Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

Volume 30, Number 6 November–December 2014 www.claytonvnps.org

"CSI Plants: How Plants Are Used in Committing and Solving Crimes" is the topic at our meeting on November 20.

Our speaker will be **Steve Carroll**, Director of Public Programs at the State Arboretum of Virginia at Blandy Experimental Farm, near Winchester. Before moving to the Arboretum, he taught ecology, botany, and evolutionary biology for 15 years at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri. He is a botanist, ecologist, and gardener who frequently speaks and writes about plants and gardening. Steve is the co-author of *Ecology for Gardeners*, published by Timber Press, and he has written for gardening and outdoor publications. Steve has had an interest in the role of plants in crime for more than two decades.

The meeting begins at **6:45 pm** at the **James City County Rec Center** at 5301 Longhill Road, Williamsburg, VA 23188. **See you there!**

From the President

As I began to think about what to write, many ideas came to me. I wanted to share how I became a member of the John Clayton Chapter. It was because of one of the best presents given to me in 1993, the gift of a year of membership that Bland Blackford gave me that year. I knew nothing about native plants or what the Virginia Native Plant Society was about. I began going on the walks, field trips and to meetings, and began to learn about plants and met so many wonderful members whom I consider very special friends. Therefore I would like to thank Bland because this

gift of hers really changed my life. Now I am a native plant gardener and happy to be involved with plants.

Since I am still the plant chair, I would like to say that we have potted all the plants from our many generous donors who gave from their gardens, both members and non-members. We have a good collection of plants from our three potting parties as well. Thank you all who came and helped—we worked hard and had a good time. And the plants are spending the winter at the home of Jim and Joan Etchberger. Our plant list for the sale had many new additions which you will want to buy or help sell.

Two events of interest are happening near us. The first was the grand opening of the Meadowview Biodiversity Center in Disputanta, Virginia. It will support restoration and educational efforts at the Joseph Pines Center. They are going to restore the Virginia longleaf pine population and the pitcher plants ecosystem. (See article on Page 11 for more details.) The other event, taking place with the help of the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council, is the making by Catherine Zimmerman of a film dedicated to researching, promoting and educating about conservation to protect the Chesapeake Bay.

Happy 30th Birthday to our chapter founded in 1984!

From Phillip

Dear chapter members, thanks for letting me serve as President of the chapter for the past couple years. And an extra big thanks to all the officers and chairpersons who've worked so hard to keep things running smoothly. Everyone did a great job! Even though I'm stepping down as Pres, don't think you've gotten rid of me just yet. I'm looking forward to continuing to work on the board as the website chair as well as continuing to to help maintain our Stonehouse Habitat garden. And good luck to all the other incoming officers and board members. I know Lucile will make a great president, especially if people pitch in to help with the workload. Please consider serving on the board either as a committee chairperson or committee member. With your help we can do bigger and better things! **Phillip Merritt**

New members

Welcome to new members **Virginia Fick** of Plainview and **Lola McGourty** and **Melissa Mullins**, both of Hampton.

Recent plant walks…

September 20's walk on the Colby Swamp Trail

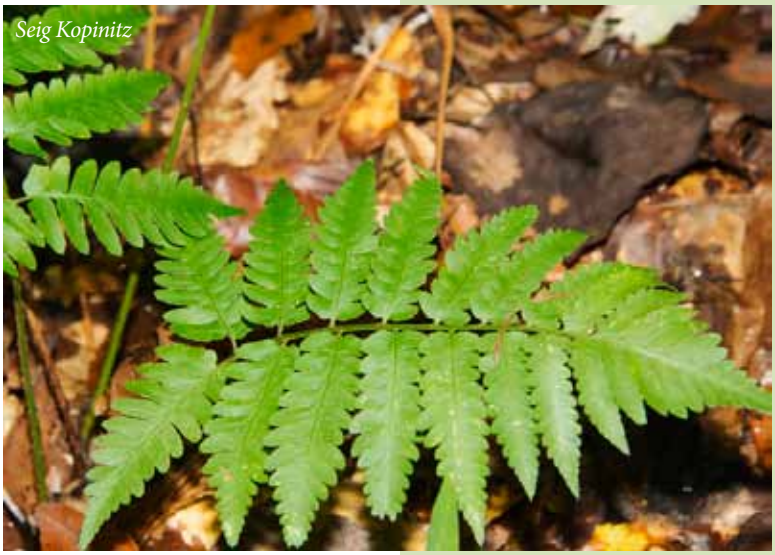
Led by Donna Ware, our group set out on the Colby Swamp Trail, initially along a broad recently paved pathway. We sighted a specimen of bigtooth aspen *(Populus grandidentata)* along the path's edge, alerted by the presence of its distinctive fallen yellow leaves, which stood out on the black surface.

We soon veered off the paved pathway and into the woods in our search for a butternut tree *(Juglans cinerea)*, a cousin of the black walnut (*Juglans nigra)*. We found the first butternut at the water's edge, a few nuts still on some branches with many more on the damp ground under it. We collected perhaps two dozen nuts from the ground beneath that tree, and Donna hopes to use them to start more butternuts. Along the way we glimpsed lots of fungi on the forest floor (it was high mushroom season, after all, and there had been much recent rainfall), and many flowering plants.

Leaves of butternut (left) and black walnut (right)

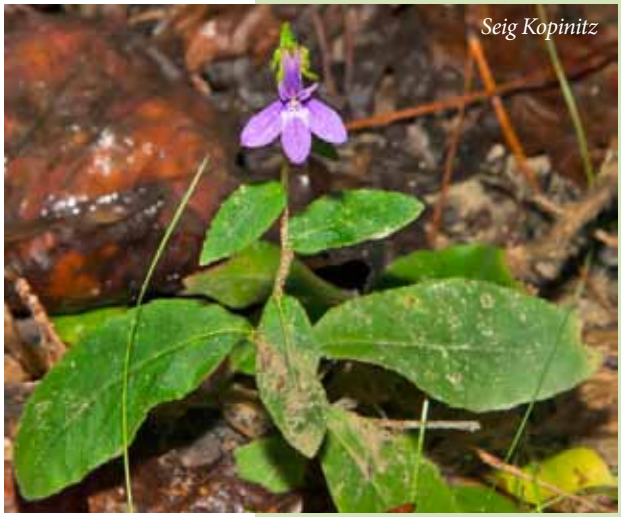
Butternut fruit

The terrain was sometimes challenging (and wet), but persevering, we came to a small stream near which we spotted log fern *(Dryopteris celsa)* growing, along with a black walnut and a butternut whose trunks were only a few feet apart, making comparison between the trees easy.



A log fern's frond

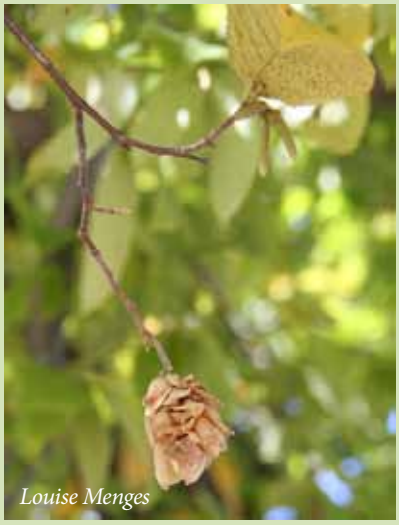
Here is a partial list of the native plants we saw: Indian Pipe *(Monotropa uniflora)*; pussytoes (not sure which one); lots of fireweed *(Erechtites hieraciifolius)*; climbing hempweed *(Mikania scandens)* clambering over growth in a marshy area; starry campion *(Silene stellata)*; a lespedza; rattlesnake plantain *(Goodyera pubescens)* with a past-its-prime flower stalk; goldenrods; golden ragwort *(Packera aurea)*; leaves of Indian cucumber *(Medeola virginiana)*; rough buttonweed *(Diodia teres)* in mown grass near parking area; blazing star *(Liatris pilosa)*; downy lobelia *(Lobelia puberula)*; leaves of cranefly orchid *(Tipularia discolor)*. **Louise Menges**



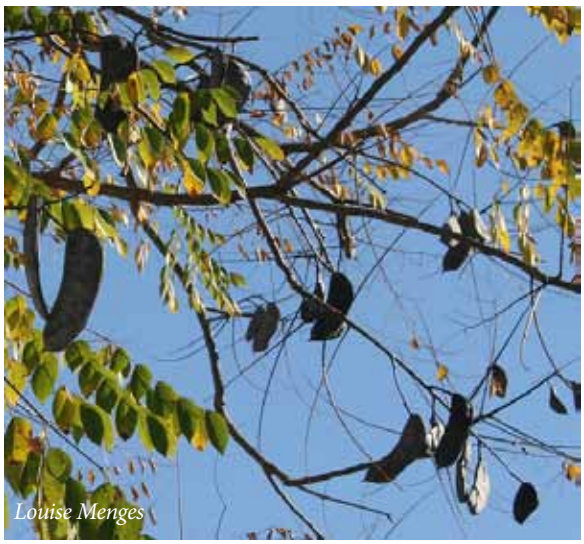
Downy lobelia in bloom

A tree walk around Williamsburg on October 25

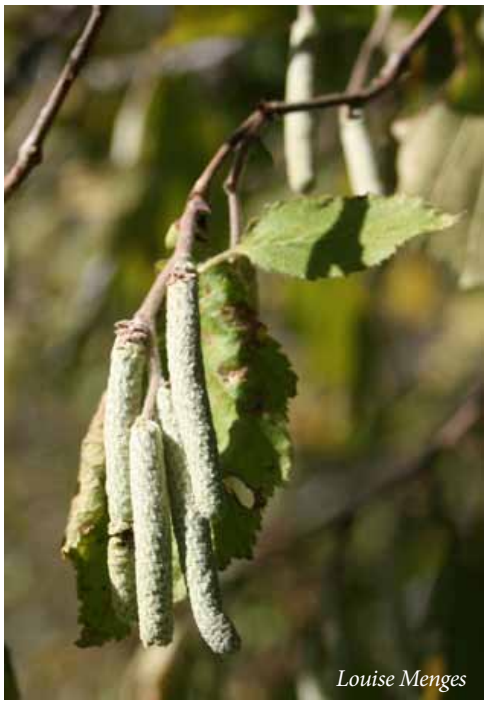
The weather was gorgeous for the tree tour through downtown Williamsburg on October 25th. We had a good turn out of about 25 or so people. Lots of master gardeners and master naturalists, but not so many VNPS members (only 2). I'm guessing that was because I've given this walk several times before. The leaves were just starting to turn, so it wasn't quite as colorful as I'd hoped, but still beautiful. This year, I added a Eastern Hop hornbeam tree *(Ostrya virginiana)* to the walk. I'd only recently spotted a specimen on North Henry Street near the entrance to the new parking garage. It still had some seed husks on it, so I grabbed some to plant in my yard. In addition to the usual suspects on the tour, we got to make some good comparisons of various-sized seed pods in the Fabaceae family including, yellowwood, redbud, and Kentucky Coffeetree (those pods are huge! And sticky. And poisonous). We also braved the wrath of some People of the Past as we snuck into some of the CW gardens to look at a couple of the things they had tucked away. One garden we visited has a nannyberry *(Vibrunum lentago)* next to a blackhaw viburnum *(V. prunifolium)*, making for a



Eastern hop hornbeam seed husks



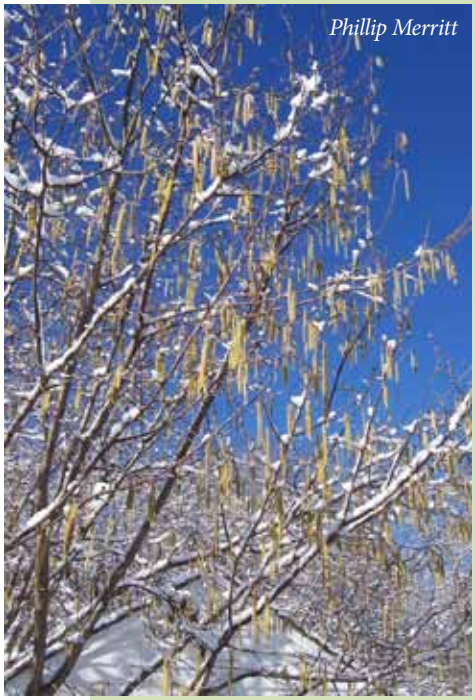
The huge, sticky, poisonous seedpods of kentucky coffeetree



American hazelnut catkins

convenient comparison in the distinctive talon shaped buds of these two small trees. We also got to see some American hazelnut *(Corylus americana)* and witchhazel *(Hamamelis virginiana)* in bloom. I'd definitely recommend checking out the the hazelnut this winter, once the soft yellow catkins have completely developed. It's quite striking, especially when covered in a light snow. Here's the location: Latitude 37°16'24.50"N, Longitude 76°42'10.37"W

Louise Menges



The hazelnut in winter, its catkins decorated with snow

Phillip Merritt

Upcoming walks…

Ornamental native grasses on November 22

Join **Helen Hamilton** on **Saturday, November 22** from **1:30–3:00 pm** for a walk through the Williamsburg Botanical Garden to see common local grasses in winter condition, furnishing homes for insects and providing landscape interest. Other garden plants and shrubs have interesting seeds and structures over the winter. Meet at the Freedom Park Interpretive Center parking lot. Contact Helen at 757-564-4494 or helen48@cox.net for more information.

This walk is part of our partnership with James City County, allowing sale of our Wildflower Book in the Freedom Park Interpretive Center.

All about asters

I became interested in asters last summer watching the disk flowers unfold in oxeye *(Heliopsis helianthoides)*. Most familiar flowering plants produce recognizable male and female parts. The stamens have long filaments topped with anthers, usually turning golden yellow as the pollen in them matures. The pistil has receptive stigmas tipping a column (style) which projects form the swollen ovaries below, where eggs await. Pollinating


A closeup look at oxeye's disk flowers.

insects transfer pollen to stigmas which, when receptive, stimulate the pollen grains to germinate and grow into tubes which deliver sperm to the egg cells in the ovaries.

All this occurs in the Aster Family but not in the common patterns. The five stamens are united into a tube into which their pollen is shed. The immature style pushes the shed pollen up through this tube of stamens. After this pollen is dispersed to other flowers by animals or by the wind, the stigmas at the tip of the style become receptive and are available to pollen brought in from different flowers.

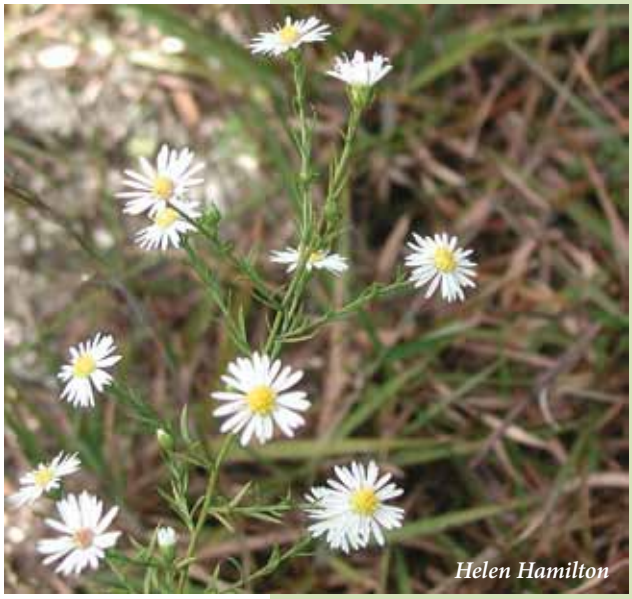
The Aster Family is considered the largest and most advanced of all flowering plants. With representatives worldwide, it includes annual, biennial and perennial herbs, shrubs, trees and vines. Over 1500 genera and 23,000 species are recognized. Curiously few members of this vast group of plants have any significant economic value to us humans—sunflowers *(Helianthus)* may be the most notable.

Native woody plants in this family include two shrubs, groundsel tree *(Baccharis halimifolia)* and marsh-elder *(Iva frutescens)*. The vine climbing hempweed *(Mikania scandens)* is also a member of the Asteraceae. By far the largest group in our area includes the herbaceous plants such as dandelions, joepyeweeds, ironweeds, sunflowers, goldenrods, coreopsis and thistles.

The flowering heads can include both ray flowers and disk flowers, or only rays or only disk flowers. Asters, sunflowers, and black-eyed susans have both, but with only the disk flowers fertile. Both the ray and disk flowers are fertile in oxeye. Familiar wildflowers with ray flowers only are dandelions, hawkweeds and chicory. Those with disk flowers only are bonesets, ironweed, goldenrod, and thistles.

Becaus its tiny florets are packed into a central disk, foraging insects can quickly and easily gather nectar and pollen from members of this family. While herbaceous, fall-blooming aster species often are compact and shrub-like in branching, with small heads often covered with late season insects.

Blooming from late summer through November and even into December after the first frosts, small white asters with yellow disks are usually the last flowers of the year. Frost aster *(Symphyotrichum pilosum)* is one of the last wildflowers before heavy



Frost aster

frost, seen along roadsides and meadows in our area. The stems and leaves may be covered with tiny white hairs, giving a frost-like appearance. This aster can be shrub-like, a broadly branched perennial 1–3 feet tall. The flowering stems are long with conspicuous needle-like leaves.

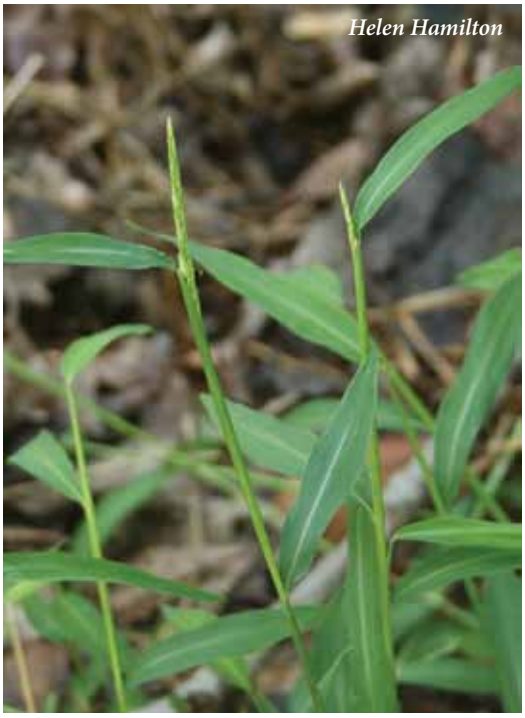
Another late bloomer is often called calico aster *(S. lateriflorum)*, since the centers are at first yellow, then purplish-red. These multi-colored flower heads are borne on only one side of the branch.

Blue-rayed asters are striking in the fall garden, especially along with the golden yellow of goldenrod. Big-headed aster *(S. grandiflorum)* is well named, with its yellow disk surrounded by red-purple rays to one and a half inches long. With a shrub-like appearance, this plant bears each flower head solitary at the tip of a branchlet. While this species flowers in dry woods and along roadsides, New York aster *(S. novi-belgii)* occurs in fresh and brackish marshes, swamps and other wet habitats.

Big-headed aster

Visitors to all these plants in late fall will be the last of the butterflies, bumblebees, hoverflies, beetles and wasps, all preparing for overwintering as eggs, pupae, or adults. Many find cover from the cold in the hollow stems of wildflowers, which should remain uncut over the winter. **Helen Hamilton and Gustav Hall**

Invasive Weeds



Flowering Asian Stiltgrass

First, there's Asian Stiltgrass *(Microstegium vimineum)*, always being delivered to my garden by birds and the wind. Must pull it out before it sets seed. Stiltgrass is an annual with not much of a root system, so the plant is easy to pull. Or to mow, if there is a large infestation without other desirable plants. It's a waste of money and effort to use any herbicide, since the plant dies after the first frost—it's the long-lived (as long as 7 years in the soil) seeds that need to be eliminated.

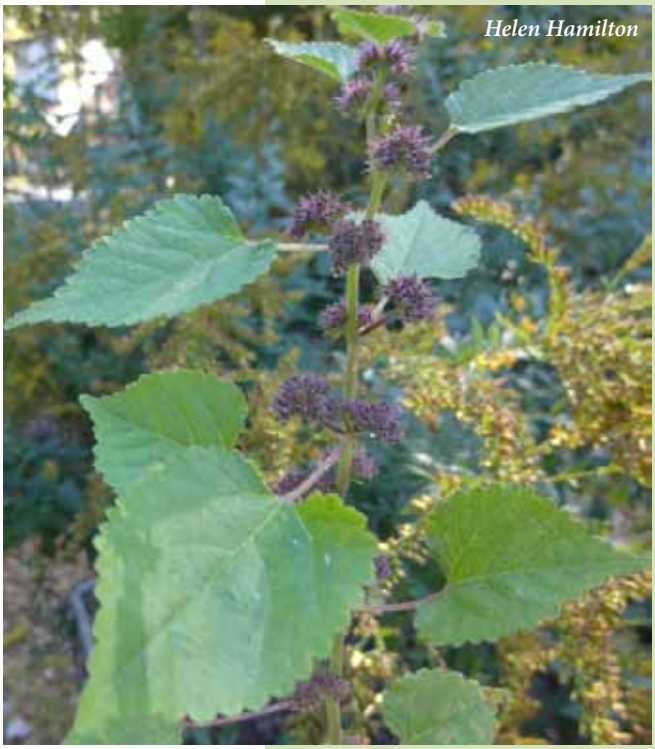
This Asiatic Hawk's-beard plant was flourishing in Helen's garden (until she spotted it).

Last year Asiatic Hawk's-beard *(Youngia japonica)* appeared in my garden, from who-knows-where? A gray-green rosette of somewhat fuzzy leaves with uneven edges appears first, followed by a bare flower stalk topped with a yellow blossom. Of course the flower releases lots more seeds. Last year I pulled out a lot of plants with emerging flowers, and now I am yanking out the first signs of those leaves, growing in driveway cracks, at the edge of flower beds, and anywhere.

Now a new one—Mulberry Weed *(Fatuoa villosa)*. This nasty weed superficially resembles Three-seeded Mercury (*Acalypha* spp.), an innocent little native. Dorothy Geyer, Natural Resource Specialist at Colonial National Historic Park, found this plant while searching plants that grow in Florida.

The University of Delaware website (https://extension.udel.edu) has a fact sheet which tells us it is an annual plant producing copious seeds, first reported in Louisiana in 1964, now spread throughout the southern states and in western coastal states.

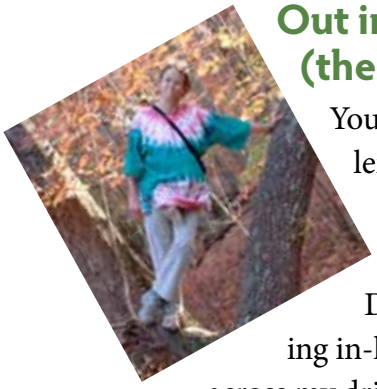
From the University of Delaware website:
"Much of the spread of *Fatoua villosa* can be attributed to its frequent appearance in horticultural material and nursery stock. It is also likely to spread through purchased top soil that contains its abundantly produced and explosively projected seeds.



Mulberry Weed in flower.

Suspected Mulberry Weed should be removed from garden beds or pots and be discarded in the trash, not composted nearby. The plant produces abundant numbers of seeds, so it should be treated with herbicide or rogued out before it sets seed. A two to three inch layer of mulch can prevent most seed germination, as can pre-emergent herbicides. Post-emergent herbicides would also be effective".

It seems to be everywhere in my gardens, with flowers when the plant is only an inch or so tall, while growing to 12 inches or more. All these weeds should be removed NOW before the seeds settle in to emerge in the spring. **Helen Hamilton**



Out in left field (the Wisteria Wars continue…)

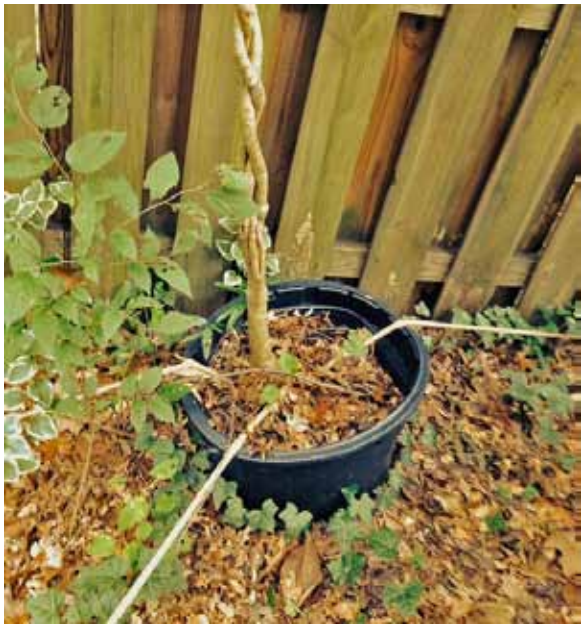
You know, I thought I had solved the problem of my neighbor's chinese wisteria invading my space (I can hear Dorothy Geyer laughing at my optimism).

Doing a little cleaning up for the impending in-law festival, I came upon this, creeping across my driveway: ☛

Had I not made myself clear by pulling up this invader's twin and painting it with Roundup? I suppose not.

This time, I decided to go one step further and have a talk with my neighbors.

I knocked at the door, and Henry and Greg came out to hear my complaint. They had no idea that there was even a chinese wisteria *in* their back yard. So we went and looked for it, and I found it behind the ☛ wood fence. The previous owners had conscientiously set it in a plastic pot, thinking that would prevent it from spreading.



But no! The roots leapt over the container and made their way into my yard (3 of them, to date, including the

one I killed earlier this year, which was satisfyingly dead and crispy all the way to the mother plant). I told them how to kill it by cutting it and painting the stumps with Roundup. And putting plastic over the top for good measure.

So, now the question is: Will they do it?

Only time, and a few peeks over the fence, will tell. We've come too far to give up on it! **Kathi Mestayer**

Natural Gas This Time

Remember the Cypress Creek coal-fired power plant proposed in Surry County by Old Dominion Electric Company? How our chapter and VNPS issued a proclamation against its construction? And how ODEC had convinced the residents of Surry County of the plant's utility with promises of new jobs, etc? Here's the result, as posted by the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA):

More than 9,000 comments were submitted against the plant and many town and city councils passed resolutions against it. In August 2012, ODEC asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to cease the permitting process necessary for the proposed Cypress Creek plant to proceed. NPCA is heartened by this news but will remain vigilant, as ODEC still owns the land and could decide to revive this plant in the future.

Now Dominion Resources and partners are proposing a giant natural gas pipeline cutting across the most biodiverse habitat in this country, including areas in George Washington National Forest and coming into the Hampton Roads Area. Worse, the natural gas will be delivered into the pipeline at the surface after water under extreme pressure causes the shale to fracture ("fracking)." Past fracking localities show severe environmental damage. From Marcia's other article "Fracking in Virginia": *The George Washington National Forest overlays the Marcellus Shale formation, the largest shale formation in North America. It is the watershed for the James and Potomac Rivers which supply drinking water to millions in Virginia. Oil and Gas companies want to frack in the GW National Forest.*

Here's the link to and the opening paragraph of the article written by VNPS Conservation Chair Marcia Mabee Bell on behalf of the VNPS Board of Directors.

http://vnps.org/giant-natural-gas-pipelines-proposed-for-virginia/

On September 2nd, Dominion Resources, along with its partners Duke Energy, Piedmont Natural Gas and AGL Resources, announced its intention to move ahead and build a major 42 inch pipeline that will stretch 550 miles across three states. It will begin in Harrison County, West Virginia and end in eastern North Carolina. Approximately 450 miles will cross Virginia entering from West Virginia through Highland County in the northwest and exiting to North Carolina through Greensville County in the southeast. A 20 inch lateral pipeline will stretch from Greensville County to the Hampton Roads area.

Virginia Governor McAuliffe strongly supports the pipeline project and incredibly, so does the Washington Post, both citing long-term economic benefits such as clean energy, new jobs, lower energy costs, less reliance on foreign oil.

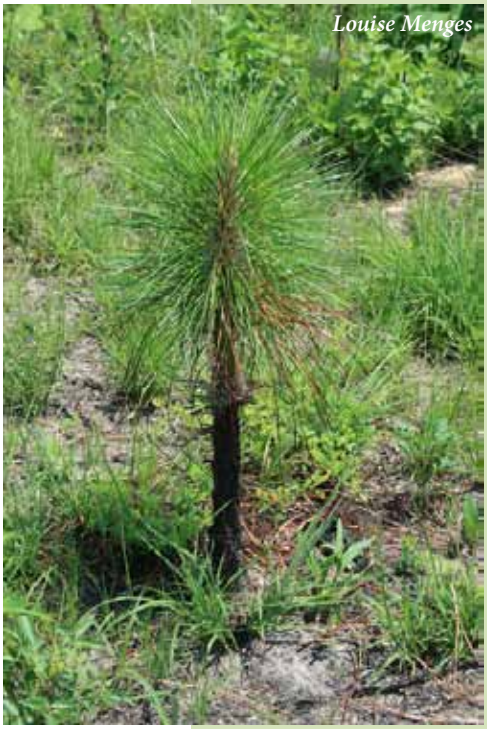
From the Post article:
The project would encourage fracking, they (environmentalists) warn, when the state needs to encourage renewable sources of electricity. Instead, Mr. McAuliffe has rightly sided with reality and backed the pipeline's construction.

Check out Webmaster Sue Dingwell's blog with comments by many equally aghast wildlife enthusiasts. We need to add our voice to this protest. **Helen Hamilton**

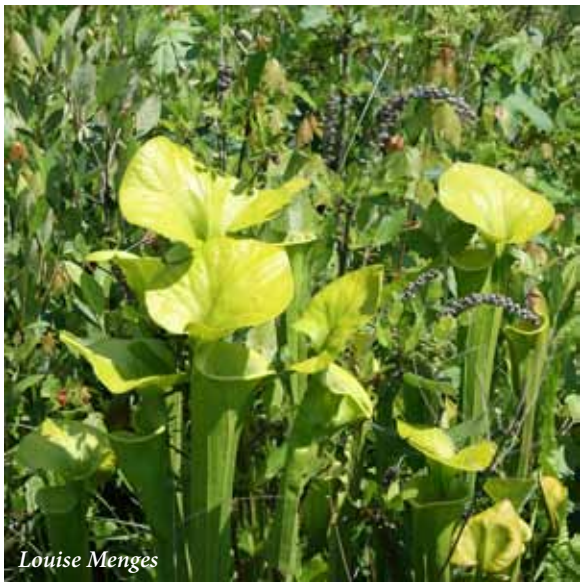
Preserving a longleaf pine/pitcher plant habitat in Sussex County

On August 15, 2014 Meadowview Biological Research Station closed on the purchase of the Center for Biodiversity at Joseph Pines Preserve in Sussex County. The purchase was facilitated by a $50,000 grant from the Richmond-based Mary Morton Parsons Foundation, donor support, and a mortgage loan from Union First Market Bank in Ruther Glen, Virginia.

The Center for Biodiversity will support restoration and educational effort at the adjoining 232 acre Joseph Pines Preserve with a rare plant nursery, interactive website, and on-site classes. The preserve is restoring a biologically diverse native Virginia longleaf pine/pitcher plant ecosystem and preventing the extinction of many rare plant populations. Joseph Pines Preserve is the only nature preserve in Virginia where one can see functional



Longleaf pine seedlings survive the periodic burns at Joseph Pines Preserve.



Yellow pitcher plants *(Sarracenia flava)* growing in the Preserve in June 2010.

populations of carnivorous pitcher plants in a historically correct environmental setting. The preserve is permanently protected with a conservation easement with the Virginia Dept. of Forestry.

The Center for Biodiversity is located at 22515 Cabin Point Rd. in Disputanta, VA. A grand opening was held on October 11, which included tours of the center and preserve, displays of architectural plans for the center, and views of museum artifacts.

Meadowview is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) conservation organization based in Woodford, VA.

For further details please call 804-633-4336 or visit the Meadowview web site at www.pitcherplant.org.

A note of appreciation from Phyllis…

Thank you for the food, emails, cards, phone calls, hugs and support at the passing of my husband, Ted Putnam. **Phyllis Putnam**

John Clayton Chapter Calendar

Thursday, November 20	**6:45 pm: John Clayton Chapter meeting** at the **James City County Rec Center** at 5301 Longhill Road, Williamsburg, VA 23188 Our speaker is **Steve Carroll**, whose topic will be **"CSI Plants: How Plants Are Used in Committing and Solving Crimes"** (See Page 1.)
Saturday, November 22	**1:30–3:00 pm:** An **Ornamental Native Grasses** walk at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden led by **Helen Hamilton** (See Page 5 for details.)

There may be walks in the works which did not make this issue, so keep a lookout for announcements about additional walks and other events on our website at **www.claytonvnps.org** and in the local newspapers.

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