



Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

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www.claytonvnps.org

Officers

President Phillip Merritt
352/727-1994
phillip.merritt@gmail.com

Vice-President Lucile Kossodo
757/565-0769
kossodo@cox.net

Treasurer Phyllis Putnam
757/229-8035
phylputnam@cox.net

Secretary Cortney Langley
757/291-1500
clangley@plantrescue.org

Committee Chairs

Awards/Historian Open

Education Kathryn Peterson-Lambert
757/270-6972
triplam747@aol.com

Hospitality Martha Smith
757/566-0127
martha@hollyforks.com

Membership Fred Blystone
757/229-4346
fredblystone@gmail.com

Newsletter Louise Menges
757/229-4346
louisemenges6@gmail.com

Plant Rescue Cortney Langley
757/291-1500
clangley@plantrescue.org

Plant Sale Co-chairs

Susan Voigt 757/229-6513
svoigt1@cox.net

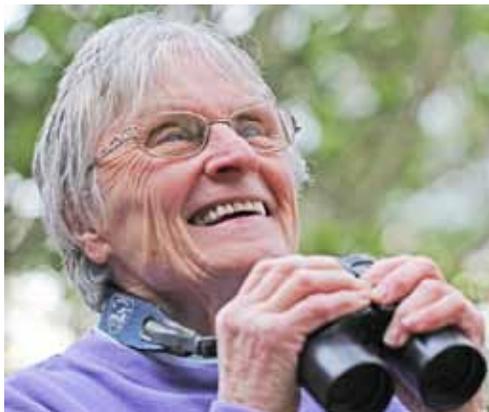
Patti Gray 757/645-4164
patriciagray67@gmail.com

Plant Walks Helen Hamilton
757/564-4494
helen48@cox.net

Publicity Patrick Teague
757/903-5450
patrickoteague@cox.net

Web (Acting) Phillip Merritt
352/727-1994
phillip.merritt@gmail.com

Our March 20 Meeting: Teta Kain will speak on “Flora of the Dragon Run”



Dragon Run is a 40-mile-long river that runs through Virginia’s Middle Peninsula. It is the headwaters of the Pianka-tank River and it serves as the boundary line that separates Essex, King & Queen, Middlesex and Gloucester counties. Its shores are lined with

freshwater swamps, massive bald cypress trees, and a host of other plants, some that are unique to this type of environment. Because of those extensive swamps, few have ever traveled this hidden waterway, and its inaccessibility lends an air of mystery and intrigue.

Over the past 20 years, Teta Kain, local naturalist and wildlife photographer, has been kayaking the river, photographing both plants and animals she finds along its shores. Gliding by ancient trees, navigating narrow, twisting channels, and pushing through lush stands of water plants, Teta, in her trusty flat-water kayak, gets close-up photos of the many species that abound. Along with the visual feast of the Dragon’s beauty, Teta will include a few stories about her adventures on the river.

Teta has been a wildlife photographer for over 40 years, and has traveled extensively throughout the United States, and especially in Virginia, photographing everything from bugs to birds. She has been involved with nature and environmental organizations since the early 1980s.

Over the years, Teta’s broadening awareness of the natural world has prompted her to “always take a camera along.” She has a library of over 25,000 photographs which she uses in slide programs she presents to various groups around the state. As she says, “Nature study and photography have been the governing forces in my life and have led me on incredible paths of adventure.”

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!**

From the President

Even though it's hard to imagine it will ever warm up again, it's time to start thinking about plant walks. There are 3 scheduled as of now, and I'll be planning additional walks (2 or more per month), so check back on www.claytonvnps.org from time to time, and also give the John Clayton Facebook page a great big like so you can follow announcements there as well. By the way, if there's a spot that you know of that will make for an interesting walk, please let me know! **Phillip Merritt**

January's meeting: "Heath Diversity in the Mid-Atlantic Region"

Our speaker, plant ecologist Rod Simmons, gave us an illustrated tour of the Mid-Atlantic's native members of the Heath Family, which occur throughout most of the region. Heaths range from tiny plants such as Trailing Arbutus (*Epigaea repens*), Sweet Pinesap (*Monotropsis odorata*), and Pipsissewa (*Chimaphila umbellata*), through shrubs like the many azaleas and blueberry relatives, to Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*), the only tree in the family native to our area.

Rod was kind enough to make his "slides" available after his presentation, and I include here a few, along with the text which accompanied them—they do a much better job of giving a feel for the information his talk conveyed than any description I could write.

Louise Menges



Rod Simmons



Dense colonies of ericads along old "white sand" road east of Cox Landing—the southern extension of Rt. 747—through the recently protected 3,143 acre South Quay Sandhills Natural Area Preserve east of the Blackwater River in the City of Suffolk, Virginia. This landscape appeared much the same in the late 1990s, when Mark Strong and Rod Simmons revisited the site to update the flora, as when Harvard botanist M.L. Fernald extensively botanized the area in the 1930s and 40s. The site's dry to mesic, upland sandhill communities support Virginia's last remaining stands of naturally occurring Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*), as well as numerous other rarities.



Photo by The Garden Centre Group

Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) (L.) The region's only tree of the Ericaceae occurs in acidic, dry to mesic, upland forest slopes and openings, as well as sandy woods of the coastal plain. It ranges in eastern North America from Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania south to Louisiana and Florida. It occupies an extreme range distribution in Maryland, with sole extant populations in dry to mesic, acidic forests of the Appalachian Plateau (AP) in Garrett County and historical occurrence in sandy woods of Worchester County (ES). It is absent from the Western Shore (WS), Piedmont (PD), Blue Ridge (BR), and Ridge and Valley (RV) in Maryland. In Virginia, it is common throughout the southern half of the state; less so north of Richmond; and absent from northern Virginia.



Rod Simmons

Staggerbush (*Lyonia mariana*) (L.) A medium-sized shrub of acidic, dry to mesic, Oak-Pine-Heath forests, ranging from New York and Connecticut south to Texas and Florida (disjunct in some central and deep south states). A plant of the coastal plain in Maryland and Virginia, it is rare in the piedmont and absent from the mountains.



Photo by Garth Wedemire

Coast Azalea, Dwarf Azalea (*Rhododendron atlanticum*) (Ashe) Rehder_{G₄G₅}. A low shrub of dry to mesic, sandy, Oak-Pine-Heath woods primarily of the Atlantic coastal plain, ranging from eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware south to Georgia. In Maryland, it is known only from sandy woods of the Eastern Shore.

February 8th's nude tree walk

Saturday was cloudy and overcast, a messy kind of cold weather day when a lot of folks want to stay inside and sit by the fire. Not so for the 35 or so brave souls who ventured out (with clothes on—yes! It was the trees that were nude, not us) to join Charlie Dubay as he led us down the garden path. Well, not exactly the garden path, but rather a trail through the woods at William and Mary.

The day began with a talk over at the James City-Williamsburg Rec Center. It was here that Charlie shared with us an overview of winter tree identification. With photos, branches, dried leaves, and pantyhose for Christmas fern seedlings, we learned—in merely two hours—how to discover and identify what was what in the woods in Williamsburg. After that, we were ready to head out and put our knowledge to the test.



Our leader points out features of a tree's winter buds.



We use the keys Charlie provided us to help ID trees along our walk.

After a brief introduction and some easy practice near the parking lot, we wandered into the woods by William and Mary Hall. Each numbered tree needed to be named, and we very quickly banded together to share knowledge and to try to help each other. In the next two hours, we learned bunches, practiced new skills, and bonded with new friends. The day warmed up and we ended with a blue sky, lots of smiles, and a new appreciation of winter tree identification—and of Charlie's incredible storehouse of knowledge as well as his willingness to share it.

Judy Jones



Charlie's identification clues for American Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), posted on its trunk.

Upcoming JCC walks...

Sunday, March 9: Helen Hamilton will lead a naked plant walk in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden.

Join Helen at 1:30 for a walk in the Botanical Garden in Freedom Park to identify emerging weeds, overwintering shrubs, grasses, and stems of perennials, all of which create a landscape with much winter interest. Meet in the Freedom Park Interpretive Center parking lot. Contact Helen at 757-565-4494 or helen48@cox.net for information and to register.



Helen took this photo of some of the overwintering grasses at the Botanical Garden in mid-February.



Kathi Mestayer

Uvularia perfoliata

Saturday, April 12: Pat Baldwin leads a walk in Gloucester's Beaverdam Park.

Join Pat at 10 am at the Fary's Mill Road entrance for a walk through Beaverdam Park, where we can expect to see Jacob's Ladder (*Polygonum repens*) and Merrybells (*Uvularia* sp.) among the spring wildflowers in bloom there.

For information and to register, please call Pat at 757-838-2064.

Saturday, June 2: Pat Baldwin will lead a walk on the Warhill Trail in James City County.

Pat predicts sightings of Horsemint (*Monarda punctata*), Blue Curls (*Trichostema* sp.) and White Milkweed (*Asclepias variegata*) on this walk. Meet in the first parking lot for the trail at 10 am.

For information and to register, please call Pat at 757-838-2064.



Phillip Merritt

Monarda punctata

We need your help! Our Plant Sale is April 26, and 4 Potting Parties are coming up...

Yes, spring is coming, although it has been cold and wintry. We have already arranged four potting parties. **A successful Plant Sale needs plants to sell and volunteers to help plant them!**

Saturday, March 15

The first potting party will be in the James City County area on Saturday, March 15 at 9 am at Stonehouse Elementary's Habitat, 3651 Rochambeau Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23188. We will dig at Stonehouse and then pot the plants nearby at our plant staging area at Joan Etchberger's home (757-784-2882), 100 Woodland Road, in Woodland Farms.

Host: Lucile Kossodo (home 757-565-0769/cell 757-784-2882)

Saturday, March 22

The second potting party will again be in the James City County area on Saturday, March 22 at 9 am. Our host will be Joan Etchberger. and we will dig and pot plants from her garden at 100 Woodland Road in Woodland Farms (757-784-2882). If you want to donate plants to the sale from your garden, you can bring them to Joan's house and we will pot and care for them until the sale.

Saturday, March 29

The third potting party will be again be in the James City County area on Saturday, March 29 at 9 am. Host: Lucile Kossodo (home 757-565-0769/cell 757-784-2882) at Stonehouse Elementary's Habitat, 3651 Rochambeau Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23188. We will dig at Stonehouse and then pot the plants nearby at our plant staging area at Joan Etchberger's home (757-784-2882), 100 Woodland Road, in Woodland Farms .

Thursday, April 3

The fourth potting party will be in Gloucester's White Marsh area on Thursday, April 3 at 1 pm. Hosts are Hayes and Joyce Williams: 6135 Brookwood Lane, White Marsh (cell 804-694-6235/home 804-693-4417). Call for directions to their home.

It is important that you contact Lucile Kossodo either by phone (home 757-565-0769/cell 757-784-2882) or by email (lkossodo@cox.net) to let her know which potting party you plan come to, so that in case of inclement weather or other unforeseen changes you can be notified of them! Dress in work clothes, bring water, a snack, and bug spray.

Here is another great opportunity to support the goals of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society. Funds raised from



the sale of these plants will help send students to Nature Camp, fund scholarships, and conduct educational programs and other projects that are important to the Chapter. You can learn a lot about our native plants and meet other members, and **we could use your help.**

Lucile Kossodo

A plant is a plant for a'that:

Introducing Kathryn Peterson-Lambert, our new Education Chair

Kathryn, who lives in Virginia Beach, is originally from California. She studied and worked a year in a college botany lab before joining the U.S. Navy. While stationed in Japan, she was a part-time employee of a Japanese business company and traveled extensively throughout Asia, hiking and observing plants in her spare time. She has volunteered extensively on Virginia Beach garden club boards, PTA boards, VNPS chapter boards, and the Tidewater Chinese School board while counseling children with educational choices, and Asian Pacific cultural education. She assisted with theme gardens, Reflection programs at Virginia Beach Public schools, and Council of PTAs, and serves as a volunteer local plant advisor on native plants in the city landscape. She has received over 200 hours of advance training in botanical studies such as horticulture short courses, Project Learning tree, international forestry, environmental coastal training, tree identification, plant propagation, and pollinator training. She has been working with other professionals as a volunteer on native plant marketing for the Commonwealth. She enjoys hiking in the mountains of east and west coastal ranges while writing and lecturing on the historical and current uses of plants in medicine. She received degrees from College of Staten Island and ODU, attending advanced courses.

Kathryn has agreed to contribute a regular column about native plants, and begins with this one:

Have a cup of Joe!

Joe Pye Weeds: *Eupatorium Purpureum* L. and *Eutrochium* (formerly *Eupatorium*) *dubium*

These two native perennials are found in the Coastal Plains and have a range from Nova Scotia to South Carolina (not native to the low country), including eastern counties of Virginia. The Joe Pye Weeds are perfect for our area because they enjoy acidic soil. *Dubium* is our smaller perennial and grows 3 to 10 feet tall. *Purpureum* is the larger species. Case in point: I saw a stand of *Purpureum* growing in a depressed area (possibly reaching for more light) in western Virginia



that was 20 to 25 feet tall. Both of these species have whorl-shaped leaves and dense, 3 to 7 inch, disk-shaped flowers in shades of pink and purple across their diameter.

The plant is a host to Leconte's Haploa, *Haploa lecontei*. The Haploa caterpillar enjoys crawling around foundations and buildings, which makes Joe Pye Weed a great candidate for a yard addition. The Common Pug, *Eupithecia miserulata*, also hosts on Joe Pye. The Pug is polyphagous and is a regular visitor to gardens. You will find both of these caterpillars in the summer and fall. Joe Pye Weed also supports many butterflies like Swallowtails, American and Painted Ladies, and Fritillaries, as it is a nectar plant.

Joe Pye Weeds are very easy to grow. Furthermore, they require no fertilizer and no additional watering except during extreme droughts. *Purpureum* is also important as a medicinal plant. *Purpureum* leaf and root tea have been used traditionally to induce sweating, which helps to fight Typhus fever; the tea can also be used as an elixir for kidney infections or painful urination. German researchers have reported immunologically active polysaccharides. The plant was marketed by Joe Pye in the 19th century and received its common name from him.

References: *Flora of Virginia, Wildflowers and Grasses of Virginia's Coastal Plain* (Helen Hamilton and Gustavus Hall), *Caterpillars of Eastern North America* (David L. Wagner), *Wildflowers of Tidewater Virginia* (Oscar W. Gupton and Fred C. Swope).

Kathryn Peterson-Lambert

Notes from left field...

Chinese wisteria (the mystery continues)

Ever since I wrote about my next-door neighbor's chinese wisteria sneaking into my yard (and getting caught by the roots), my email box has been overflowing with questions about what happened next. Last weekend we had the first good gardening day in awhile, and since there was not much planting to do, I did maintenance.

Well, at some point, I bumped into the end of the chinese wisteria runner that I had painted with roundup. Still dead. But still attached to the rest of the runner, which continued underground to the neighbor's mother plant. Never one to leave well enough alone, I pulled at it until I got right up next to the mother, clipped it, and re-rounded it



A Joe Pye Weed in bloom



up. Then, I took the runners that I pulled up that day, arranged them end-to-end in the driveway, and got the measuring tape out. Twenty-five linear feet. And that's not counting the pulling I did when I discovered it, which was easily another 25 feet.



Kathi provides photodocumentation of the runners' total length. Wow, it *is* at least 25 feet—amazing!

So, now I understand how the chinese wisteria got so bad at the Glass House site on Jamestowne Island (it's looking much better now). It sneaks up on you, invisibly, insidiously....

Kathi Mestayer

Book news

Local Master Gardeners and Native Plant Society members are hearing talks about “Plants for Pollinators,” and “Wildlife Gardening,” and “Native Ornamental Grasses.” In January I attended the Mid-Atlantic Horticultural Conference and the Virginia Beach Flower and Garden Show (our sister chapter, South Hampton Roads VNPS, gave me a table at their nice exhibit) and made good contacts for future talks.

In February, programs have been given and are scheduled for the Prince George Master Gardeners, the Hanover Master Gardeners, and the native plant chapters of Potowmack, Northern Neck, and South Hampton Roads. And Christopher Wren classes will hear about “Sex in Gardens.”



I took this photo of my exhibit at the VA Beach Flower and Garden Show.

Programs coming up in March include the Horticultural Extravaganza at Tabb High School, a training class and a chapter presentation to the James City/Williamsburg Master Gardeners, three programs for the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, and a class for W.A.L.T.

Educating the public about backyard native plant habitats is a primary purpose for these events, and of course, copies of *Wildflowers and Grasses of Virginia's Coastal Plain* have been offered for sale. All retail and college Barnes and Noble bookstores in the Coastal Plain, including those in D.C., New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, have been contacted. Our book is on order at the two B&N stores in Williamsburg and the store on Jefferson Avenue in Newport News. With these initiatives, we hope sales will increase in the spring.

Helen Hamilton

Now Appearing in Your Neighborhood

Hairy Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*) is beginning to flower in lawns, fields, roadsides, disturbed habitats. This weedy annual, native to Europe and Asia, is easily recognized by a persistent basal rosette, to 8 inches across, of long-petioled leaves with 5–9 leaflets. Tiny white flowers bloom at the end of a long central stem that has a few small leaves with hairy petioles, which is why the common name includes “hairy. As the flowers fade, long, flat seedpods will soon disperse zillions of weeds. Naturalized in moist soil from southern New York to Illinois and Alabama, and every county in Virginia, Hairy Bittercress is a common and conspicuous garden weed; the plant self-seeds vigorously almost everywhere.

Blooming February through May, the flowers furnish nectar to a few early butterflies. The leaves have a hot, cress-like flavor and can be used in salads.

Helen Hamilton

Outreach at Bruton High

Recently, Helen Hamilton and Kathryn Peterson-Lambert talked with Environmental Science students at Bruton High School. While Helens’ talk emphasized gardening for native insects with some plant sex (to keep the students awake), Kathryn focused on the class project. Their teacher, Amy Lockwood, has tried for several years to establish three gardens outside the school. This year she’s helping the students start seeds in the classroom, and Kathryn will be designing layouts for a vegetable garden, shrub garden, and native perennials.



Helen Hamilton



In this group photo taken with the students, Amy Lockwood is on the far right, Kathryn third from left, and Helen in the middle (*just look for the green hair*).

Below is a membership renewal form. **If your renewal date is 12/31/13 or earlier**, this is the last newsletter issue you will receive until you renew. Please contact Membership Chair **Fred Blystone** at 757/229-4346 or at fredblystone@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 Blandly Farm Lane, Unit 2
 Boyce, VA 22610

John Clayton Chapter Calendar

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|---------------------------|---|
| Sunday, March 9 | 1:30 pm: Helen Hamilton will lead a Naked Plant Walk in the Botanical Garden in Freedom Park to identify emerging weeds, overwintering shrubs, grasses, and stems of perennials. (See Page 5.) |
| Thursday, March 20 | 6:45 pm: John Clayton Chapter meeting at the Yorktown Public Library . Our speaker is Teta Kain , whose topic will be "Flora of the Dragon Run" . (See Page 1.)
<i>The Library is located at the intersection of Battle Road and Route 17 in Yorktown.</i> |
| Saturday, April 12 | 10 am: Pat Baldwin will lead a walk in Beaverdam Park in Gloucester. (See Page 5.) |
| Saturday, June 2 | 10 am: Pat Baldwin will lead a walk on the Warhill Trail in James City County. (See Page 5.) |

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