Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

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1984

Claytonia virginica

Don't miss our Annual Meeting and 25th Anniversary Party!

It's from 7 to 9 pm on Thursday, September 17 at the Williamsburg/James City Co. Rec Center on Longhill Road.

Our program:

"A field of dreams: restoration of native coastal prairie for native grassland plants, birds, and butterflies in Maryland"

Douglas E. Gill, our speaker for September's Annual Meeting, learned natural history in Audubon chapters in New Jersey, and joined the faculty of the Department of Biology at the University of Maryland in 1971, where he has been been a Full Professor since 1983. His research and teaching center on ecology from an evolutionary biological perspective. A dynamic speaker, Dr. Gill was invited to present the results of his 40 year study of the life history of pink ladyslipper orchids at a recent VNPS Spring Workshop.

In his presentation for us on September 17th, he will describe his studies of 228 acres of native grasslands undergoing restoration in Queen Anne's County, Maryland. This study began in March of 1999 and focuses on four areas:

- growth performance of planted native grasses versus invasive alien species;
- responses of wildlife, especially native bird species such as Grasshopper Sparrow, Dickcissel and Bob-white Quail to these restored grasslands;
- whether these grasslands become home to insects, and if so, their effects (if any) on neighboring row crops, as well as on the native grasses themselves;
- development of techniques to optimize the prairie's attractiveness to wildlife.

Dr. Gill will be available after his talk to discuss habitat restoration with anyone with special interest in this topic.

Directions to the Williamsburg /James City Co. Rec Center at 5301 Longhill Road:

Approaching from Newport News, follow Interstate 64W to Exit 242A. Approaching from Richmond, follow Interstate 64E to Exit 234. Both of these exits access Route 199.

Follow Route 199 to Longhill Road and exit on Longhill Road. If you have come from Exit 234 (Richmond), you will turn left onto Longhill. If you have come from Exit 242A (Newport News), you will turn right on Longhill. After turning onto Longhill Road, take the second left (Route 322), then turn right immediately into the parking lot in front of a very large building that is the Community Center.

Donated items are needed for the raffle at the Annual Meeting—*Your support is needed for this important fund-raiser!*

Please notify Donna Ware by e-mail, *dmeware@verizon.net*, if you have new or like-new items of potential interest to our members that you wish to contribute. Items contributed to date include a botany book, a pair of garden boots in a daisy design, and a pair of framed botanical prints. You might also consider offering a service, e.g. 1 hour of advice on landscaping-with-native, 2 hours of instruction in photographing wildflowers, etc. Find an imaginative way to help send students to Nature Camp!

Here is the slate of officers we will vote on at our Annual Meeting:

President: Helen Hamilton

Vice President: Bharati Lakshmi and Charlotte Boudreau

Treasurer: Pat Gibbs

Secretary: Mary Turnbull

From the President

Invasive Plants

Recently I was horrified to discover notes in two magazines recommending native plants. One, ***Better Homes and Gardens***, July 2009, page 90, recommends Chinese wisteria, sold by White Flower Farm, their partner in plants; I sent a note to the horticulturist at White Flower Farm, citing www.invasive.org. The reply, via Kathi Mestayer (I have no idea why I did not get a direct reply): "Thank you for sending White Flower Farm the letter from Ms. Hamilton, regarding the invasiveness of *Wisteria sinensis*. While this plant may multiply to the point of invasiveness in one area of the country, it is a good neighbor elsewhere. We appreciate your interest in our products."

True, invasiveness is local, and Chinese wisteria is out of control in the south, which may not be the case in Connecticut, the home of White Flower Farm; nonetheless, I picked up this magazine here in the south, and how would I know it's OK in the northeast, but not here??

The second offense was in ***Organic Gardening***, promoting beefsteak plant, *Perilla frutescens*, highly invasive in New Quarter Park and Yorktown. I sent them a note and have not received a reply.

Notifying the folks at VNPS of these occurrences, Sally Anderson, VNPS President, replied: "Is it time to start a campaign to inform garden magazines of the invasive species in their coverage areas? I'm sure they know, but maybe they need a new list and reminder. The list is a little difficult in some ways, but maybe we could choose our top ten (or 20?) cultivated/commonly sold, partner with Master Naturalists/Master Gardeners (or not), and make a color brochure to send to them. And as we work on the new website, this type of information with photo gallery should be included."

Kim Strader, VNPS Horticulture Chair and horticulturist at Blandy, sent this note: "I am going to be making a list of invasive ornamental/nursery plants for Virginia to give to our vendors at our Mothers Day Garden Fair event because we ask that vendors not sell alien invasive species at our sales. I will have the list ready by December so that it can be used to pick the top 20 (or how many is decided on). It is for Virginia but would probably apply to the mid-Atlantic region."

Thank you Kim! Now we need to do what we can to inform publications and our local garden centers and nurseries about plants invasive to this area. **Helen Hamilton**

New members

Welcome to **Felicity Rask Ericson** of Gloucester, **Stephen Living** of Chesapeake, **David Monahan** of Williamsburg, **Suzi Smith** of Yorktown and **Ann Williams** of Ware Neck.

July 9 meeting: All you need to know about growing perennials!

Denise Greene demonstrates how to divide a perennial clump by pulling apart the roots into sections.

In one of the most informative and fun sessions in a long time, Denise Greene showed us all you need to know: from collecting seed, to tips on growing perennials from seed and tips on dividing plants. Denise brought a lot of seed heads and perennial plants to demonstrate her techniques. In her charming and quiet way, she took a sage plant, cut off the spent flower head in one quick snip, dropped it in a bag, and said, "You have just collected perennial seeds." As the talk progressed to greater depth and details and seeds and soil were strewn around her, we heard a voice in the back say, "She's the Julia Child of growing perennials!" For those of you who missed the meeting, here are Denise Greene's handouts (printed with her permission) and some notes from the meeting.

Seed collecting

Many plants such as wild blue indigo, sundrops, cardinal flower, hibiscus, bluestar, meadowbeauty and butterflyweed form seed capsules which change color, swell, and split when their seeds are ripe. Others hold their seeds in the flower head

while ripening. These include members of the *Compositae* family such as black-eyed susan, purple coneflower, indian blanket and sunflowers. As the nutlets or seeds of these plants begin to ripen the dried flower heads expand, loosening the seeds which usually turn darker colors as they ripen.

Late bloomers such as asters, liatris, ironweed, joe pye and goldenrod give us a second show of fuzzy seed heads as their seeds ripen and the pappus bristles become more conspicuous. These usually hold their seeds until a few weeks after the first frost. You have a better chance of finding seed with developed embryos and they are easier to remove if you wait until then to collect them. Denise just places the cut stems of seed heads or capsules in a labeled supermarket paper bag. She lets them dry a few days until the seeds are easily freed by vigorously shaking the bag. Once she is sure the seeds are dry and won't mold, she places them in a labeled ziplock plastic bag and refrigerates them. Seeds which are contained in a fleshy fruit such as those of passionvine and jack in the pulpit need to be cleaned to prevent them from rotting in storage. She soaks them in water overnight and rubs them across a sieve under running water until they come clean. If these seeds are allowed to dry out in storage, they may go into an extended dormancy that could cause germination to be delayed up to 2 years. It's easy to give them moist storage conditions by refrigerating them in ziplock plastic bags with moistened sphagnum moss for up to 6 months. You need to check them occasionally to make sure they aren't germinating in the bag. If they do, you need to go ahead and plant them. Individual plants will vary in their requirements, so it is a good idea to research a particular plant. Denise's favorite resources are Harry Phillip's *Growing and Propagating Wild Flowers,* Jan Midgley's *Wildflowers of the Southeast,* and William Cullina's *The New England Wild Flower Society Guide to Growing and Propagating Wildflowers of the United States and Canada*.

In other words, after labeling, location and timing are everything. You need to know when to pick seeds and where to keep them until planting time.

Growing perennials from seed

Many perennials can be started from seed indoors or outdoors in the same way as annuals. Scattered over a seed starting mix, lightly covered and kept moist and warm (60–75 degrees indoors), they will germinate in 1–4 weeks. They can be started in a seed-starting bed or where they're to grow. Plants in this group include *Aster, Baptisia, Campanula, Coreopsis, Gaillardia, Gaura, Helianthus, Heliopsis, Heuchera, Liatris, Lobelia, Lupinus, Mimulus, Oenothera, Polemonium, Rudebeckia, Salvia, Sedum* and *Tiarella*.

Moist-chilling Most perennial seeds go dormant under storage conditions and need to be pre-treated (also called stratification) before planting to get them to germinate. Most of these just need to be fooled into thinking they've gone through a winter. To do this place them in a plastic baggie with some moist, not wet, potting soil or sphagnum moss and put them in the refrigerator for about 90 days. They should germinate a couple weeks after being sown at 70 degrees. Some require less time to break dormancy, so it's a good idea to check them for sprouting every once in a while. If you don't like to fool with Mother Nature, you can plant the seeds in flats and place them in a sheltered spot outside for the winter. Just be sure they're not going to be washed out by heavy rain or eaten by mice or birds and check them occasionally to make sure they don't dry out. Moist chilling is the method needed for most perennial seed. Rather than make a list here, I'll just say that if you don't see it on any other list it probably belongs here. Or you can ask Cynthia Long, our Seed Queen. If it's native, she probably has grown it.

70-40-70 stratification Some perennial seeds go into a double dormancy, meaning that they need a warm moist period: 90 days @ 70 degrees followed by a cold period of 90 days @ 40 degrees, followed by another warm moist period in order to break dormancy and germinate. This is usually found in woodland species such as bloodroot, which expects a dry dormant season in the summer. You can either use the plastic bag trick above with an added time on top of the refrigerator first or sow the seed into flats that go outside where the seasons are real. Not many species require this treatment; some that do are *Asarum, Caltha, Cimifuga, Claytonia, Dicentra, Erythronium, Lilium, Mertensia* and *Sanguinaria*.

Light A few perennial seeds need light in order to germinate. These should not be covered with soil when sown. They include *Aruncus, Asclepias, Campanula, Chelone, Galax, Gentiana, Heuchera, Lobelia, Penstemon, Rhexia, Sedum,* and *Veronicastrum*.

Scarification Some seeds have a very hard seed coat and water can't easily soak in to begin the germination process. They can be helped along by pouring boiling water over them and allowing them to soak overnight or by nicking the seed coat with a nail file or rubbing them between two pieces of sand paper. This helps with seeds of *Hibiscus, Kosteletskya, Lupinus, Baptisia, Amsonia* and *Senna*.

Always use a good light seed starting mix, not garden soil, to start your seeds. Commercial mixes are sterile, reducing the chances of damping off and other diseases and they can retain moisture more evenly without forming a hard crust. As soon as your plants are up, make sure they receive plenty of light; they shouldn't get leggy or do too much bending. When they get their first set of true leaves

(not the seed leaves that come up first) they are ready to transplant. Don't forget to gradually ease seedlings to their new outdoor climate to avoid shocking them—this they do take personally! Good luck, happy gardening.

Once we got to propagation by division, the soil really started flying and we were shown how it really can work.

One of the best kept little secrets Denise gave us is that watering the baby plants with a cooled strong camomile tea can prevent and cure damping off .

Propagation by Division

Many plants are easily divided, even when they aren't dormant. In general spring bloomers should be divided in the fall and fall bloomers should be divided in the spring. This just gives the plants more time to recover before they bloom, but if you have to divide some other time anything works except maybe the hottest part of the summer and the coldest part of the winter. You just may not see a strong bloom on these plants until they have a chance to re-establish.

Dig a mature plant with as much root as possible. Wash or gently shake the soil from the roots and examine the crown, or growing point of the plant. On many plants you will see that it is actually made up of many smaller clumps all growing together. Pull or cut these smaller sections apart while trying to keep as much of the root attached as you can. For plants with woody stems or rhizomes, look for buds and cut them into sections that have at least a few healthy buds in each division. Replant your divisions as soon as possible and keep them well watered. Some plants that propagate well by division are: *Penstemon, Rudebeckia, Sisyrinchium, Coreopsis, Senecio, Phlox, Salvia, Aster, Tradescantia, Echinacea, Boltonia, Solidago, Eupatorium, Helenium, Helianthus, Vernonia, Silphium, Oenothera* and *Chrysogonum*.

Propagating by Root Cuttings

The most important part here is making sure that the root is planted as it grew with the top facing up. You need to be sure to note this, as once the root is cut, it's almost impossible to see which way is up. The best time of the year to take root cuttings is late fall through early spring. To take cuttings from a fleshy rooted plant such as *Asclepias*, dig a well established plant when it is dormant. If you don't want to dig the whole plant up, you can dig around it and remove just the outer roots. Cut segments a couple of inches long and remember which end was up. Place the root cuttings about ¼ inch deep in a container or flat of sand or loose, fast draining potting mix. Put the container in a warm sunny window—around 70 degrees is best. Water sparingly. You should see shoots forming within about six weeks. The same method can be applied to fibrous rooted plants such a *Rudbeckia*. Instead of cutting single pieces of root, you should cut "chunks" of well rooted soil about the size of an ice cube. Some plants which lend themselves to propagation by root cuttings are: *Asclepias, Baptisia, Rudbeckia, Echinacea, Coreopsis, Phlox,* and *Eurpatorium*. If all this effort seems like a lot of work, you should thank our many volunteer plant growers who work hard for the Plant Sale. Hopefully this talk will inspire many of you to grow plants for your gardens and our Spring 2010 Plant Sale. We all thank Denise Greene for a great presentation! **Lucile Kossodo**

Two Midsummer walks

Chickahominy Park June 20

Phillip Merritt led this walk along the wooded banks of the Chickahominy River at Chickahominy Park, sometimes threading between campsites filled with weekend campers.

Hedge false bindweed

Among the native plants we found growing there were two members of the blueberry family (neither with ripe fruit yet)—highbush blueberry *(Vaccinium fuscatum)*, and deerberry *(Vaccinium stamineum)*; water parsnip *(Sium suave)*; halberd-leaved rose mallow *(Hibiscus militaris)*; hedge false bindweed *(Calystegia sepium)*, a beautiful pink-flowered member of the morning glory family (unfortunately, very agressive); and eastern grasswort *(Lilaeopsis chinensis)*, a tiny member of the carrot family, which Phillip plucked from beneath the water in the shallows of the river to show us.

Eastern grasswort. This little plant is only 2–3 inches tall!

We identified many trees, most of them in fruit: bald cypress *(Taxodium distichum)*; swamp chestnut oak *(Quercus michauxii)*; white oak *(Quercus alba)*; black walnut *(Juglans nigra)*; black gum *(Nyssa sylvatica)*; mockernut hickory *(Carya alba)*; bitternut hickory *(Carya cordiformis)*; and pignut hickory *(Carya glabra)*, to name just a few.

Amanita rubescens

Some fungi were in evidence, too (there certainly would have been more had our visit been preceded by more rain): one I feel some confidence in identifying as *Amanita rubescens*, and a second is a polypore which ***might*** be *Phaeolus schweinitzii* (also called dye polypore because it can be used to prepare fabric dyes).

Phaeolus schweintzii?

Visit Phillip's blog at www.howitgrows.com for many photos and more complete descriptions of the native plants we saw that day. There is also a collection of photos of plants seen on this walk (and others) on our website at www.claytonvnps.org, under "John Clayton Chapter Photo Gallery". **Louise Menges**

Little Creek Reservoir July 18

A month later, Donna Ware took a dozen plant enthusiasts to visit a similar habitat near Little Creek Reservoir, along a trail which followed the margin of the reservoir in part and proceeded through higher ground as well.

spreading eryngo

At the water's margin someone spotted spreading eryngo *(Eryngium prostratum)*, a diminutative relative of rattlesnake master *(E. yuccifolium)*, with lavender-blue flower heads. Donna told us that it is native further south and may have spread to southeast Virginia relatively recently. There we also saw a tall, robust spikerush with sharply four-sided stems *(Eleocharis quadrangulata)*; and common dwarf St. John'swort *(Hypericum mutilum)*, a slender, delicate plant with small, 5-petaled yellow-orange flowers.

Spikerush in bloom

The trail continued along a ridge of higher ground through a forest dominated by Virginia pine, scarlet oak, sand hickory *(Carya pallida)*, mockernut hickory and sourwood (with some loblolly pine, American beech, black oak, water oak, southern red oak and white oak). At a presumed old homesite was an immense, spreading, multi-branched white oak with a circumference of 14 ft. 1½ inches (Donna measured it)! A chestnut oak *(Quercus prinus)* grew on a low bluff above the lake, and on a slope above it, what appeared to be a chestnut oak-white oak hybrid. Chinquapin *(Castanea pumila)* was common along the trail, some trees with ripening burs. We saw a single large red hickory *(Carya ovalis)*, a classic specimen with 7 smooth leaflets, spherical nuts and slightly scaly bark.

Chinquapin burs

Among the other native plants along the trail were St. Andrew's cross *(Hypericum hypericoides)* and ground-nut (*Apios americana*, a legume which was an important food plant for American Indians), which was blooming in a sandy opening on a bank above the lake. On an open slope near the old homesite was bristly locust *(Robinia hispida)*, a low shrub bearing bristly pods. (Actually, every part of this plant is bristly—it is well-named!) We came upon an extensive colony of galax *(Galax urceolata)* under trees on a west-facing slope above the lake, some plants with fruit-bearing stalks. The heath family was well represented: two huckleberry *(Gaylussacia)* species–dangleberry and black huckleberry; two blueberry *(Vaccinium)* species–deerberry and sweet lowbush (this time we sampled some of the ripe fruit); mountain laurel, sourwood, maleberry *(Lyonia ligustrina)* and pinxter-flower azelea. There was also a colony of sweetleaf or horse sugar *(Symplocos tinctoria)* on the trail.


Bristly locust: seed pods, above; leaves, below. Notice that even each leaflet has a bristle at its tip!

Dangleberries

Groundnut blossom

Again, there are lots more photos at www.claytonvnps.org. Look in the Photo Gallery under Little Creek Reservoir.

Many thanks to Donna for her wonderful notes, especially since mine were *completely* dissolved when I washed the jeans I wore that day—no chiggers, but no notes, either!

Louise Menges

From Cynthia

… in response to a question about her seed-collecting talk at NQP July 30:

"It was very informal and low key, and I didn't pass out anything but seeds. You could let people know I have seed packets available if they are interested—all kinds (native, of course). I'd like to give them out this year; they won't be fresh in another year." **Cynthia**

In appreciation of Dorothy

Dorothy Whitfield is back in the work force (not that she ever left it!) … but here's a pic of her with Donna in the Ellipse Garden Friday, June 26, where a lot of weeding was done, and 5 of the Ford's Colony Trailblazers dug out overgrown soldier mallow and spread leaf mulch … Dorothy is truly amazing!!

Helen Hamilton

Fire ants!

The red imported fire ant *Solenopsis invicta* has plagued U.S. farmers, homeowners, livestock, pets, and wildlife ever since its accidental introduction at Mobile, Alabama, in the 1930s. In 1989, the first fire ant infestation was detected in Hampton. A dramatic increase in the year 2008 showed they are now established, spreading naturally, and cannot be eradicated in the Tidewater area. Since The Office of Plant and Pest Services (OPPS) in the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) can no longer treat areas affected, a permanent quarantine is in place for the counties of James City and York, and the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach and Williamsburg. The quarantine is necessary to reduce the rate of spread of Fire Ants to the areas of Virginia that are currently not infested.

This quarantine affects our giving or selling plants grown in the Williamburg, Hampton and Newport News areas to persons likely to move the plants to non-quarantined areas. We are in the process of obtaining a Compliance Agreement from OPPS/VDACS which will assign someone (me) the responsibility of guaranteeing that any plants we offer to individuals are free of fire ant infestation. That means that owners of the plants, or purchasers of plant material, soil, mulch, etc. must self-inspect the soil.

So, what to look for? Fire ant mounds are found in warm, sunny locations such as landscape beds, lawns, around trees and shrubs, along sidewalk cracks and against buildings. Fire ants are notorious for their aggressive behavior, and can cause serious health problems for humans; they clamp onto their targets with powerful jaws and sting repeatedly. Each sting injects a dose of venom that causes a burning sensation. The stings raise itching blisters that can become infected. In sensitive victims, the stings can cause anaphylactic shock (symptoms include trouble breathing and fainting) or even death.

Fire ants look much like ordinary ants, ⅛–¼ inch long and reddish brown to black in color. Their nests are mound-shaped, some very small and difficult to detect, some up to two feet tall. Check growing areas carefully; if fire ants do crawl onto your skin, they first bite with their mandibles in order to anchor for the thrust of the sting. As soon as you feel this pinching sensation, quickly sweep the ants off before they actually sting, thus reducing the likelihood of additional injury.

If you suspect that you have discovered a red imported fire ant infestation, please use caution and contact your local extension office or the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at 804/786-3515.

For more information, check this website: http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant&pest/fireant.shtml#what, from which this article was taken. **Helen Hamilton**

The Wildflower Czars do a field trip

(Pat Baldwin, Lee Bristow and Mary Hyde Berg)

It was an overcast day, temperatures in the low 80s, a great day for a field trip. Our first stop in Gloucester was along Low Ground Road, where we parked the car and walked along the weedy roadsides. We found several species of *Hypericum*, including *mutilum, gymnathum, hypercoides, crux-andreae* (St. Peterswort) and *gentianoides* (pineweed). *Polygala mariana* (Maryland milkwort) was found, but only occasionally.

Further along in the ditches, we found buttonbush, *Ludwigia alternifolia* (rattlebox), *Ludwigia linearis* and *Pluchea foetida* (with its great smell!). To our suprise, we found a few plants of the genus *Xyris* (species unknown). Known as yellow-eyed grass, there is only one species currently listed for Gloucester County. Across the street, we walked into a large cut-over wooded area dominated by *Scirpus, Eleocharis, Cyperus, Carex, Juncus* and *Rhynchospora* species. *Scirpus cyperinus* (wool grass), with its stately florescence, and *Rhynchospora inexpansa*, with its drooping head, were both prevalent here. Just before returning to the car, we saw a large mass of bright orange flowers. It turned out to be *Polygala lutea* (orange milkwort), with blooms resembling large thimbles. A splendid find, well worth the trip. Returning to the car, we feasted on native blueberries. Some shrubs were so heavily laden with fruit that the branches hung straight down!

Continuing down Low Ground Road just past Zack Road, we were greeted by large numbers of *Sabatia angularis* (rosepink), each plant with multiple blooms and diffuse branching. This is a most beautiful wildflower with wonderful pink petals and a greenish star-like center. Amazingly tall wild lettuce (*Lactuca canadensis*) lined the road, some reaching up to ten feet.

We proceeded along Bray's Point Road to a shaded, damp, spaghnum roadside. We quickly found numerous rich, yolk-yellow *Platanthera cristata* (crested fringed orchid), most just beginning to bloom. *Gratiola pilosa* (hairy hedge-hyssop) made its first appearance. A few more *Xyris* were found but the numerous *Apios americana* (groundnut), with its reddish-brown flowers, twining in tall grasses were the best show.

Platanthera cristata bloom

Leaving lower Gloucester, we traveled on Route 14 and turned onto Exchange Lane. Here the

roadsides were cool, damp and shaded. Three members of the mint family were found; *Pycnanthemum tenuifolium* (mountain mint), *Prunela vulgaris* (self-heal) and *Stachys hyssopfolia* (hedge nettle). White vervain, Virginia dayflower, phlox in seed, two species of *Elaphantopus* (elephant's foot) and a sixth *Hypericum* species, *Hypericum punctatum* (spotted St. Johnswort) were found.

We proceeded on Route 14 into Mathews County, just passing over the North River, and parked along a large ditch whose inclines were made up of very thick spaghnum moss. Hundreds of *Lobelia nutallii* bloomed the entire length of the ditch. Here I found my personal choice for the best discovery, over 60 plants of *Bartonia virginica* (yellow bartonia), a member of the gentian family. The plants were only one to four inches tall, with small white to yellow blooms. I believe this plant is often and easily overlooked. I have encountered this plant in Virginia only once before, and I have been botanizing for over 30 years. **Pat Baldwin**

And now another word from our sponsor...

Gloucester roadsides have been rich with wildflowers this year. Early drought kept grass from overgrowing blooming things, and the **wonderful** reduction in mowing let flowers bloom that had been cut off for many years. There is less ragweed, too, as it was not so much stimulated to germinate by early mowing. Your local VDOT office is listed under "Virginia, Commonwealth of". A call (or **many** calls) of appreciation might help to balance the yelps of the mow-rons.

Drive the back roads and see the glory.

Mowing does have an important role, though. We are in the eastern deciduous forest. Without some disruption here, trees will, in most places, quickly shade out most summer and fall flowers. Some of our best displays occur a year or two after the bush hog's devastating passage.

Mowing is also vital to control stilt grass, *Microstegium,* and Japanese knotweed, *Polygonatum cespetosum*, and those wind-pollinated ragweed and other such "no-flower" plants. Showy flowers don't just add joy. Because their pollen must be large to stay home awaiting insects, etc., and it doesn't blow sneezes to you, they reduce misery. Attack weeds when they bloom/set seed and are vulnerable!

Just as May mowing releases ragweed, August–September mowing releases cool-season grass seed. The grass seed ye always have with ye; don't feed the industrial lawn industry buying seed.

October–February: Plant woody species.
Right now: Kill the weed; prevent the seed.

Gardeners—saving the Earth one drop of sweat at a time.

The Wildflower Nut

Membership Form for John Clayton Chapter, VNPS

(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	

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

Calendar

Saturday, Sept 12	**Native plant walk at Beaverdam Park in Gloucester**, led by Pat Baldwin. *To register and for details, call Mary Hyde Berg at 804/693-3568.*
Thursday, Sept 17	**7–9 pm: John Clayton Chapter's Annual Meeting and 25th Birthday Party** at the Williamsburg/James City Co. Rec. Center on Longhill Road. There will be a raffle to benefit our Nature Camp Scholarship Fund. *Check our website at www.claytonvnps.org for more details.*
Sunday, Sept 20	**1:30 pm at Denbigh Park: Take a tour of a brackish tidal marsh at this small park on the Warwick River.** The park has a boardwalk perfect for viewing cordgrass, black needlerush, seashore mallow, butterfly pea and other species. This will be an easy walk on flat surfaces, about ⅓ mile total. From I-64, take the Jefferson Avenue West exit (towards the airport), go about 1¾ miles and turn left on to Denbigh Blvd., then follow 3 miles to the end of road. To register for the walk, email Phillip Merritt at *claytonsnatives@yahoo.com or call 757/604-1026.* ***We're also working on other possible fieldtrips for September and October, so please be sure to check the website at www.claytonvnps.org for more information.***
Friday, Sept 25 *thru* **Sunday, Sept 27**	**VNPS Annual Meeting at the Salem Civic Center in Salem, Virginia**, hosted by the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and the New River Chapter of VNPS. More information about the meeting can be found at *www.vnps.org/events/2009/07/vnps-2009-annual-meeting.html*.

An update on Pat Pat Gibbs is continuing her recovery at Lynn House, a Christian Science care facility in Alexandria, and Yorke Nelson is picking up bank statements and preparing reimbursement checks during Pat's recuperation. We all look forward to seeing you back home, Pat! **Helen Hamilton**

More photos

The Farmer's Market, July 20

Sara Nugent and Joan Etchberger woman the Chapter's display at the July 20 Farmer's Market, which had a steady stream of interested visitors. Jan Newton, Cynthia Long, Ada Lou Turner, Mary Turnbull and Helen Hamilton also worked at our booth that day.

Dwarf St. John'swort *(Hypericum mutilum)*

A tiny frog in the palm of a participant's hand at Little Creek

A cypress (and some of its knees), viewed from the dock at Chickahominy Park

American beech nuts

Water parsnip *(Sium suave)*

We photograph a small plant (probably spreading eryngo) as Donna gives us more info.

Donna and Ralph Will measure the circumference of the big white oak.

Phillip's beautiful photo of hedge false bindweed *(Calystegia sepium)*

Donna points out how different sand hickory leaves can be, depending upon whether a tree grows in full sun or in shade.