



Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

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www.claytonvnps.org

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Our July 18 Meeting: Jan Newton on “Native Plants for Butterflies and Birds”



Jan Newton, past Education Chair of the Virginia Native Plant Society and current webmaster for the John Clayton Chapter, will present a program featuring photos of and information about native plants that attract and provide food for butterflies and their caterpillars, as well as for birds, and she will provide tips for growing these plants in home gardens. “Plant them and they will come!”

Jan moved to Williamsburg in 1996, joined the Virginia Native Plant Society about 2005, and shortly after learned that the John Clayton Chapter had given her a full year’s membership in recognition of her work with the Stonehouse Elementary Habitat and its students. She became the Publicity Chair for our chapter that fall and began a passionate journey learning about and sharing her ever-growing knowledge of native plants. She has served on the state VNPS Board as the Education Chair and continues to serve our chapter as the webmaster of the chapter’s web site.

Jan is known as the “Plant Lady” for her work with the Stonehouse Elementary School’s Habitat garden in Williamsburg, which she helped design, install, and now maintains, and she educates Stonehouse students through the Habitat Helpers program. She has become a much sought-after speaker from Hampton to Charlottesville to the Northern Neck, and this past year gave over 20 presentations on native plants and their benefits for wildlife to Master Gardener and Master Naturalist groups, garden clubs, civic organizations, schools, and the Roads Scholar program at the College of William and Mary. Jan’s photographs have been published on various web sites and in publications, including a honey bee booklet published by the Louisiana State University, a new book by Helen Hamilton and Gus Hall, *Wildflowers and Grasses of Virginia’s Coastal Plain*, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries’ Love a Tree annual poster for science teachers, and area newspapers. Jan

was the 2011 recipient of the chapter's John Clayton Botany Award "in recognition of her enthusiasm for native plants and being a highly effective advocate and educator."

The meeting begins at **6:45 PM** at the Yorktown Public Library at the intersection of Battle Road and Route 17 in Yorktown. **See you there!**

"Reverie: Images from the Prairies, Woodlands and Wetlands of the Midwest" was the topic at our May meeting.

Our program on May 16 was in many ways like attending a symphony for the eyes! Linda and Robert Scarth presented a slide show of their beautiful photographs of natural subjects, accompanied by an equally lovely and ethereal instrumental soundtrack. It was a most enjoyable evening.

Louise Menges



The audience watches raptly as the Scarths' presentation unfolds.

New members

Welcome to new members **Lonnie Mattes** of Williamsburg, **Barbara Dunbar** of Yorktown, and **Susan Yager** of Newport News.

A call for nominations: 2013 John Clayton Botany Award and JCC Community Service Award

The John Clayton Botany Award is given to a person who has excelled in teaching others in our chapter and/or members of the public about the wonders of the plant world. The John Clayton Community Service Award goes to a person whose work has added to the beauty of our community through such activities as creating gardens, reclaiming spoiled habitats, rescuing plants, etc., and/or has worked to prevent the degradation or destruction of native plants and their habitats.

Please send a one paragraph (or up to one page long) recommendation to Donna Ware at 14 Buford Rd., Williamsburg, VA 23188 or dmeware@verizon.net by July 31st. Any nominee must receive at least 3 recommendations to be considered. Awards (if any are given) are presented at the September membership meeting.

Donna Ware, Chairman, Awards Committee

Recent JCC walks

April 28 walk at Lafayette High School's Nature Trail

Well, I finally downloaded some photos of the April 28th plant walk at Lafayette High School. Jan Newton and I filled in at the last minute when Gus Hall had to cancel. I hadn't been to the site before and I was actually a little lost when I got there for the walk, but with the help of a couple of field trippers, we were able to find the right trail. We had hoped to find some trillium in bloom on this visit, but as I recall there were only few almost dried up blooms to be seen. I did learn something interesting about the leaves though. Amidst the three leaved stems that are typical of trilliums were some single leafed



Phillip Merritt

A may apple blossom.

plants. One of the field trippers thought they might be also be trilliums, and sure enough, when I looked into it I learned that first year trilliums only have a single leaf. Among the flowers that we did see in bloom were violets, golden ragwort, may apple, pawpaw, cardamine and claytonia. And we did see many pink ladyslippers, but only the leaves. However, after the walk finished, Jan and I went back to take some more pictures. And not 10 feet beyond where the group had finished the walk there was a beautiful pink ladyslipper in full bloom. What a shame we didn't see it the first time!

Phillip Merritt



Louise Menges

Phillip shows us the tall unfurling fronds of cinnamon ferns.



Phillip Merritt

Phillip's pink ladyslipper.



Jan Newton took these photos of *Claytonia virginica* (left) and a pair of pawpaw flowers along the trail.

A walk on the W&M campus on May 4

It was a cool and slightly dreary May 4 morning, at an early, but not too early, hour. Our group, easily identified by sensible walking shoes, cargo pants, safari hats, and hiking shorts, gathered in the Crim Dell amphitheater after only a minor parking snafu at PBK (what's new...) Our fearless leaders, **Dr. Marty Mathes** and **Helen Hamilton**, gathered us together (and that's saying a lot because there were several dozen of us), and we set off through the wilds of the William and Mary campus to visit their special trees—native specimens *and* those carefully and purposefully transported from elsewhere.

We learned a great deal of interesting information about the origins of the whole Crim Dell wildlife area. Dr. Mathes shared several humorous anecdotes about his involvement over the years and the commitment of Dr. John Baldwin, who was an early force in horticultural efforts at W&M.

Personal favorites along the way included the lovely Blue Ice Juniper, several chestnut varieties, the Dawn Redwoods (tallest if not biggest species in America), the large and lovely cryptomeria (sounded like Superman plants to me), and the Windmill Palm trees in the shelter of the ell at Ewell Hall.

As promised, Dr. Mathes had us back to the parking lot before any tickets were issued and a wonderful and informative time was had by all.

Ginny Carey, Master Naturalist, Historic Rivers Chapter

A May 11 walk at Freedom Park that went ahead despite being canceled!

Leader **Donna Ware** canceled a plant walk on May 11 at Freedom Park because only two people had registered, but six participants who had not registered were at the Park and ready for a walk when Donna stopped by to make sure everyone knew about the cancellation. The



Mary Turnbull

Though we can't tell which tree Dr. Mathes is describing here, it's clear that his listeners are engaged!



Mary Turnbull

Dr. Mathes stands before a blooming red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*) on campus.

earlier rain shower had stopped by then, so we began. Donna said she would give us an abbreviated version, but we walked until noon and learned about 41 plants and 4 “moving critters.”

The highlight of the walk was a demonstration by Donna as she pretended to be a pollinator of the Mountain Laurel. Mountain Laurel flowers have stamens that are held within the folds of petals under tension.



Donna was not expecting to see Canadian lousewort (*Pedicularis canadensis*) but there it was, just coming into bloom.



An up-close look at mountain laurel flower structure.

When an insect pollinator (Donna) visits the flower, the filament snaps the anther against the body of the insect, releasing the pollen. Then the magic happened: after being crushed the blossom sprang back to its original shape with the stamens no longer trapped in the

petals, to the oohs and aahs of the onlookers.

Phyllis Putnam

A walk in Mary Turnbull’s garden on May 25

Mary began planning her native plant garden walk weeks ahead of time. She numbered 88 native plants and for some plants provided photographs of flowers not yet in bloom. Each participant received a list of common and botanical names for a self-guided tour. Mary, her husband Allen, and friend Kathryn Blue helped participants by pointing out interesting plants and telling stories about the features of the garden. They offered refreshments and order forms for Helen Hamilton’s new book on flowering plants of Virginia’s Coastal Plain.

Prior to the walk, Donna Ware made her third visit to the garden to help identify native species. On this visit, she added several tree species to the list: Persimmon, Bitternut Hickory, American Elm, and Green Ash. She also clarified a few species for Mary, including Sedge, Wood Rush, False Nettle, Honewort, and Rose Azalea. Over her visits to the garden, Don-

na has identified 50 native plants. During the last 8 to 9 years and prior to joining the John Clayton Chapter of the Native Plant Society, Mary had planted an additional 38 non-native species.

The garden paths, with many steps and steep inclines, were freshly mulched the day before the walk. (Mulch was spread several days earlier, but a 4-inch rain had washed most of it away.) The swollen spring-fed creek also washed away at least one of the plants for display. Number 66 was an Elderberry, and the group all said goodbye to it.

More than 50 participants came from the community to stroll in the garden. Four groups were represented: the Native Plant Society, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and a few folks from the Williamsburg Area Bicyclists. I spoke to a few of the participants and asked them what they learned or liked best.

“I liked the very delicate flower of Hearts-a-bustin.” “I was impressed by the white canopy of the Alternate-leaf Dogwood.”

“I learned how to identify Jumpseed by looking for a purple V-shaped pattern on the leaf.” “Mary’s landscaping is amazing.” “I loved the meditation bench by the side of the stream. Mary said that she often sits there and looks up to the sculpture, a remembrance of her cat Sadie.”

Adrienne Frank



Mary Turnbull

Everyone was looking for the 88 native plants on the printed list.



Mary Turnbull

Dorothy Whitfield sat on the Meditation Bench to enjoy the native plants growing in this part of the garden, which included lizard’s tail, hog-peanut, bitternut hickory, hooked crowfoot, coral bells, marsh fern, false nettle, green ash, common violet, honewort, American elms, and summer grape.

Upcoming walks—

A rescheduled Spring Wildflower Walk at Freedom Park on Saturday, July 6, 9 am to noon

Donna Ware will again lead this walk around Colby Swamp at Freedom Park, where we hope to see foamflower, log fern, and blue monkshood, among others. Wear shoes that can get wet and expect about 1.5 miles of walking.

The Park is at 535 Centerville Road at its intersection with Longhill Road, Williamsburg. Meet at the parking area for the Free Black Settlement (the left-most/southern-most parking area associated with the Visitor's Center).

Please register by calling Donna Ware at 757-565-0657 or emailing her at dmware@verizon.net.

Gosnold's Hope Park in Hampton on July 13 at 10 am

Botanist **Pat Baldwin** will lead a plant walk Saturday, July 13 at **10 am** in Gosnold's Hope Park, 901 E. Little Back River Road, Hampton. Many interesting plants can be seen in the undeveloped habitat at the back of the park, which is pine forest bordered by a small tidal slough with wetland plants.

To register and for more information contact Pat Baldwin at 757-838-2064.

Denbigh Park in Newport News on August 3 at 9 am

Phillip Merritt will lead a plant walk at Denbigh Park in Newport News. This small park has a lovely view of the Warwick River and the boardwalk allows close-up views of aquatic plants. Meet at **9 am**.

Email Phillip at phillip.merritt@gmail.com to sign up and for more information, or just show up!

Longhill Swamp on September 14 at 9 am

Donna Ware will lead a plant walk around and through Longhill Swamp. Meet at **9 am** in the first parking lot of the Williamsburg Indoor Sports Complex building at 5700 Warhill Trail, off Longill Road, Williamsburg.

Please register by calling Donna Ware at 757-565-0657 or emailing her at dmware@verizon.net.

Notes from left field

Native Plants Make you Healthier?

Oh, come on. Is this about Stalking the Wild Asparagus? Thankfully, no.

A couple of weeks ago, I was listening to NPR's Science Friday (it was a Friday, if I remember correctly), and thought I heard the person being interviewed say something about how having native plants in your yard makes you healthier. Huh? Since I'm hearing-impaired, I often hear things in, shall we say, creative ways (like when my pilates teacher said, "Now everyone, take your clothes off..."), so I had some legwork to do.

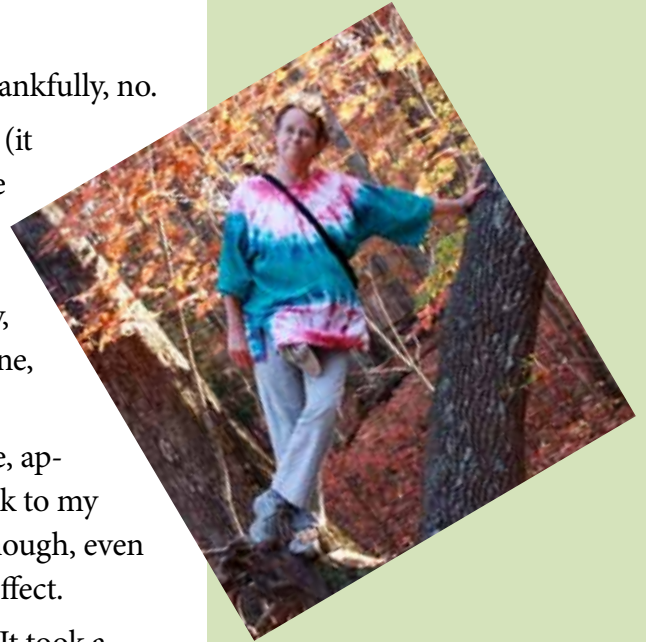
First, I made a note on a sticky note in my car about the date, approximate time, and topic of the show. Then, when I got back to my office, I got online and listened to that segment, and, sure enough, even after hearing it 3 or 4 times, the guy said something to that effect.

So, now I had to find out what the heck he was referring to. It took a little time to find him, and then bug him gently for a reply. He is Rob Dunn, Associate Professor of Biology at NC State. He emailed me back with a link to his article in *Conservation Magazine* about a study in Finland conducted by Ilkka Hanski et. al. at the University of Finland (see link below). The scientists collected and compared data on the microbial populations on the skin of adolescents in one city and region in Finland who lived in two types of home environments: those with lots of biodiversity surrounding the home and those with very little. They measured biodiversity in terms of native plant biodiversity. They took forearm swab samples to compare skin microbial populations between the adolescent subjects.

Data from 118 adolescents from 118 houses showed "...a remarkably clear pattern. Higher native-plant diversity appeared to be associated with altered microbial composition on the participants' skin, which led in turn to lower risk of allergies."¹ The type of microbes that were found to have the strongest correlation with subjects' allergies were gammaproteobacteria. If you are still seething with unanswered questions at this point, you will probably want to read his article in full.

Here is Dunn's full writeup on the *Conservation Magazine* website, which includes his discussion of the Finland study. <http://www.conservation-magazine.org/2012/09/biodiversity-under-our-skin/>

Here's a link to the study (abstract only); I couldn't get the whole thing without paying for it...<http://www.pnas.org/content/109/21/8334>.



Several questions remain, including whether this result can be replicated, what the role of gammaproteobacteria is in the immune system, and what role microbial populations and diversity play in our health and well-being. And then there's that native-plant thing. They weren't comparing native vs. nonnative diversity, so that's another question to pose. But, nonetheless, it is a surprising and interesting result, and hints at the complexity of these relationships and the importance of understanding them better.

My own solution? Eat more dirt.

¹Dunn, Rob, *Conservation Magazine*, University of Washington, June 13, 2013

Kathi Mestayer

July–August Wildflower profile: Bellflowers

Several plants in the Bellflower Family (*Campanulaceae*) bloom in summer. The smallest, blooming April through June, is Venus' Looking-glass (*Triodanis perfoliata*). Usually only 1–2 feet tall, the stem is wand-like and does not branch. All along the stem are small (½ inch wide) vivid purple-blue flowers emerging near the cup-shaped leaves.

This little plant grows in poor soil such as abandoned fields and along railroads and roadsides, especially where gravelly or sandy. The plant is found in every county of Virginia and from Maine to British Columbia south to tropical America.

A charming folk tale about a European species tells of a drop of water that can collect in the leaf's cup, acting as a mirror for Venus. *Triodanis* means "three teeth," referring to the seed, and *perfoliata* comes from the Latin for "through the leaf," referring to the cup-shaped leaves which almost surround the stem.

Tall Bellflower (*Campanula americana*) blooms from late June through September. This plant is a mountain disjunct, native to the mountain regions of Virginia, but growing in a few coastal counties where deep ravines have exposed limy fossiliferous soils.

The plant grows 2–6 feet tall, depending on moisture conditions and soil fertility. The lance-shaped leaves are 6 inches long and 2 inches wide, tapering to a slender petiole. Showy blue flowers, one inch across, are individually short-lived, but bloom in succession higher on the spike for over a month. A winter annual or biennial, there is usually a single unbranched stem from a taproot. Long-tongued bees such as bumblebees are the primary pollinators of the flowers.



Venus' Looking-glass



Tall Bellflower

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) and Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) bloom a little later, from July through October.

One of the few native plants with a true red color, Cardinal Flower produces just one elongate, densely packed flower cluster per stalk. The intensely scarlet tubular flowers open from bottom to top in the cluster and bloom for several weeks. In each flower, the long gray stamens project through a split in the upper lip. In rich soil the plant will grow 2–4 feet tall, in sun or shade.

Cardinal Flower grows best in moist, rich soils in full sun to partial shade. The leaf rosettes must be open to the sun through the winter to ensure good growth the next summer. The plant will self-sow and the seedlings can be transplanted in the fall or early spring. This perennial ranges from New Brunswick to Minnesota and south to the Gulf of Mexico, and is known from nearly every county in Virginia.

The flowers of this plant furnish nectar to hummingbirds and swallowtail butterflies. Since most insects find it difficult to penetrate the long tubular flowers, Cardinal Flower depends heavily on hummingbirds for pollination. The common name alludes to the bright red robes worn by Roman Catholic cardinals.

Flowers of the genus *Lobelia* all have 2 narrow lobes or “ears” above, with 3 wider lobes forming a lip below. The inch-long violet-blue flowers of Great Blue Lobelia are striped with white on the 3 lower lobes, which appear more prominent than the lobes above. Leaves are alternate on the stem, finely toothed, and pointed. The plant grows 1–3 feet high, with the flowers arranged in an elongate terminal cluster on a stiff, unbranched, leafy stalk.

Great Blue Lobelia is easily grown in wet to moist soil, fertile and loamy, in partial sun. In full sun the soil must be consistently moist. Found in meadows, moist thickets, and swamps from Maine to Manitoba and Colorado, south to North Carolina and Texas, Great Blue Lobelia grows in most counties of Virginia.

Early medical writers thought American Indians used the root primarily to treat syphilis, hence the species name *siphilitica*. While potentially poisonous, it was used by the American Indians for syphilis, and a leaf tea for a number of illnesses, such as colds, worms, nosebleeds, coughs and headaches.

Helen Hamilton



Another Successful Plant Sale!

Many thanks to all who volunteered for another successful Native Plant Sale! This year the sale was held at Jamestown Beach Park, a new venue on Jamestown Road across from the Jamestown Settlement, on April 27, jointly with the Master Gardeners and Williamsburg Botanical Garden plant sales. There was ample parking for customers and plenty of space for several tables of sun and butterfly plants, tents for the shade and part shade plants, and an array of shrubs and trees. In spite of a smaller inventory due to the cold, wet spring, we successfully raised over \$3850 to support chapter programs and Nature Camp scholarships.

At least 35 members donated their time and effort to setup on Friday and to help with the sale and cleanup on Saturday. We also had the support of sixteen Boy Scouts under the leadership of Hike Master Jim (Etchberger) and two nature camp scholars who assisted customers taking purchases to their vehicles. Thanks to Joan and Jim Etchberger, Mary and Alan Turnbull, and Edie Bradbury for lending tents and tables and for their general assistance. Many people helped during the entire year, preparing for the sale: planting and growing, planning, organizing, transporting, and publicizing. This year we also were able to accept credit cards for the pre-sale on Friday, thanks to Steve Stasulis, president of the South Hampton Roads VNPS chapter, who lent us a machine. Thank you all! Special thanks to Lucile Kossodo, plant coordinator, who organized several digs and potting parties and obtained plants from several sources so we could offer a fine selection of native



Volunteers transported and unloaded all the plants before the sale.



We begin to fill tables with plants for sale under one of the canopies.



I know I saw more of these somewhere!

plants. Also I want to specifically thank Tim Costelloe, Bill Morris, and Jim Etchberger for transporting many loads of plants. Many people helped and I thank them all! We were glad to donate the unsold plants to the Eco Discovery Park to enhance their native plantings, to school butterfly gardens, to Hospice House, and to New Quarter Park for rain garden and natural habitats in public areas.

Believe it or not, it soon will time to begin planning for the 2014 sale. Please look around your native plantings for possible donations to the next sale!

I am most grateful to the members of 2013 Plant sale committee for their support: Jan Newton, Louise Menges, Lucile Kossodo, Tim Costelloe, Mary Turnbull, Phyllis Putnam, and Joan Etchberger (past chair).

Susan Voigt, 2013 Plant Sale Committee Chair

Photos: Steve Stasulis, Sue Voigt, and Fred Blystone



Joan Etchberger, Jan Newton, and Sue Voigt pause during their labors for a picture.



Lucile Kossodo checks labels.



A consultation with the Prez.



Plant Sale visitors look over our offerings.



Cashiers Judith Kator and Patti Gray, left, and Phyllis Putnam, right, at work.

Calendar

- Saturday, July 6** **9 am–noon: Donna Ware** will lead a *rescheduled* Spring Wildflower Walk at Freedom Park. (See Page 7.)
- Saturday, July 13** **10 am: Pat Baldwin** will lead a plant walk in Gosnold's Hope Park in Hampton. (See Page 7.)
- Thursday, July 18** **6:45 pm: John Clayton Chapter Meeting at the Yorktown Public Library** at the intersection of Battle Road and Route 17 in Yorktown. Our speaker is **Jan Newton**, whose subject will be "**Native Plants for Butterflies and Birds.**" (See Page 1.)
- Saturday, August 3** **9 am: Phillip Merritt** will lead a plant walk at Denbigh Park in Newport News. (See Page 7.)
- Saturday, September 14** **9 am: Donna Ware** will lead a plant walk around and through Longhill Swamp. (See Page 7.)
- Saturday, October 5** **9 am: Gus Hall and Helen Hamilton** lead a walk at Little Creek Reservoir. (More details in the next newsletter)
- Saturday, October 19** **10 am: Pat Baldwin** will lead a plant walk at Grafton Ponds Natural Area Preserve (More details in the next newsletter)

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

If your renewal date is 02/28/12 or earlier, this is the last issue you will receive until you renew.

Contact Membership Chair **Patti Gray** at 757/645-4164 or at *patriciagray67@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
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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

If you would like to place an order for Helen Hamilton's wildflower book before it hits the shelves, below is a form you may use to order directly from the publisher, BRIT Press. *Editor*

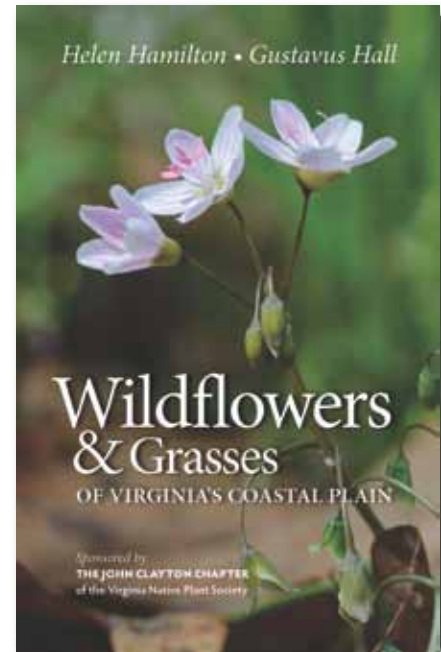
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