



Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

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April–June 2008

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Our next meeting on March 20

The program at our next meeting on Thursday, March 20 will be *Mountaintop Removal: Its Effects on Plants, Animals and Humans*.

Representatives from the Chesapeake and Williamsburg Climate Action Networks will show a film about habitat destruction and will discuss the environmental hazards of coal mining and coal-fired power plants, as well as strategies for reducing global warming.

Where and when: York County Library at the intersection of Battle Rd. and Route 17 in Yorktown, 7 pm.

Donna Ware

We welcome some new members

Welcome to new members Flora Adams, Peter and Lynn Blankman, Libby Carmines, Ronnie Cohen, Pat Gibbs, Tim Kinkead, Kathleen Monaghan, John Schwenkler, Claire Stephens, and Abigail Turner. The Virginia Master Naturalists, Historic Rivers Chapter has joined as a club (Kari Abbott, President). Some of you were inadvertently omitted in the last issue, but I hope we have included everyone this time!

Louise Menges

From the President

The growing season will soon be upon us, and that means native plant walks and field trips. Check out the schedule on the back page for viewing the spring ephemerals at Summerfield, property of Mary Hyde Berg in Gloucester, walks through Freedom Park in Williamsburg, and elsewhere.

The March meeting will host representatives from the Climate Action Coalition, reporting on the environmental devastation that has occurred and will increase if the Wise county coal-fired power plant is constructed. On January 8, Patti Gray attended a hearing and submitted statements; her involvement has been through the Williamsburg Climate Action Network.

Jan Newton, Publicity Chairman and Webmaster, has attended three hearings with regards to reducing global warming. In February, Jan traveled to Richmond to appear before the Air Pollution Control Board. Mary Ann Lawler, VNPS Conservation Chairman, submitted the following report to the March VNPS board meeting:

VNPS continues to be active in opposing the Wise County coal burning power plant as the proposal to build it continues its way through the permitting process. Jan Newton of Williamsburg appeared at a public hearing before the Air Pollution Control board on February 19 and gave outstanding testimony.

Way to go, Jan! Thanks so much for your efforts to stop this ill-advised project.

Helen Hamilton

Coming attractions!

Spring wildflower walks in Gloucester and King and Queen Counties: (No cost, but **it is necessary to register**. Call 804/693-3568 between 7 am and 8:30 pm. If messages are not returned, please call again.)

Saturday, March 15 at 10 am; rain date, Sunday, March 16 at 2 pm
(Gloucester Co.)

If you have never seen drifts of bloodroot, hepatica, toothwort, and other woodland blooms we call “spring ephemerals”, a heart-lifting surprise awaits you. Expect to see about 50 species.

Saturday, March 22, 10 am; rain date, Sunday, March 30, 2 pm
(Gloucester Co.)

Trailing arbutus, dainty, fragrant, ground-clinging shrub, valued by the Indians, shares the early spring of acid woods with jack-in-the-pulpit and many other delights and curiosities. Expect to see about 25 species.

Saturday, April 12, 10 am; rain date, Sunday, April 13, 2 pm
(Gloucester Co.)

Lady slippers, birds, and much more in the leafing woods – Expect to see about 30 species.

Committee chairs

Awards/Historian
Pat Baldwin
757/838 2064

Field Trips
Mary Hyde Berg
804/693-3568

Outreach
open

Plant List
Edith Bradbury
804/725-2650
ediebradbury1@aol.com

Plant Sale
Patti Gray
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Newsletter
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Membership
Phillip Merritt
757/259-0386
phillipmerritt@hotmail.com

Publicity/Website
Jan Newton
757/566-3646
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Conservation
open

Plant Rescue
Carolyn and Ralph Will
757/565-0306
sail@widomaker.com



Saturday, April 19, 10 am; rain date, Sunday, April 20, 2 pm (King and Queen Co.)

White blooming trees of shadbush cling to banks of Poropotank Creek, where it winds through vistas of the greening freshwater marsh. Mosses and ferns line long-traveled tracks and trails of this old King and Queen home site.

Happy trails! Mary Hyde Berg



Photo: Helen Hamilton

Williamsburg Botanical Garden's Walk and Talk for April

The Williamsburg Botanical Garden's monthly Walk and Talk educational series will be held on Saturday, April 5th from 10–11 am. Denise Greene, owner of Sassafra Farm, will present "Butterfly Gardening for the Entire Family." An expert in native plants, she will explain how to have a colorful, low maintenance garden that attracts butterflies and birds.

Kids are welcome: a Master Gardener will teach the kids about pollination (on the Virginia SOLs) with fun, hands-on demonstrations. The children will also learn about the Native American Three Sisters Garden, which contains corn, beans, and squash, and learn why this combination of plants is ecologically and nutritionally balanced. All children will receive a Three Sisters seed packet and instructions. The WBG located at 5535 Centerville Rd. in Freedom Park. Admission is free. For more information call 757/229-1995 or log onto www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org.

Clare Britcher

Flower Camp April 26 and 27

Join botanical artist Lara Call Gastinger and Flower Camp Director Nancy Ross Hugo for two days of observing, sketching, and painting wildflowers, ferns, and trees at Flower Camp, near Howardsville, Virginia. The widely acclaimed illustrator of the Flora of Virginia, Lara will help you observe plants more carefully, render them more accurately, and record them more expressively. Participants will be focusing on phenomena unique to the fourth week of April and practicing techniques that help turn even a quick sketch into a valuable botanical record. Using mixed media, even non-artists can learn to create pages illustrating "the story of a day outdoors" at this workshop, and teachers will learn new ways to approach field studies. Rendering trees will be a new wrinkle for artists who have studied with Lara before.

Tuition of \$325 includes three meals (lunch Saturday through brunch Sunday), one night's lodging, instruction, and most materials. Participants wishing to arrive Friday night may do so for an additional \$50, which includes light breakfast and a Friday evening sneak preview of Remarkable Trees of Virginia, Nancy's forthcoming book.

Ten percent of each tuition will be donated to the Flora of Virginia Project.

To register, send a \$50 deposit or full payment to Flower Camp, c/o Nancy R. Hugo, Director, 11208 Gwathmey Church Road, Ashland, VA 23005. For more information, visit www.flowercamp.org or contact Nancy Ross Hugo at nancy@flowercamp.org or 804/798-6364.

Libbey Oliver

VNPS Tallgrass Prairie Trip, May 31-June 7, 2008

Join us for a trip to Kansas to experience the beauty of the Tallgrass Prairie that once covered 400,000 square miles of the North American continent. Less than 4% of this prairie remains, primarily in the Flint Hills. In the spring, long before the native grasses reach their peak, native wildflowers are in full bloom. Birds and butterflies are plentiful as well.

Tours will include the National Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in Chase County Kansas, the Konza Biological Station and Tallgrass Prairie, Coblenz Prairie and more. Lodging will be in a guest house/motel near the preserves in Council Grove. Council Grove also offers many historic sites and museums and the Flint Hills Rodeo.

Participants will meet on the evening of May 31 for a reception and orientation. Those traveling by air should arrive in Kansas City, Mo. Transportation to Kansas and breakfast and dinner are the responsibility of the participants. Transportation while on tour will be by private car/carpool for those who plan to drive or rent their own car. For those who fly, we plan to arrange group transportation if needed. The cost of this transportation will be based on vehicle rental fees, gas and insurance costs, and will be determined when we know how many people will choose this option.

Cost of the trip is \$500.00 and includes lodging, lunches in the field, tour fees, guide fees, and a tax deductible gift of \$50 to VNPS.

Reservations and deposit of \$200.00 are needed by March 15, 2008. Full payment of the remaining \$300.00 is due May 1. Space is limited to 14 participants. For more information, contact Helen Hamilton at 757/564-4494, helen44@earthlink.net or Linda Wilcox, 757/468-4346, W8n2FotoF14@cox.et.

Sally Anderson, VNPS President

Nude trees (Part 2) on February 9

Cars straggled into the parking lot. People got out and began milling around—a single here, a mother-daughter pair, an elderly couple, a father-son combo, several young friends on bicycles. Thirty people at Eastern State on a February afternoon, anticipating a stroll through a small woodlot of leafless trees in the company of Dr. Stewart Ware.

Soon each walker was holding a twig of the most common deciduous tree of the upland coastal woods. Several recognized the tulip poplar, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, but the learning moment was to differentiate and identify the bud and bark characteristics that make it unique.

Primed with the vocabulary of alternate and opposite, of terminal and lateral buds, of leaf scars, vein scars and lenticels, we proceeded along the edge of the woods. There the five common local oak trees were sorted out for us—first by the common oak trait of a terminal bud cluster, then by differentiation of the color and size of the bud, bloom or white patches or lack of them on the bark and finally by the inner color of the cambium layer.



Photo: Helen Hamilton
Lucile Kossodo, left front, and Diane Sullivan, center, are among those examining winter buds as Stewart Ware explains how they can be distinguished from each other, during this always popular tree walk.

Oaks (always with the instruction to “not see” the clinging brown leaves), dogwood, wild cherry, maple, black gum, sweet gum (no relation to black), beech, blueberry, even poison ivy and devil’s walking stick were examined and identified by growth habit and clearly discernible features. (At least they were clear after being skillfully pointed out.) The most unusual was the “*Octagonal luminoculis*”, the streetlight on the edge of the walk area. We checked out Virginia pines and loblollies and red cedar; they were not “naked”, but we learned what marks distinguish each in our largely evergreen woodlands. An eastern magnolia was also available for inspection. At the end of the walk, hickory and white ash were carefully identified—trees with which few in the group were previously familiar.

We found ourselves back at the parking lot, where a second tour of some 20 eager woods-walkers waited. We had learned that it is far easier to identify a tree you know by location and have seen in full summer dress—but it is possible and quite interesting to introduce yourself to a new tree in an unknown environment, to learn its name and make its acquaintance. Our thanks to Dr. Ware.

Eunice Hyer

Native plants at the Garden Show

John Clayton Chapter members staffed a display booth at the Williamsburg Home and Garden Show Friday-Sunday, March 7–9, at the Williamsburg Indoor Sports Complex. A steady stream of interested gardeners stopped by and were given multiple handouts, including a note about our plant sale in April. Helen presented a PowerPoint talk on invasive plants and native alternatives in the screening area.

Many thanks to Patti Gray, Jan Newton, Martha Smith, Mary Turnbull and Donna Ware, who distributed literature and talked with visitors to the booth.

Nature camp

Using funds generated from the raffle at our annual meeting in September, and our very successful plant sale last April, John Clayton Chapter has funded four scholarships to Nature Camp. Two included contributions of \$200 each from the Holly Society, with our chapter supplying the remaining \$500. Two others of \$700 each are fully funded by John Clayton Chapter. This full scholarship covers all expenses for the campers for the two-week sessions.

Thanks to the Nature Camp Scholarship committee—Libbey Oliver, Martha Smith and Donna Ware—for long and hard deliberations among well-qualified candidates. Some of the criteria used were demonstrated need and the possibility of training a future botanist. We have asked the campers to attend a class on botany, in recognition of the funding from our chapter

Helen Hamilton

From Mary Hyde...

When it's all on the website, why bother to be a member?

The Board has discussed what benefits members receive for membership. It was observed that one joins some things for the benefits one gets, but members join *us* to support our several worthy goals, including, *first*, acquiring and sharing knowledge and joy of native plants.

Other worthy things your membership supports include:

propagating and selling native plants;

giving scholarships for nature camps;

presenting awards in recognition of plant preservation and education;

and, *not least*, building the number of members, which gives weight to our opinions and cautions.

Genetic Pollution

At the March VNPS board meeting, this topic went round and round, with botanists John Hayden, Johnny Townsend, and Horticulture Chair Kim Strader weighing in heavily.

The issue surfaced when a request came in from a botanical garden to plant a species of *Asclepias* not found in the region, according to the Digital Atlas of Virginia (this same garden has had invasives on display), and when Dr. Donna Ware cautioned the Williamsburg Botanical Garden against installing cultivars of native species growing in the surrounding woods.

Discussion hinged on the fact that VNPS promotes the use of native plants, discourages collecting from the wild, and yet Kim Strader has found only seven native plant nurseries across the state of Virginia that specialize in native plants. Johnny Townsend spoke eloquently about the need for VNPS to respond with “soft answers”—members agreed we cannot be too restrictive about what is planted where, or gardeners will turn us off.

Ruth Douglas, Invasive Plant Educator, occasionally gets comments from homeowners who attend her presentations about their preference for plants that grow rapidly and vigorously, *i.e.*, invasives!

All agreed that gardeners, especially in rural areas, should “exercise caution” as they landscape homes, being aware of possible contamination of surrounding natives by cultivars. And VNPS chapters need to step up efforts to make seeds and seedlings and clones of native plants more readily available. Many nurseries are very interested in stocking native plants, and could benefit from advice from VNPS members. Research has shown that garden centers will sell what customers want, and unless natives are strongly requested, it is not cost effective to stock them.

Helen Hamilton

2008 Plant Sale Saturday, April 26, 2008

Once again the John Clayton Chapter will be partnering with the JCC/Williamsburg Master Gardeners for a grand and glorious plant sale on Saturday, April 26 at the Williamsburg Community Building, 401 North Boundary Street, Williamsburg, VA. The sale will be from 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm, preparation from 8:00 am to 12:00, and clean-up after 4. A small band of members have joined together in the planning—Joan Etchberger, Patti Gray, Lucile Kossodo, Jan Newton, and Ada Lou Turner—and we need your help in this major fund raising effort of our chapter. Please consider participating in some of these essential and fun activities.

Potting Parties: Bring plants or just your enthusiasm!

March 25, Jan Newton, 110 Barn Elm Rd., Williamsburg 757/566-3646

March 27, Ada Lou Turner, 401 Yorkshire Dr., Williamsburg 757/220-0929

April 1, Sylvia and Sid Sterling, 4623 Free School Rd. Gloucester, 804 /693-2953

Help at your Home: If you have plant material in your yard, but need help getting it into pots, please call **Patti Gray** at 757/ 645-4164.

Sale Day: Help in transporting plants to the sale. Volunteer to help with set-up, the sale activity, and/or the clean-up.

If you need pots or plant tags (**we must use green tags**), or if you have any questions or suggestions, please contact **Patti Gray**, 757/645-4164.

An evergreen that is as familiar as an old friend

(excerpted with permission from the Northern Neck Chapter's current newsletter)

Juniperus virginiana, the Eastern Red Cedar, is one of the most widespread woody evergreens in the eastern United States. Its adaptability makes it suitable for sunny well-drained landscaping wherever its mature size of 40-50' can be accommodated. As screening, planting 10' apart, rather than 30' for specimen, will reduce the height due to competition. The female tree bears beautiful waxy blue "berries" which are savored by many birds, including cedar waxwings and bluebirds, as well as squirrels. Hummingbirds, among others, use these trees for nesting and the trees are important winter cover. The caterpillar of the olive hairstreak butterfly depends on this species for food.

Red cedar tolerates salt and does not like acidic soil, so it causes a change in the pH towards alkalinity which it prefers, concentrating calcium in the process. Earthworms avoid acidic soils and require high calcium, so they are prolific in landscapes with Red cedar. Earthworms are beneficial to soil structure and fertility and attract Robins.

This native plant has one negative... it is the alternate host of cedar-apple rust. Otherwise, the Eastern Red Cedar is a strongly rooted, long-lived tree for the Northern Neck.

Paula Boudy, Conservation/Horticulture



My own "Big Momma", mother of bonsai.

scores of tiny cedar "bonsai" contributed by the big red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) on the western end of my house.

On mowing grass

Of course, the term "grass" can only be applied loosely to the vegetation surrounding my home, at least in my back yard, which is not seeded, fertilized or weed-killed (what would be left?) and is home to a variety of plants only kept in check by mowing, and a few deliberately planted or encouraged around the periphery. This relaxed approach has its downsides, of course—for example, the

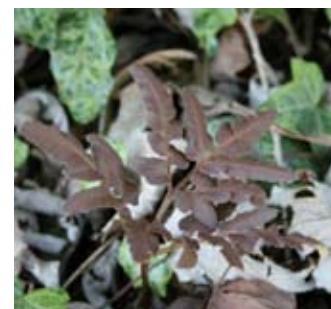
They are more noticeable during the cold months, when their stubby dark green profiles are not hidden by other greenery.

Each year I look forward to finding the first common blue violet (*Viola papilionacea*) in my back yard—I have had a special affection for violets since I was a little girl—and hate destroying their Spring display with the mower.



I was thrilled when I first identified mats of partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*) here and there; the furry white blossoms and red berries are a bonus, and this low-growing plant is under the lawn mower's "radar".

Among the volunteers sprinkled throughout my yard are grape ferns like this one (*Botrychium*—I'm not quite sure which species), their leaves still bronze at this time of year. They survive mowing, despite losing the upper portions of their fronds to the blades each time.



Photos: Louise Menges

The Carolina jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) I planted several years ago (which has now taken over a fence and is close to elbowing out a native honeysuckle) is in bud. It is not affected by mowing, though I sometimes wish I could intimidate it with the threat!

Louise Menges

What does the State Office do for us?

In answer to this question, posed now and then by members regarding the 60% of our dues which is paid to the state, Sally Anderson has provided some data:

- 1) Liability insurance for VNPS-sanctioned events, including our field trips
- 2) Sponsorships and dues to Virginia Conservation Network to carry out programs in conservation and education
- 3) Sponsorships to organizations like Bioblitz and Middle Atlantic Exotic Pest Plant Council (MA-EP-PC), and booths at meetings of organizations whose interests coincide with ours.
- 4) Officer manager wages
- 5) State newsletter, editor's fee, printing and mailing
- 6) Wildflower of the Year brochure
- 7) Office supplies, internet/website costs
- 8) Seed money for self-supporting events such as the annual meeting, workshop, merchandise.

While Sally's list is an itemization of costs, what VNPS offers is a giant umbrella organization, without which our chapter of widely scattered members would be less effective. When any of us is before the public, we provide a lot more impact and importance as associated with a state organization of 13 other like-minded chapters. As well as exchanging news and ideas among the chapters, speakers and programs are often shared.

When our chapter was in the process of reorganization, the state office was enormously helpful in facilitating our new "start-up". Likewise, the New River Chapter is in formation, with assistance from the VNPS office.

From Stan Shetler, VNPS BOD member and Botanist Emeritus, Smithsonian Institution:

In the realm of conservation, for example, where would we be in protecting the environment nationally and internationally if we had only chapters of organizations in our respective local areas?

Certainly, the local chapters are essential to the success of a state or national organization, because they make the organization tangible on the local level and provide programs and activities on a regular basis for those who wish to be directly involved. They can make the difference between involvement or non-involvement in the cause. But the larger organization unites all in a larger cause and provides the glue that holds everyone together, through publications, meetings, lobbying, tours (such as the VNPS tours to Australia, the Bruce Peninsula and Newfoundland), etc. It charters the chapters and entitles them to trade on the larger name and work of the larger organization. None of these joint activities comes free, and we have to pay for all of them if we are to have them. We can always question whether we are doing things we shouldn't be doing or pay too much for what we get, but the VNPS can hardly be accused of profligate spending. It has a very modest budget compared to some of its sister organizations.

Helen Hamilton



Outreach

John Clayton Chapter members will be in the public eye several times in the next few months. We were invited to display at the Williamsburg Home Show March 7, 8, and 9, and Helen presented a Powerpoint program on invasive plants and native alternatives on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Programs on conservation landscaping (including native plants, of course!) will be presented to the Historic Triangle Senior Center, the Queens Lake Garden Club, and the Chambrel Garden Club during the month of March.

Libbey Oliver has given us a spot at the Farmers Market July 26. To facilitate our presentations, we have purchased a four-panel display board with carrying case. All photos and text have been laminated and are attached with removable Velcro squares. Because many of these venues are outside in the heat and rain and wind, we have also purchased a tent and wind canopy.

In April we will be participating in the Earth Day celebration at William and Mary and speaking to a group at Governor's Land. The display will appear at our plant sale April 26 also.

Please contact Helen at 757/564-4494 or helen44@earthlink.net if you can help staff the table at the Earth Day celebration Sunday, April 20.

Helen Hamilton

Gloria's Goodies

More from Gloria Diggs' kitchen...

Cheese Sticks

1 pkg.	pie crust mix
1 tsp.	soft butter
½ cup	ground pecans (I use some black walnuts)
2 cups	grated sharp cheese

Season as desired: ¼ tsp. each sugar, salt, cayenne, celery salt, dried herbs (or seasonings of your choice).

Put cheese and nuts in food processor to grate. Combine pie crust mix, butter and seasonings in bowl with grated cheese and nuts, and, adding a little ice water as needed, form mixture into a long round roll. Chill, then cut into thin slices and place on a lightly greased (sprayed) cookie sheet. Bake in a 325° oven until lightly browned, and sprinkle with salt while still warm.

Sour Cream Coffee Cake

1 cup	sugar
1 stick	butter
2 large	eggs, beaten
1 tsp.	vanilla
½ tsp.	lemon juice
1 cup	sour cream
1 tsp.	baking powder
½ tsp.	baking soda
½ tsp.	salt

Cream butter and sugar until light; add beaten eggs and other ingredients alternately with sour cream, beating well after each addition. Turn into a well-greased small loaf pan, and bake in a 350° oven until top is brown and a straw inserted in center comes out clean. Place pan on its side to cool for 10 minutes before turning out the cake to finish cooling on a wire rack.

Gloria's note: I spread slices of cake with fruit flavored cream cheese to make tiny sandwiches.

Membership Form for VNPS (Place checks in the boxes below next to your selections.)

Yes, I want to **join** **renew my membership in** the John Clayton Chapter.

Name		
Address		
City	State	Zip
email	Phone	

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 VPNS to John Clayton Chapter

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

Calendar

Sat, March 15	10 am: Spring Wildflower Walk in Gloucester Co. (See Page 1 for details and contact info.)
Thurs, March 20	7 pm: John Clayton Chapter meeting at the York Co. Library (Rt. 17 and Battle Rd., Yorktown) (See Page 1 for details.)
Sat, March 22	10 am: Spring Wildflower Walk in Gloucester Co. (See Page 1 for details and contact info.)
Sat, April 5	10–11 am: Walk and Talk at New Quarter Park led by Donna and Stewart Ware; check our web site for details (www.claytonvnps.org).
Sat, April 5	10–11 am: Williamsburg Botanical Garden's Monthly Walk and Talk Educational Series, Butterfly Gardening for the Entire Family , at Freedom Park (See Page 1 for details.)
Sat, April 12	10 am: Spring Wildflower Walk in Gloucester Co. (See Page 1 for details and contact info.)
Sat, April 19	10 am: Spring Wildflower Walk in King and Queen Co. (See Page 1 for details and contact info.)
Sat, April 26 and Sun, April 27	Flower Camp at Howardsville, VA—join botanical artist Lara Call Gastinger for a weekend learning to better observe, sketch and paint wild plants. More information about this exciting opportunity is on Page 2.
Sat, May 10	9:30 am: <i>Exploring the Taskinas Creek Watershed</i> , a walk at York River State Park led by Carolyn Will (Call 757/565-0306 for details and directions.)
May 31 thru June 7	VNPS Tallgrass Prairie Field Trip, Kansas (Details about this trip begin on Page 2.)

Let's go green!

We will continue to post a pdf of our newsletter on our website, www.claytonvnps.org, and mail the newsletter to our members who prefer a paper copy. Those who would rather read an electronic version should email membership chairman Phillip Merritt at phillipmerritt@hotmail.com. This time around, I have also emailed a pdf of the newsletter to those of you who have already chosen not to receive a paper copy. Please let Phillip know how this works for you!

Louise Menges