



CF

Black Haw

Viburnum prunifolium

Shrub/small tree

Larval host to hummingbird clearwing moth

Edible berries; Attractive flowers

Catherine Flanagan
President &

Treasurer

757-879-1997

Emilia Godwin
Vice President
Programs &
Communications

Cortney Will,
Secretary &
Plant Rescue

Adrienne Frank
Plant Sale Chair

Jennifer Myers
Stonehouse Garden Steward

Libbey Oliver
Nature Camp



John Clayton Chapter
VNPS
PO Box 1128
Williamsburg, VA 23187



Claytonia

John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Jan-Feb 2025

Think Spring!

vnps.org/johnclayton



From the President:

*The History of
John Clayton
Chapter Part 2*

Welcome back! And a sincere thanks to everyone for all the ways that members and volunteers have contributed in support of our mission. By making our plant sale successful, John Clayton Chapter will again be able to contribute generously to Nature Camp Scholarships, Eagle Scout projects, school gardens, and in support of science and education through the Digital Atlas of the Flora of Virginia.

Before I pick up where the previous installment left off, I thought I'd clarify why I am so enthused about bringing the story of our chapter's history to our members. One reason is simply the wealth of digitally preserved historical information that is accessible to anyone who is interested. [click here](#)

And it isn't just the volume, it's the founders' dedication to making accessible and detailed accounts of the many projects they were able to undertake. It follows that there is much our own membership could find helpful or inspirational in these pages. Many of the founding members were highly effective advocates for conservation and land management, for conducting plant rescues, enlisting experts in the science of plant propagation, of maintaining a greenhouse, and battling the threat of invasive species. *These founding members were driven!*

They were also truly moved by the natural environment as shown by the beautiful true-to-life sketches such as the banner that became the Header for the Society newsletter, "The Bulletin" The artwork on

the banner was the work of Mary Painter, (the founder and first president). Charter member and accomplished botanical illustrator, Barbara Stewart's artwork can also be found online: [click here](#)

Continuing from where Part 1 left off, VWPS formally became a corporation in July of '82, after only having been established in April. In August it was preparing for its first Annual meeting and plant sale in October! The event was held at the National Wildlife Conservation Education Center. For this first sale, the plants were sold only to members of VWPS and NWF.

Fast forward to just how consequential and active this organization and its leaders became, here's a look at the first two president's accomplishments and honors.

Mary Painter was honored at the White House by Barbara Bush as a Washington Metropolitan Area Volunteer of the Year. She was also Director and steering committee member of the acclaimed Conference on Landscaping with Native Plants.



The second president of the Society was Mary Pockman. She was a powerful supporter of land conservation and was an active opponent of Disney buying up land in Gainesville and Prince William County to build a theme park. The Disney project failed, and it was during her term as President that the name was changed to the *Virginia Native Plant Society*.

Part 3 Next Issue

Cathy Flanagan

Jennifer Myers, John Clayton Chapter Board Member, Garden Steward at Native Plant Habitat Garden, Stonehouse School Founder, Giving Gardens Design

The Nature of Landscape Design

Kristine Hojnicky

(An excerpt from an article in Next Door Neighbors Magazine, Dec. 2024
Reprinted with Permission)

With a background as an award-winning artist and a certified landscape designer, Jennifer Myers has turned her lifelong passion for the natural world into a career that enhances local ecosystems through sustainable gardening practices using native plants.

Founded in 2021, Giving Gardens Design is built on the philosophy that landscaping can be beautiful, sustainable and low maintenance by incorporating native flora. "Our mission is simple, to connect people to their local ecology," Jennifer explains. [...]

Her journey into landscape design is rather unexpected. Originally from New York City and having lived in Pittsburgh for almost a decade, Jennifer's artistic pursuits led her to Virginia, where family ties and a new community welcomed her. [...] A serendipitous meeting with a local artist in Williamsburg and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted her to start her first garden project. [...]

The experience unveiled her true calling. "It was an evolution of my relationship with this land. I realized that this is an extension of my artistic practice, and more importantly, that this is art," she says.

Having earned her Master of Fine Arts in inter-media art and drawing from the University of Iowa, Jennifer's approach incorporates her creative education and background. She views each garden as a canvas that not only reflects beauty but also supports biodiversity and ecological health. Her commitment to using native plants is driven by their benefits, which she describes as "low maintenance and beneficial for our ecosystem." [...]

Since arriving in Williamsburg, Jennifer has become an integral part of the community in other ways aside from being a small business owner. She joined our local chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society and met a wonderful group of passionate people.

Through them, she became the Garden Steward at Stonehouse Elementary School, where she engages with young students, teaching them about the importance of native species through hands-on activities. [...]

I'm working on something called 'Native Plants as Teachers' because that is what they really are. Native plants are our teachers. We have so much to learn from them," Jennifer adds. She runs the after-school club, School Health Initiative Program, or SHIP. [...]

Her advocacy doesn't stop at education. Jennifer is a vocal supporter of movements like Homegrown National Park and We are the ARK, which promote the restoration of native habitats in backyards and school gardens across the country. [...]

Jennifer's work encapsulates a powerful message: landscapes can be transformative, both aesthetically and environmentally, turning ordinary backyards into sanctuaries of biodiversity and learning.



Introducing ...Member Profile



Stonehouse garden 2024

Our chapter is growing and to help us get to know members, we will be profiling a member in each issue of the newsletter. If you know of someone who can be introduced to our community, please send your ideas to Cathy Flanagan (jccvnps1@gmail.com) or Emilia Godwin (jccvnps2@gmail.com). Thank you for helping us get to know our fellow members.

Stonehouse Garden Update by Jennifer Myers

Stonehouse Native Plant Garden is thriving! We have now completed four sessions of SHIP (School Health Initiative Program) After-school club at Stonehouse Elementary School. We meet each spring and fall for 7 weeks in total, and students have about an hour in the garden with us. I co-teach the club with Liz Callen, the Culinary & Garden Educator at the SHIP, part of WJCC Public Schools. Liz is in charge of the vegetable beds, and I am in charge of the native plant areas.

Students rotate through different stations and have time to learn about many aspects of farming, gardening, and native plants and their co-evolution with other species. Each session we have them search for a new native plant in the spirit of 'Native Plants as Teachers' - with the understanding that each of these plants has many, many things to teach and tell us about how to live in an ecosystem, how to support other species, how to thrive in tough conditions and be resilient, and how to persist and be beautiful and beneficial, all at the same time!

One of our biggest projects that took us two sessions total to complete was the rock swale that the students designed, installed, and maintain in the garden. SHIP after-school club runs on the help of volunteers who work with us during the club, we are always looking for more help, so please reach out if you are interested!

The next few years at Stonehouse will include an updated sign for the garden that celebrates this as a now 20-year native plant garden founded in 2004 under the stewardship and watchful loving eyes of VNPS John Clayton Chapter.

We will continue to do the SHIP Program as long as we can and learn and live with these beautiful native plants. They are so under-represented in traditional gardens but so deserving of a front and center place in all of them! We plan a few more projects including a wildflower bed that we are seeding this winter and a Monarch Milkweed Bed, devoted to the wonder of milkweed and the many stages of the monarch caterpillar.



Farm Club



As a new year is unfolding before us, we are starting to review our programs and processes. Members' input is always welcomed and appreciated. Over the past few years, our programs have been mostly digital. Even though this approach has its benefits, allowing us to learn from speakers from around the state and beyond, it may be time now to explore a combination of approaches and formats.

In 2025, we will explore the possibilities to offer more in-person programs, whether speakers, walks, volunteer projects, or plain socializing. All these come with their challenges and limitations for an all-volunteer-run organization, like ours.



We critically need higher member engagement – for Board assignments, Plant Sale volunteer involvement, representation of our chapter at community events, just to name a few. For example, we would very much like to offer monthly educational walk opportunities and a designated Walk Coordinator would make that possible. We don't necessarily need someone to lead all walks but a person who can dedicate time and effort to reach out to possible walk leaders and coordinate the entire process. If you know someone who has the skills and availability, do let us know.

Our exploration of opportunities will take us in another, related, direction: to find ways to reach out and engage younger members or potential members who may still be actively working on their careers but have the inclination and some availability to participate and grow into some of those opportunities I spoke of before. Will that be easy? Probably not. Schedules are quite tight these days but that shouldn't stop us if we are to nourish the next generation of chapter leaders, volunteers and members.

Next year we would also like to give more chances to current members to get to know each other. Yes, in-person programming will help. But there are other, more subtle or immediate ways. With this newsletter issue, we are starting to profile chapter members who are doing important work for the chapter and the community. We are also brainstorming ideas about offering an annual member social. Any of you reading this who would like to step up and help put it together would be so much appreciated.

There are plenty of other ideas but we also want to give you a chance to participate. Let us know what programs you'd like to see us offer and how you can help implement them. Share your thoughts and ideas; contact us at jccvnps2@gmail.com. Thank you for your valuable feedback.

Emilia Godwin



February Speaker:
Jordan Metzgar
Curator, Virginia
Tech Massey Her-
barium
Getting to Know
Virginia's Ferns
Feb. 20, 7 pm on
Zoom

Read his bio on
our website at
[vnps.org/](http://vnps.org/johnclayton/events)
johnclayton/events

Plant seeds have lots of ways of moving about to ensure conditions are correct for their germination. Many seeds use the availability of wind, water and gravity while others depend upon sending seeds out through the digestive systems of birds and other animals or by sticking to animal fur. Birds and squirrels bury seeds and may forget where they are – when they germinate, the plant has a new home.

Wind disperses seeds with cottony plumes like milkweed and dandelion; grass seeds are small and light and can be carried on wind. Some seeds and fruits have hooks and spines that stick to the fur, feathers or clothing – distribution to a new home occurs when the seeds are detached and released from animal fur, bird feathers and human clothes. Plants with winged seeds like maple and catalpa depend upon wind to send them about.

Fire is necessary for the germination of certain plant species like longleaf pine – all have tough coats that break open after a fire that clears the land of competing species. One of the most bizarre seed distribution methods is done by the peanut plant that sends the flower underground to grow into the peanut seed.

Another Asian species has a long stalk with a seed at the end. The stalk moves until a rock crevice is located where the seed is pushed inside. Storksbill (*Erodium cicutarium*) has a long awn that twists into a spiral when dry, thus releasing them from the parent plant. When the awns are wet, they uncoil and drive the seeds into the ground.

Many plants use another remarkable method by forcibly ejecting their seeds, often long distances from the parent plant.



Spotted Jewelweed/
Touch-me-not
(*Impatiens capensis*)

has pods that expand, build up pressure and explode when touched, thus sending seeds out

to new ground. In Scotch broom the two valves of the seed pod dry and warp, resulting in separation of these valves and violent seed release.



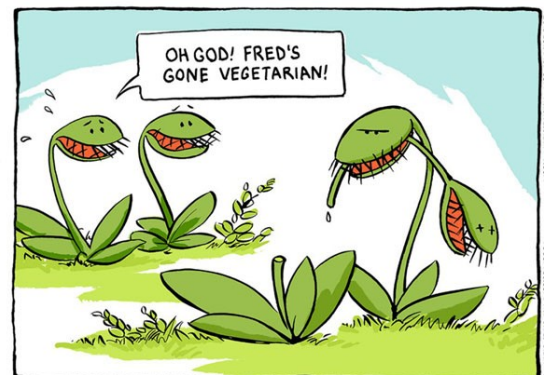
The seeds of Witch Hazel
(*Hamamelis virginiana*)

shoot out like bullets, often to 30 feet per second. The seeds of the squirting cucumber (*Ecballium elaterium*) that grows in

southern Europe near the Mediterranean blasts out seeds at about 60 miles per hour, one of the most rapid among plants and close to the limit of plant movement.

How the seeds do these activities is poorly understood and under investigation of some species. Hormones are involved, water pressure, drying and wetting, all interacting in various ways.

Another remarkable activity in plants is seed germination – *next article*.



A little plant humor

Gary and Adrienne's Garden

New to John Clayton?

*Note: The schedule for our meetings may vary based on the presenter's schedule. We will send an email reminder, but you can check the Website for the latest:

vnps.org/johnclayton

Our meetings consist of a video presentation, followed by an interactive Q&A. The presenters are experts from a wide variety of relevant fields. The Zoom format allows for greater participation and convenience.

The presentations are recorded and the videos may be viewed at the link below:

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/8054025>



If you have native plants that are outgrowing their space, we may

be able to help you dig them to donate to our school garden, or sell at our plant sale



The John Clayton Chapter Annual Native Plant Sale is a year round

project that everyone can contribute to in some way. Great team work has made this event very successful for us. It is how we fund Nature Camp scholarships, school gardens, local parks, and donations to VNPS initiatives such as the Natural Areas Preserves fund and the Flora of Virginia.

Learn about the project and the helpful app:

<https://floraofvirginia.org/>



If you've been to a potting party or the plant sale, you likely have met Gary and Adrienne. She is the knowledgeable, tireless and cheerful leader of the plant sale. He is also tireless, knowledgeable and a gardener who likes to cook.

They lead butterfly walks in the summer and plant hikes for the Friends of Dragon Run in the winter. The Dragon Run is a Cypress-Tupelo Swamp and a very unique habitat that needs to be protected. Learn about the swamp flora and fauna, and also activities sponsored by the organization by going to: <https://www.dragonrun.org>

Welcome New Members!

Jennie Davy

Patricia Kelcourse

James Thompson

Kimberly Rhyne

Williamsburg

Newport News

Williamsburg

Newport News



If a friend shared this newsletter with you, and you'd like to join as a member, go to <https://vnps.org/johnclayton/membership> to find out more. Gift membership is also available. Help us spread the love for native plants and wild spaces. *Thank You!*