



C. Flanagan

Common Bluets
(*Houstonia caerulea*)

Hello Spring!

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Claytonia

John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

March-April 2024

vnps.org/johnclayton

Jordan Metzgar, Curator Virginia Tech Massey Herbarium

Please join us on Zoom
Thursday, March 21, 7:00 pm



Jordan Metzgar is the curator of the Virginia Tech Massey Herbarium. He received his B.S. in biology from Cornell University and earned his Ph.D. from the University of Alaska Fairbanks for his dissertation on the evolution of the parsley ferns (*Cryptogramma*). His current job involves researching the ecology and distribution of various ferns and other southeastern USA plants.

Jordan also runs an active outreach pro-

gram in the local community to share his botanical knowledge and enthusiasm for natural history.

Jordan became entranced by ferns when he was an undergraduate and pursued a career in botany to further this passion.

His favorite plant is walking fern (*Asplenium rhizophyllum*). He lives in Christiansburg, VA, with his wife and two young sons.

From The President

As we await the arrival of Spring, our thoughts are going towards potting parties, organizing all the volunteers and finally to our Plant Sale on the first Saturday in May at the Williamsburg Community Building.

We hope that many of you will join us in this effort which allows us to send students to Nature Camp, fund our speakers, and give grants to new native plant

efforts in schools and parks.

We also hope to be able to offer walks to see native plants in areas around our chapter. I hope you will remember to donate plants from your garden to our plant sale. We sincerely thank you for your donations!

Some Environmental News

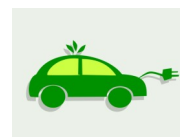
I recently read an article in USGS Mineral Resources about rare earth metals.

The name rare earth was

given to rocks discovered in Sweden in 1788 that could be dissolved in acids.

Today we know that rare earth oxides of Lanthanides are a set of 17 indistinguishable lustrous, luminescent, magnetic, and silvery white soft heavy metals. They are not rare because they can be found all over the world.

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For the Love of Native Plants and Wild Spaces

By Emilia Godwin

We all love our native plant sale, don't we? Sprouts grown into respectable plants, ready to find loving homes, the excitement of gardeners bringing their lists of long sought after native plants, the boy scouts ready to serve our community, the experts floating between tables sharing knowledge and experience, and volunteers making it all happen as they pitch in whenever needed.

But aren't we forgetting something?

Oh yes- the students that were selected to receive the Nature Camp Scholarships funded by the proceeds from our plant sales.

Instilling a love for nature and for the plants that originated in Virginia and that have claimed it as their home for centuries, is at the core of our purpose as an organization. So giving opportunities to young people to either start or continue their relationship with nature is beyond rewarding.

We are very proud to introduce the following students who are bound for nature camp this year. Thanks in huge part to you, and others like you, who will join us for the Annual Native Plant Sale on Saturday, May 4th at the Williamsburg Community Building on 401 N Boundary Street.

We are excited to hear what these students will have to say about Nature Camp when they return. They shone through the application process, consisting of a student essay and a teacher recommendation. The committee representing five Williamsburg area organizations was impressed with them and we are eager to find out how Nature Camp experience helped enrich their lives and deepen their love for the natural world. Look for our story about their experiences at Camp in the fall issue of our newsletter.



Maksymilian Sekula, a 7th grader at Walsingham Academy, and a Tenderfoot Scout in Troop 103, enjoys reading, acting, playing the piano and guitar, sailing, surfing, and singing! Maks is also interested in conservation. He demonstrates that interest by helping in his school's learning garden, being involved in Save the Bay, in Boy Scout service projects, and by volunteering at archaeological surveys sponsored by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.



Kiera Sohoni, a 7th grader, has also attended camp before. Limnology (the study of inland aquatic ecosystems), herpetology (the study of amphibians and reptiles) and botany are subjects she would like to study. She has used microscopes to study plant and animal cells and credits Nature Camp with her desire to identify butterflies and mushrooms.



Owen Ellis a 7th grade honors student, will attend camp for the first time. He is interested in wildlife (especially fish) and is excited to increase his knowledge of plants and how to protect wildlife. He dreams of being a conservation ranger.



Asher Sohoni, a 10th grader, received the Carolyn Will Memorial Scholarship which is provided by longtime JCC member Ralph Will. Asher has attended camp before. He appreciates the knowledge that he gains from camp about the natural world (this summer he plans to focus on astronomy) At school he takes advanced science classes.

Sidewalk Crack Mosses *By Helen Hamilton*

The growing season for most plants is over by the end of fall — even the asters that can persist into December have shriveled and finished their blooming for the season.

But winter is the season when many mosses are green and reproducing. Easy to see on cold rainy days in January are those that live in the mortar between the concrete in sidewalks and brick walls and in asphalt.

Mosses don't require much to make a life. A little moisture and a tiny amount of mineral soil and their spores open to start new growth. These small plants are pioneer species, making a home for the plants that have tubes to transport water (vascular plants). Only one cell thick, they soak up water from the environment. If no water is available, they will be dormant until the next drop arrives. A vigorous population of mosses allows the seeds of vascular plants to sprout; Norie Burnet of Eden Woods in Chesterfield tells visitors that a moss garden is just as much work as a wildflower garden since the vascular plants are constantly "invading" the moss carpet.

Here are three common mosses easily recognized without magnification. These tiny plants usually do not carry common names since there are so few observers. A few authors have invented some

names that try to describe the plant.

Bryum argenteum aka
"Silver Moss"



This is the moss most characteristic of cracks in sidewalks, also found along paths, in gardens and fields. The entire plant is no more than 1 cm tall (less than 1/2 inch) and the leaves are only 1 mm long. Round stems are upright, tightly packed and appear silvery to pale green since the leaves have lost their chlorophyll at the tips. Nothing else looks like this moss in sidewalk cracks. The second name *argenteum* is Latin for "silver" The photo includes an emerging vascular plant enjoying the lush environment provided by the moss.

Entodon seductrix aka
"Chord Glaze Moss"



Named probably by a female botanist who reports "Dried, the moss looks like glossy embroidery floss" It is found everywhere — on tree bases, rocks, concrete blocks, roof shingles, asphalt, and in the

mortar and on the sidewalks. It is easily recognized by shiny, green-yellow stems that are round and worm-like, with scaly overlapping leaves. "Entodon" refers to the teeth in the capsule; Ralph Pope, author of a field guide, says the name "seductrix: suggests the author "clearly spent too many years in the lab"

Weissia controversa aka
"Pigtail moss"



The bright yellow-greenish leaves are twisted, like pigtails. This small moss often forms large cushions in open bare soil, on soil over rock and cement. The genus name honors a botanist F.W. Weis and the epithet (species name) refers to problems with nomenclature.

And this...A photo found on the internet with the caption:

"A Living Car"



From The President continued...

China has the largest mining operations, but it decided to limit its sale of rare earths. This spurred other countries such as Australia and the US in Southeastern California to begin mining them.

What is left after the mining are huge holes and some dangerous environmental damage.

But slowly, we are finding ways of doing the separation with less harm. We do not yet have enough items to recycle the rare earths at this moment.

What are the uses of rare earth? Smart phones, digital cameras, hard disks, flat screen TVs, electronic displays, clean energy defense technologies, glass polishing, refining petroleum, magnets for steering and in electrical or hybrid

cars to name a few.

Hopefully, new ways will help us learn to separate the rare earth minerals to cause less harm to our environment.

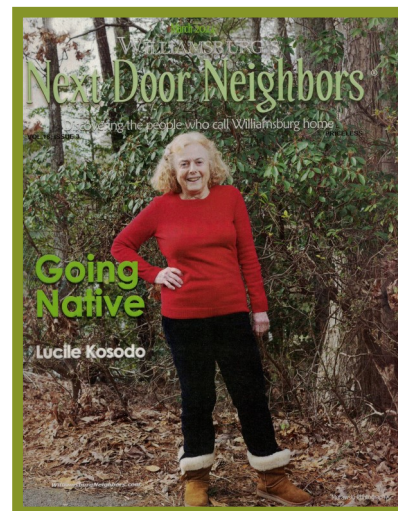
A Problem Herbicide:

Jonathan Hettinger reported in a February 7, 2024, article in the Guardian that three major manufacturers of weedkillers: Bayer, BASF, and Syngenta have been banned from using the dicamba weed killers. They have accused the EPA of breaking the law with their approval of this weedkiller.

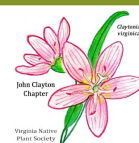
The products used in the South and Midwest have caused great damage as they are highly volatile. The USDA estimates that 15 million acres of soybeans have been damaged and over 280 inci-

dents were reported from counties where additional restrictions are required to protect endangered species.

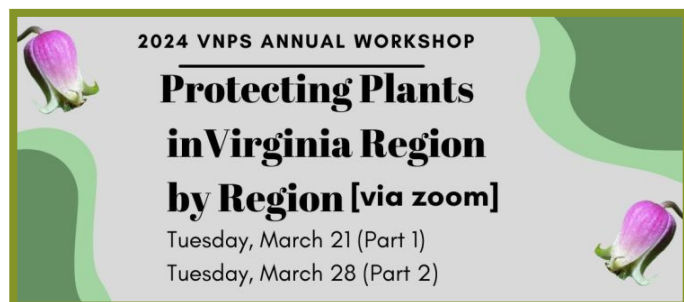
Needless to say, there have been many lawsuits against these three chemical companies.



Chapter Logo
by Lucile
1984



Click to read: [Next-Door-Neighbor-Lucile.pdf \(2 downloads\)](#)



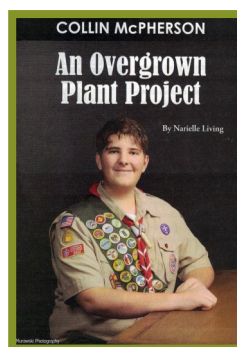
To Register: Go to <https://vnps.org/>

Welcome New Members!

Lynn Abbott	Williamsburg	Tina Gessler	Williamsburg
Katrina Kelso	Hampton	Jennifer Jebo	Williamsburg
Cay Yount	Williamsburg	Eve Otmar	Williamsburg
Julie Fielder	Newport News	Marty Wood	Hampton

Do you know someone who would like to join? You can also give a membership as a gift. It's easy online:

<https://vnps.org/select-membership-type/>



Collin McPherson, an Eagle Scout with Troop 103, led his fellow scouts in revitalizing the Stonehouse Elementary School Native Plant Garden this past fall. His team did an outstanding job. You can read an interview with Collin in the latest issue of the Next Door Neighbors Magazine.

With the scouts' work complete, John Clayton Stonehouse garden steward, Jennifer Myers, added permanent plant labels with the common and scientific names of the native plants. Jennifer also received a grant to develop a curriculum entitled "Native Plants as Teachers" We are pleased to be a part of helping young people engage with nature and Virginia native plants!