



Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

www.claytonvnps.org

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Officers

President Helen Hamilton
757/564-4494
helen48@cox.net

Vice-Presidents

Charlotte Boudreau 757/596-2524
djboudreau@cox.net

Bharati Lakshmi 757/728-9096
b.lakshmi.266@gmail.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 (Middle Peninsula)
Mary Hyde Berg 804/693-3568

Field Trips (Lower Peninsula)
Phillip Merritt 757/259-0386
phillip.merritt@gmail.com

Outreach open

Plant List Edie Bradbury
804/693-4190
ediebradbury@cox.net

Plant Sale

Joan Etchberger 757/566-1884
jetchberger@cox.net

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

Newsletter

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

Membership

Patti Gray
757/645-4164
patriciagray67@juno.com

Publicity/Website

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

Conservation

open

Plant Rescue

Carolyn and Ralph Will
757/565-0306
c.will@juno.com



Our next meeting on March 17: "Highlights from John Clayton Field Trips"

Join **Phillip Merritt** for a photographic review of the past year's fieldtrips and get a look at some of the interesting spots and

beautiful plants that grow in our area. Highlights include the Kentucky lady slippers of Hickory Hollow and the yellow pitcher plants of the Joseph Pines preserve. Phillip may throw in a few extra photos of other special plants he has captured with his camera.

Phillip is field trip co-chair for the John Clayton Chapter. He is a landscape architect with Hertzler & George in Williamsburg, and has a master's degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Virginia and an undergraduate degree in Fine Arts from the University of North Texas.

The meeting begins at **6:45 pm (note new time!)** at the Yorktown Public Library at the intersection of Battle Road and Route 17 in Yorktown. **Parkway repairs have been completed and it is again open for its entire length!**

From the President: The word is spreading



...About planting natives to feed insects to feed our native songbirds, that is. Doug Tallamy is speaking in 3 venues locally this spring (see Page 8 and the calendar). I just finished a six-hour class on gardening with native plants with our local lifelong learning group, the Christopher Wren Association. Shirley Devan, Williamsburg Bird Club president, gave a talk to the Kingsmill Garden Club, emphasizing the importance of feeding our native birds with insects feeding on native plants. Jan Newton is speaking to the James City/Williamsburg Master Gardeners, Phillip Merritt will meet with the gardeners at Ford's Colony and I am scheduled to present to the Gloucester and Mathews Master Gardeners— all this spring and early summer.

Our plant sale is coming up. Lucile and Joan have collected a lot of potted plants, now stored in the covered facility in Toano, hoping they will put forth some good-looking leaves by April 30. But we need a **LOT** more plants to offer to the public. Weather is warming, so as we see new growth of native perennials, maybe appearing in places where they are not wanted, let's pot them for the plant sale. Local nurseries are not reliable sources of native plants; we are telling groups who hear us speak, and want to know where to buy the wonderful plants they see on our power point slides, that purchasing at the native plant sale is their best opportunity.

And if you have not yet heard Dr. Tallamy in person, please try to attend one of his presentations. He has a lot to talk about beyond what is published in his books.

Helen Hamilton

New members

We welcome new members Susan Whitt of Lanexa, and Lou Verner and Holly Walker of Saint Stephens, Virginia.

January meeting: "Gardner on Gardening"

At the start of our meeting, **Billie Meacham**, a Jamestown High School senior who attended Nature Camp 2010 on a John Clayton Chapter scholarship, spoke to us about her experiences there. She told us, "Nature Camp has changed my life", and that she now wants to become an environmental consultant.

Our speaker for the evening, **Lance Gardner** (ably assisted by his son Skye), presented a program about gardening with the environment in mind. His emphasis was on low maintenance native plant wildflower gardens. He also showed us many beautiful images of his own wildflower and vegetable gardening activities.

A few points from Lance's talk—

Things we can do for a better environment (he mentioned at least 10, but I only managed to jot down these 4):

- don't burn yard refuse
- don't use a garbage disposal
- keep cats inside to protect wild life
- save and reuse graywater



2010 Nature Camp attendee Billie Meacham and Patti Gray, selection committee chair.



Skye and his dad take questions from the audience.

Spiders, snakes, wasps and hornets are beneficial critters. Encourage them, along with frogs, toads, skinks and lizards—they are all good arguments against sprayed yards and lawns.

Mosquitos are not a problem in a healthy system where their predators can thrive, and birds and predatory insects depend on native plants to survive, too.

Louise Menges



Helen Hamilton visits with guests Celeste Dudley and her granddaughter, Catherine Dudley.

Our Plant Sale is coming up on April 30!

Important changes for the 2011 Plant Sale

John Clayton Chapter VNPS and Master Gardeners will again host a joint plant sale on Saturday, April 30, 2011. The most important change is location of the sale. It will be held in the parking lot of the James City County Williamsburg Rec Center, located at 5301 Longhill Road next to the My Place Playground. The sale will be outside, and we hope to cover the plant tables with tents.

The second important change is the time of the sale. The sale will begin at 9 am and end at 2 pm. Cleanup will occur between 3–4 pm. Due to the early start time the setup will occur on Friday, April 29 from 11 am–4 pm; we consider it a bonus for us to be able to do most of the setup on Friday. Because of the early setup, all plants need to be delivered to the sale location on Friday, April 29, between the hours of 11 am and 2 pm. After the setup, we will hold a members only pre-plant sale. Please call Lucile Kossodo at 757/565-0769 or cell 757/784-2882 or Joan Etchberger at 757/784-6870 if there are any questions concerning plant deliveries. We hope the earlier start time will encourage more sales.

If any of you has a tent you could lend us, we would appreciate it very much, since tent rentals are very expensive. Please call either Lucile Kossodo or Joan Etchberger if you do have a tent we could use.

For us the Plant Sale is a very important event; it is the main source of funding for our programs, our scholarships and our Nature Camp participants. It is also a great way for all of us to meet and share our knowledge of native plants with the public. Our outreach will encourage the public to include more native plants in their yards!

Plant Deliveries: Friday, April 29, 2011, from 11 am–2 pm

Sale Date: Saturday, April 30; open to the public from 9 am–2 pm

Where: James City County Williamsburg Rec Center Parking Lot, 5301 Longhill Road, Williamsburg, VA

How you can help:

- 1) Bring plants to pot at one of the four potting parties being held (see the next article).
- 2) Attend a potting party and help us plant and label the pots.
- 3) If you have extra native plants and need help getting them into pots, please call Joan Etchberger (757/784-6870) or Lucile Kossodo (757/565-0769).
- 4) Help us transport plants to the sale.
- 5) Volunteer on Friday, April 29 from 11 am–4 pm to help set up for the sale. All volunteers will be able to buy native plants after the setup.
- 6) Volunteer for the sale from 9 am–2 pm. We will need help to complete setup and to clean up after the sale.

Let's make this the greatest plant sale ever. *We need your help*—the Master Gardeners will not be assisting by providing volunteers to help us with tasks. We really need you in order to succeed in this sale.

Any questions regarding the plant sale?

Contact Lucile Kossodo (757/565-0769) or Joan Etchberger (757/784-6870).

Join us at one of the the Potting Parties

This year our members are hosting four potting parties: one in the Gloucester area, two in the greater Williamsburg area and one in the Newport News area. Wherever you live, there will be a potting party near you. We offer those who host a potting party their choice of a free Native Plant from our John Clayton sale before the sale begins.

We hope that you can come and help us plant and label at one of the potting parties now planned. Please bring some native plants for the sale; it would help us very much. If you have native plants but cannot come to the potting party, contact Joan Etchberger at 757/784-4728 or Lucile Kossodo at 757/565-0769 and we can pick them up. If you need help digging them up, please call one of us and we can help dig.

 **James City County area:** The date is Saturday, March 26 at 9 am. (rain or shine) at Stonehouse Elementary School, 3651 Rochambeau Drive. The host is Jan Newton, phone number 757/566-3646, cell 291-8760. Digging will be done on-site and the potting will be done at Joan Etchberger's home, phone number 757/784-6870, at 100 Woodland Road.

- 🌿 **Williamsburg area:** The date is Saturday, April 2 at 9:30 am (rain or shine). The hostess is Mary Turnbull. Her address is 109 Woodmere Drive, Williamsburg. Her phone number is 757/229-4046.
- 🌿 **Newport News area:** The date is Sunday, April 3 at 2 pm (rain or shine). The hostess is Charlotte Boudreau. Her address is 28 Oakland Drive, Newport News. Her phone number is 757/596-2524
- 🌿 **White Marsh area:** The date is Thursday, April 7 at 1pm (rain or shine). The hosts are Hayes and Joyce Williams. Their address is 6135 Brookwood Lane, White Marsh. You can reach them at 804/694-6235 (cell) and 804/693-4417 (home). Call them to find directions to their home.

We offer our deepest thanks to those who have offered to host a potting party. Their help makes this sale possible. We also thank those who will bring plants and help us pot. Together we will make this sale a great success.

Joan Etchberger and Lucile Kossodo

Plant Sale Co-chairs

March's Wildflower of the Month

Eastern red cedar

There is much to like about our native red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), which provides a home for many songbirds. The tree is evergreen, requires full sun, and is tolerant of most soils, especially those dry and infertile. The heartwood is highly aromatic, light, strong, durable, and widely used for cedar chests, cabinets, fuel, and fence posts. The dry outer bark, when stripped and rubbed between the hands, provides excellent tinder. A volatile oil derived from juniper leaves is used in perfumes and a flavoring may be derived from the berries. However, red cedar can be injurious to nearby apple orchards because it is an alternate host for cedar-apple rust, a fungal disease.

Eastern red cedar can grow to 60 feet tall, retaining an attractive columnar-pyramidal form. The leaves are of two types: sharp, spreading and needle-like on young plants up to 3 years old and as scattered shoots on adult trees, and small, scalelike and overlapping on adult trees, carrying a heavy coating to permit survival during cold winters and hot dry summers.

Important winter food for birds and small mammals are the bluish waxy seed cones, berry-like with fleshy scales. Inside the cones are a few wingless seeds, which pass through digestive tracts undamaged and are often dropped along fences. The fruits are eaten by over 50 spe-



Photo: Helen Hamilton



Photo: Louise Menges

Cedar-apple rust (*Gymnosporangium juniperi-virginianae*) on red cedar, after a rain.

cies of birds, including cedar waxwings, bluebirds, bobwhite, grouse and pheasant. The great purple and olive hairstreak butterflies lay their eggs on red cedar, which furnishes food for the larva.

European settlers planted cedars on either side of their front doors as a good luck charm—possibly because they are so long-lived. American Indians chewed the fruit for canker sores, and used fruit tea for colds and coughs. Leaf smoke or steam was inhaled for colds, bronchitis and rheumatism, and for purification rituals.

Ranging from southwest Maine to southern Minnesota, and southwest to Georgia and Texas, red cedar grows naturally in almost every county in Virginia. Juniper seedlings appear frequently in meadows and gardens, again from bird distribution. Cedar trees without the “berries” in the fall and winter are probably the male of the species, which carry golden-brown remnants of their pollen-bearing cones.

Helen Hamilton



Photo: Cortney Langley

Thank you, Yorktown Library!

In appreciation for allowing us to hold our meetings in its facility this past year, John Clayton Chapter has donated two copies of Doug Tallamy's *Bringing Nature Home* and a copy of *Insects and Gardens* by Eric Grissell to the York County Library in Yorktown. In this photo, Helen Hamilton presents the books to the library's Norma Colton on the night of our January meeting.

Clayton Chapter members make the news!

Phillip Merritt and Joe Hertzler were speakers at a January meeting of the Governor's Land Garden Club, with a presentation entitled "Landscape Architecture".

Club vice president Judy Flanders, Joe Hertzler and Phillip are shown in this photo from the Jan. 22 Gazette.



And **Mary Turnbull** was the subject of an article in the February issue of *Williamsburg's Next Door Neighbors* magazine titled "Off to work I go!". Mary talks about how she became a bicycling enthusiast, a bicycle commuter to and from her job as a library media specialist at Lafayette High School, and the passion she and her husband share for cycling, its pleasures and its rewards.

Lisa W. Cumming Photography took this photo of Mary and her bike for the article, and it is used here with permission.



Upcoming John Clayton Chapter walks

Saturday, April 30 at 10 am

Phillip Merritt will lead a walk around a small swamp at the intersection of John Tyler Highway and Venture Lane (near Five Forks). Plants in bloom may include swamp doghobble, golden ragwort, crossvine, and yellow pond-lily, as well as large cinnamon and royal ferns. Though the walk will not be long, there will be wet ground and lots of fallen and overhead branches. To register, email vnpsfieldtrips@gmail.com or call 259-0386.

Friday, May 20 at 4 pm

John McFarlane, Director of Gardens and Grounds at William and Mary, will lead a tour of the landscape around the new School of Education, featuring cutting edge stormwater treatment using rain gardens and contemporary design. We'll also take a short walk through the nearby College Woods. To register, email vnpsfieldtrips@gmail.com or call 259-0386.

Northern Neck Chapter hosts walks in Chilton Woods

Marie Minor will be botanizing Chilton Woods this year beginning in March, with walks scheduled for the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays, and meeting at Chilton Woods at 10 am (rain dates will be the following Wednesday). The first walk is on March 2; bring water, binoculars and a camera, if you wish. Please contact Marie for directions and information on where to meet at 804/925-5950 or mfminor@verizon.net.

A Walk in the Forest on Saturday, March 19

On Saturday, March 19, from 7 am to 4 pm, the Society of American Foresters is hosting an event at the New Kent Forestry Center near Providence Forge. There will be:

a **7 am guided birding trip**, led by the Williamsburg Bird Club;
guided nature hikes at 10 am, noon and 2 pm;

an **11 am planting demonstration** near the Education Center. Free seedlings of pin oak, baldcypress, persimmon, river birch, and white oak will be available (up to three per family).

Hiking trails open at 7 am (maps will be provided). Exhibits at the Center open at 11 am and will include:

- “Goods from the Woods”;
- Wildlife Identification with the Va. Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries and Virginia Living Museum;
- Firewise Community Information;
- Virginia Waterfowlers’ Association, with wood duck boxes to give away;
- American Tree Farm System Information;
- Paper making, leaf rubbing, track stamping and other crafts.

There is no cost to participate in this event. The New Kent Forestry Center is located at 11301 Pocahontas Trail, Providence Forge, Virginia.

Questions? Contact Lisa Deaton at 804/512-2933
 or lisa.deaton@dof.virginia.gov.

Denise Greene at Colonial Williamsburg’s 65th Annual Garden Symposium on April 11

On Monday, April 11 at 10:30 am, John Clayton Chapter member **Denise Greene**, a landscape designer and owner of Sassafras Farm in Gloucester, will present a program titled “Flowering Perennials: Attracting Pollinators to Your Garden”. Denise will discuss how to use native perennials to bring pollinators into your garden, describing which species work well in different planting situations in the mid-Atlantic, their basic characteristics as they apply to garden design, and the pollinators they might attract.

Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*, is also a Symposium speaker on April 11, at 8:30 am.

A brochure with full schedule and information is available at http://www.history.org/history/institute/institute_about.cfm. You may also call 1/800/603-0948 to request the brochure, which includes a registration form to return by mail.

Friends of Dragon Run walk on April 23

Mark Chittenden, Friends of Dragon Run President, and **Mary Hyde Berg** will lead a Spring Wildflower Walk along plant trails in the Dragon Run Wilderness Area. Meet at 9:30 am at the Food Lion parking lot on Rt. 17 about a mile north of the Hardee’s in Saluda.



Denise Green in her garden with Holly.

Contact Mary Berg for more information and directions at 804/693-3568. Visit www.dragonrun.org to learn more about Dragon Run and events there.

2011 Nature Camp Scholarships

If we want to encourage more students to study science, maybe we should give everyone a chance to attend The Nature Camp in Vesuvius, Virginia. After our John Clayton Chapter Nature Camp Selection Committee read the ten applications for our scholarships, we would have liked to send all of these enthusiastic young people off into the woods for study and adventure. It was very impressive to read their essays explaining why they wanted to attend.

“Nature camp will give me knowledge to make the world a better place...I want to be able to make new friends who like nature and getting dirty and working outdoors in any type of weather.” According to her teacher, this young eighth grader and her grandfather have participated in animal population surveys and studies measuring the effects of pollution on animal habitats.

“Global warming really concerns me. It saddens me that the human race is causing such destruction to the habitats on this planet...I will use what I learn at Nature Camp to help stop this from happening.” Her teacher mentions that she has a deep passion for the environment and that she is very bright and curious.

Other applicants had volunteered at local school gardens and humane societies or helped with school recycling projects. Some applicants who have been to Nature Camp previously reported that they have changed their habits to be more environmentally sensitive or that they now aspire to be a high school science teacher or environmental lawyer.

After reading all the essays and teacher recommendations, we chose two candidates and one alternate: **Callie Newton**, seventh grader at Tono Middle School in Williamsburg; **Alexandra Stanton**, eighth grader at Grafton Middle School in Yorktown; and as alternate, **Chandler Fox**, 7th grader at Berkeley Middle School in Williamsburg.

The selection committee included Libbey Oliver, Joan Etchberger, Liz Lowe, and Patti Gray.

Patti Gray

A letter of thanks from Pat Baldwin

Having been affiliated with the John Clayton Chapter for over 25 years, there have been many members who have made a lasting impression on my life. I would like to take this opportunity to openly thank just a few of them.



Some pictures of Nature Campers found on The Nature Camp website at www.naturecamp.net and used with permission.

First, I would like to thank Dr. Jay Andrews, better known as Andy. Now deceased, he was the initial person to approach me when I attended my first meeting at VIMS. He quickly came over, introduced himself and welcomed me. He talked about the new chapter, its goals and purposes, then introduced me to other members. He spent most of the evening with me, thanking me for attending and urging me to become a member. My most memorable time with Andy was on a field trip to Big Island along the Dragon Run. We came upon a large coiled water snake at the base of an old rotted stump. Andy said, "Nothing to worry about". In a matter of seconds, the snake lurched at us. This was my first and last trip to Big Island! Over the next several years, I took my kids on almost all of the chapter field trips. Andy would take time to talk to them about the wonders of the natural world and would softly chastise them when they disturbed the ground looking for bugs and lizards without returning things as they found them.

Secondly, a grateful thanks goes out to Sid and Sylvia Sterling. After Andy introduced them, they asked if there was anywhere I would like to go to search for wildflowers. I thought they were just kidding. I was definitely wrong. Over the years, we have explored the counties of Gloucester, Middlesex, Mathews, King and Queen, New Kent and portions of Northern Neck. We traveled north to see a million Virginia Bluebells at Bull Run. A short distance away, we visited the G. Thompson Wildlife Refuge. Here we found over a million large Flowering Trilliums, Nodding Trilliums, Wood Anemone, Yellow Lady's Slippers and Green Violets. We traveled the Blue Ridge and the Valley of Virginia where we found shale barrens with several rare and unique plants. We crossed into West Virginia to see the massive cranberry glades on top of a mountain and then traversed Kentucky. We have searched for plants in coastal North Carolina and visited Green Swamp, where we saw hundreds of Pitcher Plants, bladderworts, sundews, butterworts and even Venus Flytraps in their native habitats. Lastly we searched for plants in coastal South Carolina. My favorite was a small tree, *Daubentonia punicea*, with vivid orange-red blooms similar to wisteria.

Next, I would especially like to thank Dr. Donna Ware. A short time after I joined the Chapter, Donna put a small blurb in the *Claytonia* asking for certain specimens of plants from Hampton. This was the beginning of my interest in plant geography and distribution. Since then I have collected over 6000 specimens, 4 state records and slightly over 100 city and county records. My first encounter with Donna was on one of her field trips. These field trips were not only enjoyable but were huge



Blooms of *Daubentonia punicea* (also known as rattlebox or scarlet wisteria), in a photo by Larry Allain of the National Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette, Louisiana. USDA identifies it as an introduced species. It is apparently native to South America, and is also described as invasive, with seeds poisonous to animals and humans. (All good reasons not to plant it, but it is certainly beautiful!) Ed.

learning experiences. She graciously shared her knowledge of plants and did not hesitate to answer the many questions by persons attending. After a few years Donna asked me if I would like to volunteer in the College of William and Mary Herbarium. I jumped at the opportunity. She taught me how to collect, identify, dry, press, mount, database and file plant specimens. I especially enjoyed field trips searching for the elusive Small Whorled Pogonia. An added benefit was meeting her husband, Stewart, a true southern gentleman from Mississippi.

Lastly, a thanks for Bob and Cynthia Long. Their spirit, dedication, friendship and willingness to serve have been great assets both to me and to the Chapter.

Patrick Baldwin

Calendar

- Sunday, March 13** **2 pm: The South Hampton Roads Chapter VNPS** hosts a talk by **Doug Tallamy** at **Virginia Wesleyan College** in Norfolk.
(For more information, Call Linda Wilcox at 757/468-4346.)
- Thursday, Mar. 17** **6:45–8:45 pm: (Note earlier time—the Library has requested that we be out by 8:45)** **John Clayton Chapter meeting** at Yorktown Public Library: **Phillip Merritt** will present “Highlights from John Clayton Field Trips”.
(See Page 1.)
The Library is located at the intersection of Battle Rd. and Rt. 17 in Yorktown
....and the Parkway is at last open for its entire length!
- Saturday, March 19** **7 am to 4 pm: A Walk in the Forest** hosted by the Society of American Foresters at the New Kent Forestry Center near Providence Forge.
(See Page 7 for a more complete description of this event)
- Sunday, April 2** **8:30 am–3:30 pm: Doug Tallamy** is a speaker at the **18th Annual Gardening in the Northern Neck Seminar** in White Stone.
(See www.claytonvnps.org, Fieldtrips and Events, for more info, or call 804/580-5694.)
- Monday, April 11** **10:30am:** At Colonial Williamsburg’s 65th Annual Garden Symposium, JCC member and landscaper designer **Denise Green** will present “**Flowering Perennials: Attracting Pollinators to Your Garden**”.
(See Page 8 for more details.)
- Saturday, April 23** **9:30am: Wildflower Walk at Dragon Run**, led by **Mary Berg** and **Mark Chittenden**. Contact Mary Berg at 804/693-3568 for more information and directions.
(See Page 8 for more details.)
- Saturday April 30** **John Clayton’s 2011 Native Plant Sale** at the Williamsburg/JCC Rec Center, 5301 Longhill Rd. *(For details and to learn how you can help, see article on Page 3.)*
- Saturday, April 30** **10 am: John Clayton Native Plant Walk.** **Phillip Merritt** will lead a walk around a small swamp at the intersection of John Tyler Highway and Venture Lane (near Five Forks). To register, email vnpsfieldtrips@gmail.com or call 259-0386.
(See Page 8 for more details.)
- Friday, May 20** **4 pm: John Clayton Native Plant Walk.** **John McFarlane**, Director of Gardens and Grounds at William and Mary, will lead a tour of the landscape around the new School of Education. To register, email vnpsfieldtrips@gmail.com or call 259-0386.
(See Page 8 for more details.)

