



Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

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www.claytonvnps.org

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From the President

In these difficult times, we are still in quarantine in Virginia. I hope that you are keeping busy garden- ing. I know that I am, and for the first time am mak- ing some headway in the removal of weeds. In many

countries now there articles about how to improve one's yard in this time of sheltering at home. Usually in April the Plant Sale Committee and I would be so busy with last minute counting of plants, potting last minute arrivals, pricing them, getting the list of plants for the sale corrected, and getting supplies ready for the sale. Instead, I have been photographing native plants in my garden as they emerge and bloom. I have been amazed at how many of the natives put on a beautiful show in April. How lucky we are in Virginia to have so many beautiful natives. Many of our native plants were imported into Europe from the time of their discovery until today, where they are showcased in the markets and flower shops. Therefore, we decided that this year we would do a newsletter with plants from the gardens of members of the John Clayton Chapter of VNPS. I hope you will be happy to see them all. My hope is that members will see photos of a native plant that will inspire them to add it to their yards. In my own front yard, I have made an effort to fill it with butterfly host plants. The results have shown how the butterfly count has increased as my host plants have increased. I do not know they find them, but suddenly a particular butterfly shows up when the host plant appears in the garden.

I found a good news story in the *Guardian* written by Patrick Barkham. Earlier I had read another story he wrote in 2017 entitled "Why it is time to bring back the Great British Stork." He was inspired when he saw a huge quantity of big stork's nests plonked on telegraph poles and an occasional church tower. We all know the story that storks bring babies derives from the Greeks. Europeans believe that having a stork nest on your chimney brings good luck. They do nest nearby in Belgium, France, and Lithuania. The last storks were actually nesting in Scotland in 1416! This month Patrick Barkham writes that more than 100 storks have been brought back to West Sussex and Surrey in a col-

laboration between three landowners in southeast England, the Cottswold Wildlife Park, the Warsaw Zoo, the Roy Dennius Wildlife Foundation, and the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (an expert in restoring endangered bird species). Conservationists brought birds with clipped wings to England and placed them in large, fox-proof open pens three years ago, hoping to attract passing wild storks, and it was successful. Now in April many are nesting and expect to hatch. They will brood in the summer. In the next five years, they hope to bring more birds to England. The aim is to self-sustain a wild population by 2030. This story has an interesting detail. Conservationists built many beautiful platforms for the storks to use as nests. Nevertheless, no, the storks ignored them and decided they preferred to nest on top of oak trees as they did in the past. The memory of nature is more powerful than the thoughts of humankind.

Have you ever heard of Sweet City in Costa Rica? It is a project in the suburban town of Curridabat near the capital, San Jose, the city in which 2 million people live, about half of the population of Costa Rica. It is urban and non-green. The town of Curridabat decided that this is not what Costa Rica represents. They decided to make inter-urban corridors which have a double objective, writes Patrick Greenfeld in the *Guardian*: “Inter-urban biocorridors have a double objective: they create ecological connectivity for biodiversity but also improve green infrastructure through roads and river banks lined with trees that are linked with the small forested areas that still exist in metropolitan areas. They improve air quality, water quality, and give people spaces to relax, have fun, and improve their health.” He continues that it is not in the DNA of Costa Rica to behave as if humans were somehow set apart from nature. “Pollinators were the key,” says Edgar Mora, reflecting on the decision to recognize every bee, bat, hummingbird, and butterfly as a citizen of Curridabat during his 12-year spell as mayor. He moved to extend citizenship to pollinators, trees and native plants in Curridabat. The urban planning has been reimagined around its non-human inhabitants, and green spaces are treated as infrastructure with accompanying ecosystem in which pollinators thrive on services offered to residents. The widespread planting of native species underscores a network of green spaces and biocorridors across the municipality that was designed to ensure pollinators thrive. This small town has been transformed from a dull suburb into a haven for urban wildlife. This is why Costa Rican citizens now call Curridabat “Ciudad Dulce” —Sweet City. As I sit here in isolation, I dream of visiting Sweet City and Costa Rica someday.

Lucile Kossodo

New Members

We welcome new member **Larry Lewis** of Newport News to the John Clayton Chapter.

A request from Awards Chair Donna Ware...

A call for recommendations of Chapter members or members of the community for:

The John Clayton Service Award for service to the Chapter and/or the community through the work of the Chapter—

(past examples: Cortney Langley for her years of service as Board Secretary; Boy Scout Troop 103 for facilitating our plant sales)

–or–

The John Clayton Botany Award for a member of the Chapter or community who has significantly contributed to the field of botany—

(past example: Helen Hamilton's publication of *Grasses and Wildflowers of the Coastal Plain of Virginia*)

The recommendation needs to describe the activity the candidate has carried out and why it merits recognition. Please send to **Donna Ware** by May 31st at dmeware1001@gmail.com or by U.S. mail to 14 Buford Rd., Williamsburg, VA 23188.

Photos from JCC members

We've suspended our chapter's native plant walks during the quarantine, but here are some photos members have taken recently in their yards or during their own walks—many thanks to all of you!

From **Lucile Kossodo's** garden:



A Virginia Least Trillium, *Trillium pusillum*. It is frequent on hummocks and along small streams in southeastern VA.



Our little *Claytonia*, which is named after John Clayton. Its common name is Spring Beauty. The flower is about 1 centimeter wide. It is present in the whole state. Its habitat is the well-drained floodplain forests and old fields.



Hypoxis hirsuta. Its common name is Eastern Yellow Stargrass and it is found in many places in our state. It grows in moist and in dry places. The flower is only 0.5 centimeter wide, but because of its bright yellow color it is really conspicuous in large quantities.



Marsh Marigold, *Caltha palustris*, has large yellow flowers that resemble buttercups and heart-shaped leaves. It flowers from March to April, and only grows in moist to wet soils; if you see a similar plant growing in dry or regular soils, it is an invaseive that is similar. *Caltha palustris* has toxic leaves and the plant can cause blisters if touched.



The huge Cinnamon Fern, *Osmunda cinnamomeum*, opening its fronds in early April. They reach up to my waist. The nice thing is that they can grow in sandy, clay, or loam soils. It has thick spore-bearing spikes that turn chocolate brown.

More photos
from Lucile...



Cut-leaf Grapefern, *Sceptridium dissectum*, showing its two different frond types, one very dissected, the other not. It grows in mesic soil and is common throughout Virginia and sporulates in the Fall. It can grow in moist, wet, or dry places.



Rattlesnake Fern, *Botrypus virginianus*, is the spring sporulating one. It is common throughout Virginia and can grow in moist or dry places in part-sun and shade.



Perfoliate Bellwort, *Uvularia perfoliata*, a lovely yellow bell, is found in moist and dry places in part-shade and shade. It grows in well-drained flood-plain forests. Under it are leaves of *Hexastylis virginica*, Virginia Heartleaf, with brown jug-like blooms, a very decorative native.



My Fringe Tree, *Chionanthus virginicus*, which blooms just as the dogwoods begin to drop their petals. Other common names here in the South are Granny Graybeard and Old Man's Beard. Trees can be either male or female. Males sport larger, showier blooms, but females form attractive, blackish-blue fruits that birds like. Nurseries don't sell trees by sex, so you have to take your chances, but either sex is well worth planting.



Wild Geranium, *Geranium maculatum*, our 2020 Native Plant of the Year. It grows in part shade to shade in acid soil.



My blooming carnivorous plants, *Sarracenia flava* (yellow blooms) and *Sarracenia purpurea* (red blooms). I grow them in a huge pot filled with humusy muck with a water-filled bottom area. They are easy to grow but do not like competing for territory. They can be grown in rain and bog gardens and should not be fertilized; the insects they digest are their fertilizer. I have a cage over the pot, as the raccoons dig them up to get at the insects in the pitchers. Note the little wren nest inside the cage on the left side by the lowest yellow flower.

Frank Smith took these photos of Jack-in-the-Pulpit, below, and Wild Comfrey, right, on the Bassett Trace Trail.



From **Adrienne Frank**:

Gary and I went looking for a rare butterfly called a Frosted Elfin. Actually, we weren't expecting to find it, since the experts haven't been able to find it in our region. However, the experts found caterpillars on the native host plant—Sundial Lupines. Near our house, we have a blooming patch of Sundial Lupines. So, we visited the patch several times to look up close at the leaves to look for evidence of tiny caterpillars. We did find a couple of leaves that look like they have been eaten, and there were bees and moths using the plant.

Adrienne's Sundial Lupine



Adrienne and Gary found these beautiful Yellow Lady's Slippers in bloom in the College Woods.



Adrienne's shots of Woolly Ragwort, left, and a White Violet, above



Elise Hayes was pleased to discover Wild Comfrey growing in her garden this year.



Alicia Garcia's picture of a Pink Lady's Slipper at Freedom Park on April 18th



Donna Ware found this Dwarf Ginseng (*Panax trifolius*) on the NW-facing slope of a ravine mouth above Colby Swamp, Freedom Park 5 April 2020, and placed a redbud flower on a leaf for scale.



Joan Etchberger contributed these photos of Coral Honeysuckle, above left, Larkspur, above right, and a forest of Mayapples, left.



Coral Honeysuckle, above, in Kathi Mestayer's front yard, and Perfoliate Bellwort, right, in her back yard



Above, a Yellow Lady's Slipper Kathi photographed in the College Woods; below, a Spatterdock (*Nuphar advena*) rhizome she found on the bank of the Chickahominy River



The eerily symmetrical arrangement of buds and an open flower on a Golden Ragwort (*Packera aurea*) in Kathi's yard





Shirley Devan's photos of a Jack-in-the-Pulpit on the Powhatan Creek Trail (left) and Spotted Wintergreen, or Pipsissewa, at Warhill (above)

From **Sue Voigt**, Stonehouse Garden Chair:

Spring has come to Williamsburg and especially to the native plants in the Schoolyard Habitat at Stonehouse Elementary School. Unfortunately, no one can enjoy them because James City County schools are closed for the remainder of the school year due to the COVID-19 virus. In spite of the "Stay at Home" orders, native plants (and weeds) are thriving. These photos were captured on a short walk in mid-April.



Pinxterbloom Azalea (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*)



Wild Columbine
(*Aquilegia canadensis*)



Heart-leaved Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia* Linnaeus)



Virginia Bluebells
(*Mertensia virginica*)



Golden Ragwort (*Packera aurea*), left

Virginia Spiderwort
(*Tradescantia virginiana*), right



John Clayton Chapter Calendar

No upcoming events are currently scheduled, but we will resume activities as soon as it is safe—until then, take care!

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 **Cathy Flanagan** at 757-879-1997 or at **flanagan.catherine@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