

Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

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www.claytonvnps.org

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"Native Plant Communities and Deer Management: Strategies for Peaceful Coexistence" will be the topic at our May 18 meeting

White-tailed deer, as a key-stone species, have increasingly affected plant ecosystems throughout their range. In southeast Virginia, they have had profound effects on forest communities, including rare species. We will discuss the efficacy of attempts to control deer populations, pros and cons of management strategies, the need for herd reduction, and ways to best educate the public about approaches that maximize the health of both plants and deer.



A white-tailed doe and her offspring
Photo: Seig Kopinitz

Deborah Green, Professor Emerita at the College of William and Mary, is a psychologist who now serves as a consultant on the human dimensions of natural resource management. In addition to her passion for native plants, she has worked with Wildlife Management Committees, conducting community surveys and public education workshops on wildlife and watershed management, and developing public education materials on wildlife and watershed management issues. She has published her work in biological as well as social science journals.

NOTE NEW MEETING PLACE AND START TIME!

The meeting will begin at **7:00** at the **Quarterpath Recreation Center**, Multipurpose Room 2, 202 Quarterpath Rd., Williamsburg.

Directions to Quarterpath Recreation Center:

From Williamsburg: Go about 1/2 mi. southeast on York St. (U.S. Rt. 60 E) from its intersection with Francis St. Turn **RIGHT** onto Quarterpath Road at the Yorkshire Restaurant. The Recreation Center is the first building on the right on Quarterpath Road.

From Newport News/Hampton: On U.S. Rt. 60 W, go about 1.3 mi. west of its intersection with VA Rt. 199 and turn LEFT onto Quarterpath Road at the Yorkshire Restaurant. The Recreation Center is the first building on the right on Quarterpath Road. **See you there!**

From the President

The Native Plant Sale was a great success. I am overwhelmed with thanks and admiration of all of you who worked so hard volunteering to do everything from planning, driving vans and/or trucks with plants to the sale, carrying plants, greeting customers, keeping the floor clean, answering questions, and finding experts to removing the prickly dead holly leaves from the pots. A huge thank you and “high-fives” to the chairs of the Plant Sale, Patti Gray and Joan Etchberger, who worked for so many hours on our Plant Sale. It was a great challenge as we did it all in one day, albeit a long one. They organized and synchronized us so well that we were able to deliver the plants to their tables like a well-oiled machine. Every detail was ready to go; what a wild ride it was! So many wonderful volunteers make this group great. A huge thank you to Jim Etchberger for the traffic signs and the covered trailer he created to safely transport plants without wind burn. His Boy Scouts were fantastic helpers. They put up traffic signs for customers, helped carry the plants to set them up for selling and helped carry the plants for the customers who came to buy. It was as if we had all rehearsed this choreography ahead of time. Our transportation directors, Tim Costelloe and Bill Morris, deserve many thanks for getting all the plants loaded and driven to the sale so quickly—what a smooth operation. Everyone who volunteered to help was involved and it showed in the success of our sale. Sadly, the Etchbergers and Patti Gray will be retiring from directing the sale. We need to find one or two persons to head our sale next year. It is our only moneymaking effort, funding a child to nature camp and our speakers. I hope we can keep the momentum of this year going into 2018!

From Rod Simmons comes an alternative idea for green lawns as we know them. Originally the idea was suggested by the research of three biologists from Yale: Herbert Borman, Diana Balmori and Gordon Geballe. Rod calls them “Freedom Lawns.” The reason for the name “Freedom” comes from the fact that they require very little maintenance as opposed to fertilized or chemically treated lawns. These lawns contain mostly native vegetation, including mosses and lichens. These lawns are semi-natural areas and offer the appropriate native species and habitat for pollinators. These lawns occur in oak and oak-hickory overstory as we have here in Virginia. If these places have not been farmed, they will have native soils, micro-organisms, and contain dormant seeds for native plants which have remained in the soil. If not, he suggests plants below. Rod Simmons goes



on to say that fertilizers (including leaf compost and manure), lime, pesticides, commercial seed mixes, and native plant seed mixes destroy most native grasses, wildflowers and wildlife, eventually even the oaks. He strongly indicates that one must not use commercial lawn seeds or commercial wildflower seed mixes. Even tilling or soil amendments would disturb the soil. All those things allow non-native invasive plants to grow, loading up on nutrients to destroy native biodiversity and trees. As he says, “Soil disturbance is the main cause of non-native invasive species.” It always comes back to the weeds. To change your current lawn, you should carefully acidify the soil using iron sulfate or garden sulfur (never aluminum sulfate) and carefully remove weeds. Here are the native seeds that you could use, and they are available in native plant nurseries:

Grasses:

Poverty Oatgrass (*Danthonia spicata*)—dominant and widespread; forms a continuous turf with lots of room for other plants.

Autumn Bentgrass (*Agrostis perennans*)

Panic Grass (*Dichanthelium acuminatum* vars.); also *Dichanthelium depauperatum*, *D. dichotomum* var. *dichotomum*, and other low *Dichanthelia*— not Deer-Tongue Grass (*Dichanthelium clandestinum*).

Three-awn Grass (*Aristida* spp.)—mainly in sunny, open areas on mineral soil.

Poverty Grass (*Sporobolus vaginiflorus* var. *vaginiflorus*) —mainly in sunny, open areas on mineral soil.

Sedges:

Parasol Sedge (*Carex umbellata*), Black-edged Sedge (*Carex nigromarginata*), Reflexed Sedge (*Carex retroflexa* var. *retroflexa*), Shaved Sedge (*Carex tonsa*), and many other low, woodland carices.

Rushes:

Path Rush (*Juncus tenuis*)

Wildflowers:

Eastern Yellow Stargrass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*)

Trailing Bush-clover (*Lespedeza procumbens*); also Creeping Bush-clover (*Lespedeza repens*); both prefer some sun.

Pussytoes (*Antennaria* spp.); needs some sun to bloom well, otherwise it'll remain non-flowering.

Dwarf-dandelion (*Krigia virginica*); in sunny, open areas on mineral soil.

Pinweeds (*Lechea* spp.)—need some sun to bloom well.

Nailworts (*Paronychia canadensis* and *P. fastigiata*)

Pinweed (*Hypericum gentianoides*)—in sunny, open areas on mineral soil.

St. Andrew's Cross (*Hypericum hypericoides* ssp.)—*Ssp. hypericoides* is rare in the greater D.C. area.

Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*)

American Pennyroyal (*Hedeoma pulegioides*)

Lyre-leaf Sage (*Salvia lyrata*)

Hyssop Skullcap (*Scutellaria integrifolia*)

Southern Yellow Wood-sorrel (*Oxalis dillenii*)

Blue Toadflax (*Nuttallanthus canadensis*)—needs some sun to bloom well, otherwise it'll remain non-flowering.

Virginia Plantain (*Plantago virginica*)

Dwarf Cinquefoil (*Potentilla canadensis*)—dominant and spreading.

Common Buttonweed (*Diodia teres*)—in sunny, open areas on mineral soil.

Common Bluets (*Houstonia caerulea*)

Field Pansy (*Viola bicolor*)—in sunny, open areas; also other *Viola* spp.

Thanks to Rod Simmons for his interesting article.

You can reach him at Rod.Simmons@alexandriava.gov for questions on how to proceed with this. By coincidence, my small back lawn has slowly turned into something close to what he describes because I did not want to keep it mowed. It has mosses, poverty grasses, St. Andrew's Cross, and I never planted them at all—they just showed up. Now I will try to add some of the other plants Rod Simmons mentions. There are fewer weeds than there were before; less and less show up each year. It is worth a try.

Lucile Kossodo

Our March program: an account from Cathy Flanagan

It is with appreciation that I report on VIMS Center for Coastal Resource Management Ecologist Molly Mitchell's excellent presentation to the Virginia Native Plant Society on Thursday, March 16. As previewed in the *Claytonia*, the topic was Climate change and sea level rise-driven changes in plant communities. Knowing how concerned we all are about the future of our environment, we are fortunate to have a resource like Molly.

While rising temperatures and increasing CO₂ are concerns, Ms. Mitchell emphasized that the greatest and most pressing issue for tidal marshes is sea level rise, which is occurring twice as fast in Virginia than it is globally. Thermal expansion accounts for some of the rise, but land subsidence is the biggest contributing factor. Removal of ground water is most often the cause, and the areas near the pumping centers of Franklin and West Point are experiencing the most subsidence. However, there is another contributing factor. Many thousands of years ago, the ice sheet that covered Virginia caused land in our area to bulge upward. As the ice started to melt and the weight of the ice was removed, the land began sinking, and it is still sinking today relative to the rivers and bay. There is yet another factor, though not yet well understood, and that is the shift in the Gulf Stream. It is thought that fast moving water pulls other water with it—there are many unknowns; for example, is it cyclical? For CCRM to provide guidance, more research is needed to improve projections.

The influence of sea level rise is already being felt. “Things are getting wetter and saltier,” explained Ms. Mitchell. An inventory on every marsh in Virginia was done forty years ago, and is currently being re-done. In 1971, for example, the ratio was half low marsh and half high marsh. Today it is all low marsh, making fresh water systems very important. This change in salinity distribution results in salt moving further up the estuary. While marsh plants can adapt to the effects of rising temperature and carbon dioxide levels (such as an increase in the rate of photosynthesis, respiration, and transpiration), especially if the changes are gradual, it is not the case with salinity. *Spartina alterniflora* can tolerate low marsh conditions as can *Salicornia* spp, which can excrete salt (it can be seen on the outside of plant stems). It can also tolerate the increase in hydrogen sulfide that occurs in low marsh areas. The invasive species *Phragmites australis*, however, has some salt tolerance, can choke out native species, and is an increasing problem.

Marsh plants tend to “retreat back to the land” when conditions are unfavorable, but often there has been shoreline erosion. So, when plants can’t survive or retreat to the land the question is about the future. Which brings me to a new term I learned from this presentation—“prestoration.” When planning restoration of lost wetlands one must consider what kind of plants will be needed in the future, such as those with higher salt tolerance. This highlights the need for more research to make better predictions. A question about funding in our current political climate came from the audience. The EPA is funding Molly’s research, but it is her understanding that state grants will not go away. I hope that is the case.

Recent plant walks and other events

A Weed Walk in Freedom Park on March 18

We found a few, but not as many as expected—more wildflowers were in bloom at the entrance to Freedom Park. Gus thinks the area around the Interpretive Building is a little cooler and less exposed, and does not attract as many weed seeds. But Hairy Bittercress was setting seed, there were a few violets, and both *Houstonias*—the lovely purple flower with a red center (Tiny Bluet, *H. purpurea*) and the little white species that Donna first found a few years ago, Southern Bluet (*H. micrantha*). Dwarf Dandelion was in bloom (*Krigia virginica*), small rosettes of Purple Cudweed (*Gamochaeta purpurea*) were everywhere in the lawn, also Dovesfoot Cranebill Geranium (*Geranium molle*).



Freedom Park walkers: Hart Haynes, Barb Bucklin, Roger Gosden, Chris Gwaltney, Gary Wright, Mary Turnbull

There were a lot of round-leaved small plants out there—Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), buttercups (*Ranunculus* spp.), maybe Coinleaf (*Centella erecta*), and Swamp Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*).

And of course I found some mosses, many producing sporophytes. The masses of bright yellow with thick stalks and narrow capsules are species of *Ditrichum*—they are plentiful along the edges of walkways, in bare spots in fields, and other disturbed soils.

Helen Hamilton



Helen's photo of *Ditrichum* moss

March 18th's "Exploratory" at York River State Park

Seventeen of us spent the brisk but mostly sunny afternoon of March 18th exploring the larger of two ravines that feed the pond southeast of the Visitor's Center at York River State Park. We entered the ravine near its head and quickly found ourselves on a small floodplain sporting an extensive colony of golden ragwort. However, except for one especially robust Virginia heartleaf ginger with multiple flowers and one clump of common bluets or Quaker ladies (*Houstonia caerulea*), a perennial with light blue flowers marked by a central yellow "eye", that was it for plants in flower in the ravine! I had expected that we would see bloodroot, hepatica, spring beauty, and leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*), but we saw none of these in this particular ravine.

The dearth of plants in flower meant we spent most of our time identifying plants in the rosette stage, such as avens, sanicle, and cardinal flower in the ravine bottom, and rattlesnake orchis, spotted wintergreen, and hawkweed on the upland adjacent to the ravine slopes, plus leafless vines and trees. As one would expect, the ravine bottom was dominated by green ash and red maple with some black gum, and American hornbeam was common in the understory. A climbing hydrangea vine (*Decumaria barbara*) had fallen loose from high in one of these trees and conveniently hung at eye level. We were able to observe that its terminal buds are naked, i.e. they have no bud scales protecting the tiny leaves in the bud, just as is the case for the genus *Viburnum*. Mountain laurel was abundant on the northwest-facing slopes and largely absent on the opposing slopes where scattered colonies of scouring rush resided. As we neared the mouth of the ravine and the pond into which it feeds, the ashes and maples were replaced by a grove of wax-myrtles. Beyond the wax-myrtles was the edge of the pond ringed by a bright green band. This band proved to consist of thousands of swamp water-pennyworts (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*).

After reaching the pond, we decided to investigate the open roadside just south of the Park pay station. There we were treated to eye-catching patches of tiny bluets (*Houstonia pusilla*), a native winter annual. The colors of its flowers ranged from deep purple-blue to pale blue to almost white (rare), but all of these color

variants sported a purplish “eye” instead of a yellow “eye” like the perennial common bluet. Johnny Jump-up violets (*Viola bicolor*), our native version of a pansy, were there, too, but scarce in comparison to the myriad tiny bluets. Two introduced weeds, the delightful shepherd’s cress (*Teesdalia nudicaulis*) and the diminutive parsley-piert (*Aphanes australis*, formerly known as *Alchemilla microcarpa*), also caused us to do more hands-and-knees observation there on the roadside.

A summertime “exploratory” will focus on a ravine deeper into the Park.

Donna Ware

Williamsburg Home Show March 25–26

Our display at the Home Show at William & Mary Hall was staffed by several volunteers—here are a couple of photos Helen Hamilton took while working there. In the photo at left are Susie Yager and Sally Young; on the right, Sara Nugent wearing a crown of real forsythia (sorry, not native), Sue Voigt, and Ray Nugent.



Upcoming walks and events

Saturday, May 13, Saturday, June 10, & Saturday, June 17 : Stonehouse Habitat Garden workdays

Susan Voigt has Habitat Garden workdays planned for **Saturday, May 13** and on the **Saturdays** of **June 10** and **June 17**, plus some extra weekdays in May and June (TBA). The Saturday workdays start about 9:00 am and usually go until 11:30, but you are welcome to come for part of the time between those hours.

Your help in maintaining this valuable resource is much needed and greatly appreciated! Contact Susan for details (804-966-8487 or svoigt1@cox.net).

Saturday, May 20, 2:00 pm: Natives in the Backyard

Mary Turnbull will lead a walk on her own Nature Trail at 109 Woodmere Drive in Williamsburg. Joining the club years ago has taught her many things about native plants. There are over fifty native plants in her yard, and you only have to walk a quarter of a mile with a few optional little hills to see everything. Refreshments will be served.

Saturday, June 10, 9:00 am: Plants of a Salt Marsh

Alicia Garcia will lead a walk into the JBLE-Langley salt marsh on Saturday, June 10th at 9 am (it's going to be hot so we'll start earlier than usual). Attendees are limited to a maximum of 15 due to the challenges associated with coming on base as well as impact on the habitat.

We will see mostly spartina but some other fun species of aster and rush are always mixed in. There is also an abundance of other wildlife, including a breeding pair of bald eagles in the vicinity.

The last day to register is **June 5th**. Please contact Alicia at alicia.m.garcia81@gmail.com to register and for directions and walk details.

Saturday, July 22, 10:00 am: Natives at Joan & Jim's

The Etchbergers grow enormous native plants on their property in Woodland Farms at 100 Woodland Road in Williamsburg, and the adjoining forest is always interesting. Learn their secrets of successful summer gardening on a walk around the backyard and down to a little stream where there are some interesting mosses. Contact Joan Etchberger at 757-784-6870 for more info.

Orchids That Bloom in the Spring

There are a lot of native orchids in Virginia, some showy, others small, but charming with a close look. Some bloom early in spring, others in summer, and a few in late fall. The leaves of two species, Crane-fly Orchid (*Tipularia discolor*) and Putty-root (*Aplectrum hyemale*) are seen in leaf litter in the winter, and disappear in summer when the tiny flowers are blooming on an erect wand.

The largest and showiest spring-blooming orchid is Pink Lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*), growing in every county in Virginia in forests, usually under oaks or pines. Two other lady's-slippers occur in the Coastal Plain, but in specific habitats.



Yellow Lady's Slipper

Yellow Lady's-slipper (*C. parviflorum* var. *pubescens*) is found only in calcareous habitats in the Coastal Plain—several clumps bloom in the Calcareous Ravine in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, established by Donna Ware and friends.

Kentucky Lady's-slipper (*C. kentuckiense*) is a disjunct species in Virginia, native to the south-central states, where it forms scattered colonies.



Pink Lady's Slipper

Two populations were found in the mid-1990s in Lancaster County by a student of Dr. Martha Case. Notable for a very large pale yellow lip, it has sepals and petals with a chocolate brown appearance.

Showy Orchid or Orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*) is well named for its inch-long pale purple and white flowers, growing close to the ground on pedicels a few inches high. Plant walks have located this orchid in Freedom Park in Williamsburg and the Grafton Ponds area in Newport News. This species was originally named *Orchis spectabilis* by Linnaeus; *Galearis* means “helmet”, referring to the two pink-purple upper petals that form a hood over the flower. Plants in the genus *Orchis* occur mainly in Europe, Africa and the Far East.

The genus *Galearis* is represented by only 3 species—one in east Asia and two in North America. Roundleaf Orchid (*Galearis rotundifolia* or *Amerorchis rotundifolia*) is a plant of northern latitudes, found in some of the northern states of this country, as well as throughout Canada and Greenland.



Felice Bond

Showy Orchid

From the large to the small:



Seig Kopinitz

Southern Twayblade

Southern Twayblade (*Listera australis*) is found in Virginia only in the Coastal Plain, where it is not common, growing in wet woods and acidic soils. Susie Yager led a walk in Newport News park in March where Seig Kopinitz took several photographs posted on his Flickr website: www.flickr.com/photos/askop. A relative of this tiny orchid, Appalachian Twayblade (*L. smallii*) grows only in the Mountain Region of Virginia.

Large or Lily-leaved Twayblade (*Liparis liliifolia*) is very common throughout the state, growing in forests and old fields. Bog Twayblade

(*L. loeselii*) is seen less often, known from less than 20 counties in Virginia.



Helen Hamilton

Lily-leaved Twayblade

Another orchid scattered across the state forms an inflorescence with numerous tiny green flowers. Below the flowers the single oval leaf somewhat resembles its name. Green Adder's-mouth (*Malaxis unifolia*) grows in moist to dry woodlands. Florida Adder's-mouth (*M. spicata*) has been found in Coastal Plain counties— its range extends along the East Coast to Florida. Appalachian Adder's-mouth (*M. bayardii*) is a northeastern species; reports of its presence in two southeastern Virginia counties are questionable.

Reproduction in the Orchid Family is unique. Orchids wrap all the pollen from each anther in oval packets called “pollinia” which are arranged so that a visiting bee or wasp trying to collect nectar flies away with the pollinia glued to its body. They are transferred to neighboring flowers as the insect searches for pollen. Orchids can also be propagated by division or by separating small bulb-lets that appear in some species, but insect pollination is required for seed production.

A few species mimic the shape of and even the odor produced by female insects in order to attract males of the same species. During fruitless efforts at copulation pollinia are transferred from flower to insect.

All orchids grow from root tubers which are rounded and often paired, like testicles, which is the origin of the name, from the Ancient Greek *orchis* meaning “testicle.”

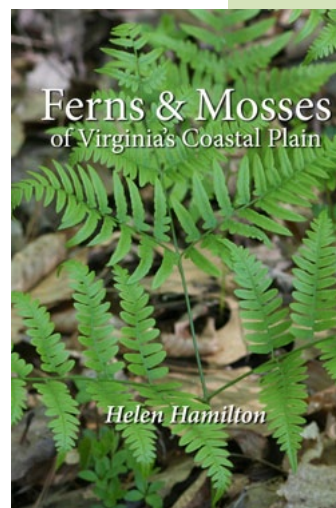


Green Adder's-mouth

Helen Hamilton

Ferns & Mosses of Virginia's Coastal Plain

All copies of the first printing of 200 books were sold in 4 months, and Helen had orders from the Post Office box that she could not fill, so she decided to order another printing of 200 copies. Copies of *Wildflowers & Grasses of Virginia's Coastal Plain* are also available, both books signed by the author. The books have been well received and she gets compliments on how useful they are in the field. Contact Helen at helen48@cox.net to order one or both of them. She thanks the Board of the John Clayton Chapter for support during the production process and for supplying wonderful photographs.



A successful 2017 Plant Sale!

We had nice weather and many visitors, and Treasurer Alicia Garcia reports that we netted more than \$3200 at our April 29 Sale. Below are just a few of the photos Helen Hamilton took of our members at work that day.

Clockwise from top left: Jim Etchberger's Boy Scout Troop 103 helped transport customers' plants to their vehicles; Alicia Garcia, Shirley Devan, and Cortney Will; Sara Nugent made sure we left the floors clean; Lucile Kossodo, Patti Gray, and Keith Navia confer; Sue Voigt with a happy customer; Lucile points out an American Wisteria she provided for the sale from her yard; Joan Etchberger and Edie Bradbury



John Clayton Chapter Calendar

- Saturday, May 13** **Stonehouse Habitat Garden** workday from about 9:00 am to 11:00 or 11:30—any time you have to help will be appreciated!
(See Page 7)
- Thursday, May 18** **7:00 pm: John Clayton Chapter meeting** at the **Quarterpath Recreation Center**, Multipurpose Room 2, 202 Quarterpath Rd., Williamsburg.
William & Mary Professor Emerita **Deborah Green** will speak on “**Native Plant Communities and Deer Management: Strategies for Peaceful Coexistence**”
NOTE NEW MEETING PLACE AND START TIME (Details and directions on Page 1)
- Saturday, May 20** **2:00 pm: Natives in the Backyard**—a Plant Walk around **Mary Turbull’s** own Nature Trail at 109 Woodmere Drive, Williamsburg.
(Details on Page 7)
- Saturday, June 10** **9:00 am: Plants of a Salt Marsh.** Join **Alicia Garcia** for a walk into a salt marsh on Langley Air Force Base to see spartina, asters, and rushes, with the possibility of a peek at Bald Eagles nesting nearby.
Email Alicia at alicia.m.garcia81@gmail.com by **June 5** to register for this walk.
(See Page 8)
- Saturday, June 10** **Stonehouse Habitat Garden** workday from about 9:00 am to 11:00 or 11:30—any time you have to help will be appreciated!
(See Page 7)
- Saturday, June 17** **Stonehouse Habitat Garden** workday from about 9:00 am to 11:00 or 11:30—any time you have to help will be appreciated!
(See Page 7)
- Saturday, July 22** **10:00 am: Natives at the Etchberger’s**—a walk around **Jim and Joan Etchberger’s** property at 100 Woodland Road in Woodland Farms, 23188 to see native plants and mosses.
Contact Joan at 757-784-6870 for more information.
(See Page 8)

Keep a lookout for announcements about additional walks and other events in the local newspapers and on our website at www.vnps.org/john-clayton.

Below is a membership renewal form. Please contact Membership Chair **Fred Blystone** at 757/229-4346 or at fredblystone@gmail.com with questions about your membership.

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