



Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

Volume 28, Number 3

May–June 2012

www.claytonvnps.org

Officers

**Vice-President,
Interim President** Bruce Hill
757/903-4599
euplotes@msn.com

Treasurer Judith Kator
757/229-0714
jandhkator@cox.net

Secretary Mary Turnbull
757/229-4046
petalpower@verizon.net

Committee Chairs

Awards/Historian Pat Baldwin
757/838-2064

Field Trips OPEN

Hospitality Phyllis Putnam
757/229-8035
phylputnam@cox.net

Membership Patti Gray
757/645-4164
patriciagray67@gmail.com

Newsletter Louise Menges
757/229-4346
ltmeng@verizon.net

Plant Rescue Co-Chairs

Cortney Langley 757/291-1500
clangley@plantrescue.org

Ralph Will 757/565-0306
ralphandcarolynwill@gmail.com

Plant Sale Co-Chairs

Joan Etchberger 757/784-6870
jetchberger@cox.net

Lucile Kossodo 757/565-0769
lkossodo@cox.net

Program Claire Sink
757/903-4599
c03sink@aol.com

Publicity/Website Jan Newton
757/566-3646
jnewton110@cox.net

Board Member-at-Large

Mary Hyde Berg 804/693-3568

Our May 17 Meeting— Tom Teeples on "Beginning Mycology: How Green Plants and Fungi Are Interrelated"



Tom Teeples, who lives in Kilmarnock, will address why mushrooms pop up in lawns and flower beds overnight and describe why they keep coming back, even after they have been destroyed. Teeples will talk about the basics of fungal life, emphasizing the inter-relatedness of green plants and fungi. He will also touch on fungus relatives such as lichens. Familiar mushrooms and “toadstools” will be discussed, but

the talk is not intended as a mushroom identification lecture; mushroom identification takes extensive study, according to Teeples.

Tom Teeples is a life-long naturalist and outdoors person. He earned two degrees from George Washington University; an undergraduate degree in mathematical statistics and a master's degree in administration. He and his wife Paula moved to the Northern Neck of Virginia in 1991. He is a past president of the Northern Neck Master Gardeners and currently is active with the Virginia Master Naturalist organization. He served as president of the Northern Neck Audubon Society for 5 years, and previously was vice president, membership chair, birding hotline administrator, and monitor for bluebird trails. He is part of the Extension Leadership Council of Northumberland County.

The meeting begins at **6:45 pm** at the Yorktown Public Library at the intersection of Battle Road and Route 17 in Yorktown. **See you there!**

From the Interim President

The John Clayton Chapter is indebted to Helen Hamilton for her 6+ years of enthusiasm, dedication, and leadership. She did much to elevate the recognition and importance of native plants across Williamsburg, Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and the counties of Gloucester, Mathews, Middlesex, James City, and York. Her knowledge of plants in the state and federal parks on the coastal plain is unmatched. She even drove her message home through her trademark green hair. On behalf of the JCC, we salute and thank our retiring president.

Now, our challenge is to fill her shoes to maintain the momentum she developed for native plants and the habitats in which they grow. As a Chapter we sponsor a well-received annual plant sale, hold bimonthly meetings with informative technical speakers, have many plant walks, and have an effective plant rescue and relocation capability. This year the Chapter is sponsoring five attendees at Nature Camp, which is a record.

Therefore, I call on each JCC member to come forward and help us keep the Chapter strong so we can continue our native plant stewardship and conservation activities at the level to which we have become accustomed. All of these events and activities take dedicated person power to make them successful and effective. Please tell us in what you would like to participate. More importantly, we will soon be looking for new members of the JCC Board of Directors, including committee chairs for the coming year, and the Nominating Committee will be calling respective JCC members to take on a Board position. If you receive one of these calls, please be generous with your time and talent so we can continue a strong, capable, and effective JCC. **Bruce Hill**

A message from Helen

Wow! What a party! Warm thanks to all JCC members and friends who attended this event hosted by Claire and Bruce at their lovely home. What a beautiful Sunday afternoon to “celebrate” the end of my tenure as president of JCC.

I can honestly say that the past 6+ years have been rewarding to me personally and very enjoyable. Board members are passionate about native plants, and educating and inspiring our public to an interest in native plant conservation and building home wildlife habitats.



Louise Menges

The JCC board is strong now, with new members Claire, Bruce, Phyllis, Courtney and Ralph, continuity provided by Mary, Joan, Lucile, Louise, Patti, Jan and Judith, and institutional memories by Pat, Mary Hyde and Donna. But turnover is important, allowing exchange of positions within the board, and the infusion of new ideas with fresh recruits.

While I will continue my efforts behind the scenes with talks and plant walks and writings, our travel plans negated the possibility of my continuing to attend board and chapter meetings. I do hope that if a member of the nominating committee calls, any other open board positions will be filled quickly. John Clayton Chapter is a strong, recognized group in our community, with possibilities of continued growth. Thanks to all who have made my involvement so satisfying

warm regards, Helen

Who has served as President?

I compiled a list of Clayton Chapter Presidents (gleaned from Cynthia Long's *Claytonia* archives) for the benefit of those of us who, like me, are fairly recent members of the John Clayton Chapter:

Barbara Hall, 1984–1986

Cynthia Long, 1986–1988

Libbey Oliver, 1988–1989

Fan Williams, 1989–1991

Gail Roberts, 1992–1993

Janice Miller, 1993–?

Gordon Chappell, 1995–1998

Lorna Wass, 1998–2000

Michael Sawyer, 2001–2002

vacant, 2003–2005

Helen Hamilton, 2005–2012

Louise Menges

New members

Welcome, new members **Archie & Jean Fripp** and **Belinda Hicks**, all of Yorktown, **Erin Halleran** and **Beverley Levinson** of Williamsburg, **Ann Gentry** of Gloucester, **Deborah Saunders** of Newport News and **Maureen Woodson** of Henrico!

“Native Plants and Native Soils” was the topic at our March meeting

We learned a lot about soils and their interaction with native plants at our March 17th meeting. Here are some highlights:

One of the first things speaker **Stewart Ware** told his audience was that “soil is not dirt.” Soil is layered, with an upper layer of dead and

decaying organic matter underlain by a particulate mineral layer, which actually *is* accurately called “dirt.” Even the upper organic layer is composed of different types of “soils”: recognizable litter on the surface; decayed litter below it; and humus just above the mineral layers. Decay of the organic layer com-

combined with the action of rainwater produces soluble organic particles, carbon dioxide and mineral nutrients which percolate down to be incorporated into the mineral layer below (the real “topsoil” for native plants). This mineral layer is able to hold the water from which plants can absorb nutrients, and provides support for their roots. Stewart referred to these layers of soil as “horizons.”

O Horizon = the organic layer;

A Horizon = the particulate layer beneath it leached of soluble minerals;

B Horizon = the particulate layer with soluble minerals redeposited;

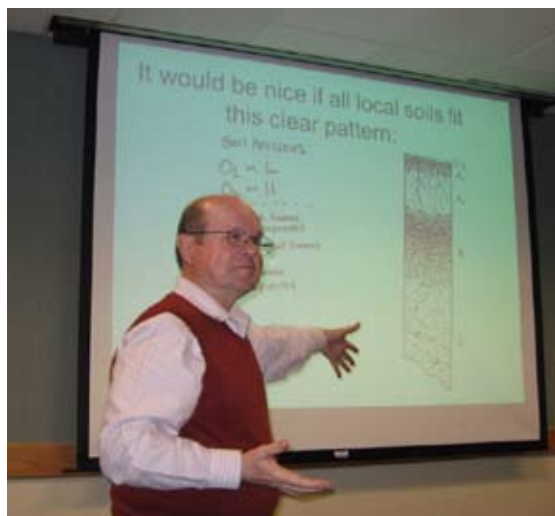
C Horizon = the lower particulate layer, which may be reddish due to the presence of iron and aluminum oxides;

Bedrock = well, *bedrock* (the origin of the particulate layers, or “dirt”).

He described the interactions of these layers in native soils and how human occupation has affected them.

Stewart explained that the two most important soil variables affecting distribution of native plants are soil chemistry and soil texture. In our area, soil pH is a good predictor of what kinds of native plants are most abundant in local areas. Natural upland soils in our area are nearly always rather acid; local small stream swamps have a wider range of pH. Calcareous ravines cut into the Yorktown Formation by erosion provide habitat for upland plants that do well in high pH soils, as do small swamps downstream that also cut into the Yorktown Formation, but swamps that have not cut into the Yorktown deposits do not have high pH.

Louise Menges



Jan Newton

Recent JCC field trips...

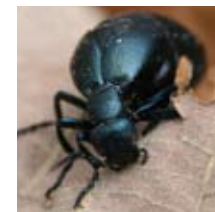
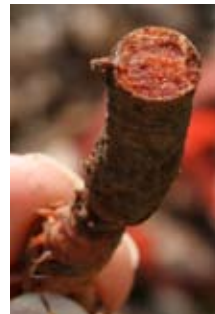
March 31: Tripetala Walk in Gloucester

May apples (*Podophyllum peltatum*) were everywhere as we entered **Mary Hyde Berg's** wooded property to begin what Mary calls a "Tripetala Walk", named for the *Magnolia tripetala*, or umbrella magnolia, growing on this tract of upland and bottomland woods and streams.

Although Mary had feared there might be few wild plants for us to see, we were rewarded with looks at many emerging and flowering native species. Among them were *Magnolia tripetala* saplings whose leaves were just unfurling at the tops of their stems; blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp.), perfoliate bellwort (*Uvularia perfoliata*), Canadian wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), showy orchis (*Orchis spectabilis*), golden ragwort (*Packera aurea*) and pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), all in bloom; bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), puttyroot orchid (*Aplectrum hyemale*), a number of fern species, the purplish leaves of roundlobed hepatica (*Anemone americana*), and a special treat for me—a morel (*Morchella* spp.) mushroom or two!

Mary was ably assisted by **Lee Bristow**, who scouted for interesting finds, provided consultation, and even cut a *Sanguinaria* root in two so we could see why it earned the common name "bloodroot." We were also grateful for the assistance of the indispensable **Donnell Taylor**, who among other things had cleared enough space in an adjacent field so that we could all park our vehicles off the narrow road, and who accompanied us for most of the walk as well. Thank you to them both, and to Mary, for a great field trip!

Louise Menges



Louise Menges

Clockwise, from upper left: *Magnolia tripetalia*; blooming ginger; round-lobed hepatica; a morel; a big beetle (which was cooperative, we discovered, because it was dead!); how bloodroot got its name.



We rest for a bit during our trek through Mary's woods. Donnell Taylor is seated on the log holding a walking stick; Lee Bristow is standing behind him.

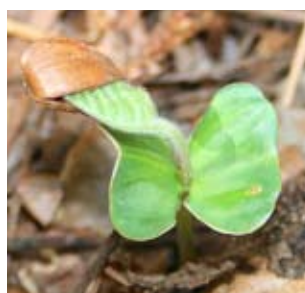
April 7: Lafayette Nature Trail Walk

Helen Hamilton and Gus Hall led another Spring field trip, this one along the nature trail adjacent to Lafayette High School, on Longhill Road in James City County. The topography of this wooded area is similar to that of Mary's Tripetala property, and included denizens of damp as well as dry woodlands, and a few slippery slopes!

Helen drew our attention to a number of grasses she spotted as we walked along, showing us their flowering structures. We also saw rattlesnake (*Botrychium virginianum*), bracken (*Pteridium spp.*) and chain (*Woodwardia areolata?*) ferns; many beeches (*Fagus grandifolia*), ranging from tiny just-sprouted seedlings to majestic large specimens; princess pine (*Lycopodium obscurum*); beautiful carpets of (mostly) unidentified mosses; lizard's tail (*Saururus cernuus*); littleleaf buttercup (*Ranunculus abortivus*), mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyl-lum*) and pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) in bloom...and many more no longer retrievable from my random access memory!



Clockwise from above:
Littleleaf buttercup;
Rattlesnake fern;
Woodrush (*Luzula multiflora?*);
Pawpaw bloom;
Tiny beech seedling with a
beechnut still clinging to its
emerging first leaves.



Louise Menges

Louise Menges



Helen explains the fine points of a grass's architecture.

5 field trips planned for May and June...

William & Mary's Plant Refuge on Saturday, May 19 at 10 am

W & M Herbarium Curator Beth Chambers will lead a native plant walk through William and Mary's Plant Refuge, located on campus near Crim Dell. Meet at the Refuge amphitheater; parking is free on Landrum Drive and other nearby campus parking areas on weekends. For additional info and to register, contact Beth at 757/345-0176.

A walk at Mary Turnbull's home on Saturday, May 26 at 9 am

A walk through **Mary Turnbull's** wooded property off Jamestown Road in Williamsburg should provide glimpses of eighty-four identified native plant species, forty of which were present when the Turnbulls built their home; one tree species on their property not often found in this area is alternate-leaf dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*). The terrain is somewhat hilly, but alternate paths are available. Refreshments will be served after the walk.

The Turnbull's address is 109 Woodmere Drive, The Woods.

To register, contact Mary Turnbull at petalpower@verizon.net or at 757/229-4046.



Beaverdam Park in Gloucester on Saturday, June 2 at 10 am

Edie Bradbury and Pat Baldwin will lead this walk on the nature trails around Beaverdam Park.

For directions and to register contact Edie Bradbury at 804/693-4190 or at ediebradbury@cox.net.

College Landing walk on Saturday, June 23 at 10 am

Gus Hall and Helen Hamilton will lead this walk to look for blooming native plants in habitats ranging from the water's edge at College Creek to the wooded areas surrounding it.

To register, contact Helen Hamilton at 757/564-4494 or at helen48@cox.net.

Longhill Swamp Walk on Saturday, June 30 at 9:30 am

Donna Ware will lead a plant walk around and through Longhill Swamp to look at woodland and wetland plants. Meet in the first parking lot of the Williamsburg Indoor Sports Complex building at 5700 Warhill Trail, off Longhill Road.

Contact Donna at 757/565-0657 to register and for more information.

A successful plant sale!

This year's plant sale was a major success. It was held in a new location at Freedom Park, which turned out to be a great venue for us as well as for the Master Gardeners and Botanical Garden folks. The threat of rain was upon us most of the day; however it did not rain until 1:30 pm, which gave plenty of time for gardeners to purchase their treasures.

To prepare for the sale, potting parties were held in the fall and more potting parties in the spring, and many plants were donated along the way. My guess is that we had approximately 1500–1800 plants available for purchase. I feel it is safe to say that the variety in plants available for purchase was the greatest that we have ever had.

Thank goodness for our wonderful Nature Campers, Boy Scout Troop 103, and Callie Newton, who hustled and lugged and pushed garden carts all day. What a treasure we have in our youth!

Plants were donated to Blayton Elementary School, Eco Discovery Park, New Quarter Park, and Freedom Park to help educate about the importance of using native plants.

Thank you to all members for your support in making the plant sale a success.



Joan Etchberger, Sara Nugent and Bruce Hill, holding the tools of their trade for the day.

Mary Turnbull

Joan and Lucile

From the Wildflower Rescue Team

After a flurry of activity, the native plant rescue team seems to be catching a much-needed rest. The team recently wrapped up the mammoth effort of rescuing at the Commander Shepard Boulevard extension site in Hampton. At final count, more than 600 herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees were saved over a six-week span. Apparently, that not only impressed us, but impressed a Peninsula blogger, who wrote up a short piece about the rescue team. Find that at <http://tinyurl.com/6t725ot>.

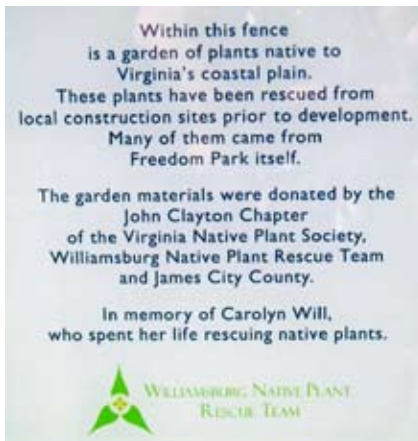
Many of the Hampton rescues have already been replanted and there are additional plans to provide plants to the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, Freedom Park's rescue garden, the National Institute of Aerospace, Grafton Bethel Elemen-



Jan Newton rescues groundpine at the Hampton site.



tary School, Nelson Elementary School and York River State Park. If you know of other educational or public gardens that might need materials, let us know!



The sign at Freedom Park in Carolyn's honor.

Cortney Langley

at the Go Ape adventure course in James City County, but was too late—the path through the woods had already been cleared. Thankfully, the operation's footprint is pretty light, as far as development and amusements go.

The team was far more successful partnering with the new Eco-Discovery Park, also in James City County. We were able to provide a number of landscaping plants and labor to help get ready for its kick-off event, James Riverfest. The park is a nonprofit venture devoted to teaching sustainability and its owner, Steve Rose, is passionate about the value of native plants and rescue work. We're excited about the idea of an ongoing educational partnership. Visit <http://eco-discoverypark.org> for more information on that.

Jan Newton graciously added a link to rescue on the John Clayton website and the team also has another site at www.williamsburg.plantrescue.org. To keep up on the latest, "like" us on Facebook, at www.facebook.com/Williamsburg.Wildflower.Rescue.Team.

As always, please let us know if you hear of development plans or if there seems to be new activity around a wild site.

Cortney Langley

The team also finished its first round of planting at the new native plant garden at Freedom Park, in James City County. The sign, graciously funded by the John Clayton Chapter, explaining the garden and memorializing Carolyn Will, is in place, and the garden is beginning to fill out. We will continue to care for it while it establishes and likely plant more there in the fall.

As for new initiatives, the team tried to rescue



Joli Huelskamp planting ferns at the new Freedom Park native garden.



A bronze plaque in memory of Carolyn planned for the National Institute of Aerospace in Hampton.

Cortney Langley

Dwarf Bluet: Wildflower of the Month for April 2012

This tiny annual bluet (*Houstonia pusilla*), with purple-violet flowers no more than ¼-inch across, colors fields and roadsides in early spring. Each blossom consists of a narrow tube, ending in 4 petals at right-angles around a central reddish eye. The flowers are borne on stalks up to an inch long, terminally and from the axils of the ½-inch long leaves.

Dwarf Bluet grows in dry soil, often in gravel roadways, from Virginia south to Florida and west to South Dakota and Texas. In Virginia, this plant occurs mostly in the Coastal Plain and south-central counties.

Two similar perennial species grow naturally in the Coastal Plain in Virginia: Common Bluet, *Houstonia caerulea*, has light blue flowers centered with a yellow eye; and Woodland Bluet, *Houstonia purpurea*, has light blue flowers with a light center cluster at the ends of stems up to 18 inches tall. These two species bloom later than Dwarf Bluet, and are found in woodlands and other moist situations, not roadsides and disturbed soils.

Helen Hamilton



Helen Hamilton

Wild Strawberry: Wildflower Spot for April 2012

Wild Virginia Strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*) has red fruits similar to the cultivated species, but smaller and much sweeter. The flowers are white, and like other members of the Rose family, the centers are filled with a large number of yellow anthers. This plant is instantly recognizable as a strawberry, with 3-parted, coarsely toothed leaves and a ground-hugging habit. The leaves are carried on six-inch long, hairy stalks, with the flowers no taller, a loose cluster appearing on short, hairy stalks.

Common in patches in fields and dry, open places in sun or shade, Wild Strawberry is found in every county in Virginia and throughout the U.S. and Canada. It will tolerate moderately acid soil. Reproducing by runners, this low plant is a good groundcover over the summer, blooming April–June with spreading green leaves until frost. Culti-



Helen Hamilton

vated strawberries are hybrids developed from this native species and a South American one.

The berries attract wildlife, and the plant is a larval host plant for the Gray Hairstreak butterfly, common in coastal Virginia.

American Indians and early settlers used leaf tea as a nerve tonic and for sore throats, among treatments for other ailments. Recognized for their protective qualities, the berries were eaten for scurvy and gout.

An extract of fresh leaves is rich in vitamin C. **Helen Hamilton**

The dark secret of weird expiration dates!

Many of you have wondered why the expiration date on your John Clayton Chapter newsletter does not change soon or immediately after you mail your check to the Virginia Native Plant Society. After all, we live in the age of lickety-split computers, don't we?

Ah, sweet mysteries of life. There are humans sitting in front of those computers, and most of those humans are volunteers who have lives just like yours—busy, busy, busy. So let us just say for the sake of clarity, the Volunteer Specialist for Expiration Dates only appears in the VNPS office once a month. And the Volunteer Specialist for Notification to Chapters waits for a one month batch of the elusive expiration dates before sending them to the chapters.

And let us just say for the sake of humor, that yours truly, the Volunteer Membership Chairperson—a job, I might say, that is always available to any interested party—just sits at her desk waiting for the elusive expiration dates to arrive. Erase that—it is not true and maybe not humorous. The dark secret is that this is only done once a month in time to lickety-split it over to the Volunteer Newsletter Editor.

By now, the mathematicians among you have figured out that all of those 'once a months' can add up to several months! Yours truly suspects that there is someone out there who can figure out how to make this work better, and that someone is the person to whom I will gladly surrender my computer files with good wishes and a pot of columbine. Meanwhile, to have the most current, best possible, least weird expiration date on your newsletter, mail your check to VNPS soon or immediately after you receive the annual bill!

Patti Gray, Membership Chairperson

Calendar

Thursday, May 17	6:45–8:45 pm: John Clayton Chapter meeting at Yorktown Public Library: Tom Teeples will speak on “Beginning Mycology: How Green Plants and Fungi Are Interrelated” <i>(See Page 1.)</i> <i>The Library is located at the intersection of Battle Rd. and Rt. 17 in Yorktown.</i>
Saturday, May 19	10:00–11:30am: Beth Chambers, W&M Herbarium Curator, will lead a plant walk through William & Mary’s Plant Refuge on campus near Crim Dell. <i>(See Page 7.)</i> Contact Beth at 757/345-0176 for more information and to register.
Saturday, May 26	9 am: Native Plant Walk at Mary Turnbull's home at 109 Woodmere Drive, Williamsburg. <i>(See Page 7.)</i> Contact Mary Turnbull at 757/229-4046 or <i>petalpower@verizon.net</i> to register.
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Check our website at www.claytonvnps.org for additional walks and events which may not have made this issue.

Membership Form for John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

(Place checks in the boxes below next to your selections.)

I am a ☐ **new member** of the John Clayton Chapter ☐ **renewing member** of the John Clayton Chapter

Name		
Address		
City	State	Zip
Email*	Phone*	

☐ I would like to receive my newsletters electronically at the email address above.

Membership dues

☐ Individual (\$30) ☐ Family (\$40) ☐ Patron (\$50) ☐ Sustaining (\$100) ☐ Life (\$500)

☐ Student (\$15) ☐ Associate (\$40) —for groups who designate one person as delegate

I wish to make an additional contribution in the amount of \$ ☐ to John Clayton Chapter ☐ to VNPS

☐ This is a gift membership; please include a card with my name as donor.

I have ☐ time ☐ a little time ☐ no time to help with activities.

☐ I do not wish to be listed in a chapter directory.

**Please Note:* John Clayton Chapter does not distribute any of our membership information to other organizations.
It is used only by the officers and chairpersons of our chapter.

Make your check payable to **VNPS** and mail to: VNPS Membership Chair
400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2
Boyce, VA 22610