



# Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

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[www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org)

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## Our Nov. 17 Meeting: Dr. Donna Ware on "Botanical Exploration and Documentation in Virginia in the 20th Century"

This illustrated talk covers the highlights and challenges of 20th century botanical exploration in Virginia and the documentation of that field work by the deposit of pressed plant specimens in herbaria in Virginia. Dr. Ware

describes it as a story of boom and bust, long careers and abruptly foreshortened ones. She describes it as the evolution going from an empty herbarium "cupboard" to one well enough stocked to nourish the development of a manual of the flora in Virginia. She will include an overview of Virginia's field botanist hat styles, from "back in the day" to present time.

A native of Springfield, Missouri, Donna Ware earned a BA degree in biology from Southwest Missouri State University, followed by a Ph.D. in botany from Vanderbilt University. Since coming to Virginia, she has served as the first curator of the William and Mary Herbarium, a position which she held for 30 years. In that capacity she did extensive work on the flora of the coastal plain and the population biology of a rare native orchid, the small whorled pogonia, and is a coauthor of the *Atlas of the Virginia Flora* and a member of the Board of Directors of the *Flora of Virginia* Project.

Donna currently is working with botanical writer Nancy Hugo on a history of plant exploration in Virginia, which will appear in the new *Flora*. She is a founding member of the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society and an honorary member of the Board of Directors of the Williamsburg Botanical Garden in Williamsburg, as well as an active participant in development of Williamsburg's Ellipse Garden in Freedom Park, where she serves on its Horticulture Committee.

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

Our chapter and those of us involved with native plant conservation have lost an irreplaceable resource with the passing of Carolyn Will. Her voice remains on the Will's telephone voicemail, and I told Ralph to never erase it, as it reminds me the lady is still here, wherever there are rescued plants.

We are so pleased that Cortney Langley has agreed to serve with Ralph as Co-Chair of the Plant Rescue Committee—thank you, Cortney!

Reluctantly, I canceled the scheduled plant walk on October 8 to Little Creek Reservoir, electing instead to participate in the DCR state-wide field trip event. Louise and I walked Dameron Creek Marsh and Hughlett Point with over 20 DCR personnel and Northumberland County native plant enthusiasts, on a beautiful early-fall morning. I learned a lot from DCR botanist Karen Patterson, as we struggled with the identification of glassworts and fall asters, and their genus name changes.

Seaside Knotweed (*Polygonum glaucum*) is a federally endangered plant in several neighboring states, and the digital atlas shows the plant in only 3 counties in the state of Virginia, so it was a real treat to see this low-growing beach plant at Hughlett Point. Karen gave up on the crabgrasses (*Digitaria*) and other *Polygonums*, simply describing them as “difficult.” So I was gratified that professional botanists can indeed be puzzled with identifying some of our native species.

In February, Charlie Dubay will present a workshop on a Friday afternoon about identifying trees in their winter condition, followed by “Nude Tree Walk” on Saturday. Charlie is very entertaining, and this event should be well attended.

In appreciation for their tenure as Vice-Presidents, we have given a year's membership to Bharati and Charlotte—thank you both!

Looking at the calendar, and the large hole in our newsletter sidebar under “Field Trips” it is apparent that we need people to volunteer to lead these popular plant walks. Mary Hyde Berg will be scheduling some walks next year, and will remain on our Board, but not as a committee chairperson. She is another invaluable, irreplaceable resource with long institutional memory, and we value her knowledge and experience.

**Helen Hamilton**



Helen and a friend photographed during a Monarch tagging program at Williamsburg Botanical Garden on September 17.

## New members

We welcome **Carol Bartram** of Yorktown to the John Clayton Chapter.

## Our Sept. 15 Annual Meeting: Teta Kain on "Butterflies of Eastern Virginia"

**Teta Kain** treated us to a wonderful talk and slide presentation about butterflies of this area during our annual meeting at the James City County/Williamsburg Community Center. Here are a few tidbits:

Butterflies do funny things compared to humans: they smell with their antennae, taste with their feet, and have their own built in drinking straw which is called a proboscis. Some drink nectar from flowers, others sip fruit juices, but butterfly food must be in liquid form. They cannot eat solid food.

The life span of butterflies varies with each species. Some, like the falcate orangetip, occur only in the month of April. The Mourning Cloak is unique in that it overwinters as an adult, hiding under bark or another sheltered place, appearing on those rare winter days when temperatures reach 50 degrees or higher. The fall brood of the Monarch differs from all other broods of that species by extended its life by months and flying to the highlands of Central Mexico to overwinter.

You can help butterflies by learning about them and what their needs are, maintaining a butterfly garden with their favorite food and host plants, by raising butterfly caterpillars in an environment safe from predators, and learning how to create and preserve habitats that the butterflies need to survive.

Other meeting highlights...

Our new slate of officers was presented and approved: **Helen Hamilton**, President; **Bruce Hill**, Vice President; **Judith Kator**, Treasurer; **Mary Turnbull**, Secretary. Two new committee chairs were introduced, as well: **Claire Sink**, Program; and **Phyllis Putnam**, Hospitality.

**Jan Newton** was awarded this year's John Clayton Botany Award, "in recognition of her enthusiasm for native plants and for being a highly effective advocate and educator". Congratulations, Jan!

And we ate well, too—thanks to the efforts of our new Hospitality Chair.

**Louise Menges**

Photo: Helen Hamilton



Jan Newton, right, accepts her award from the awards committee: Donna Ware, Cynthia Long and Pat Baldwin.



## A native plant walk at College Landing on September 10

So many people signed up for this native plant walk that **Helen Hamilton** and **Gus Hall** decided to split the group in two, with one group of us exploring upland portions of the park with Gus and the other areas along College Creek with Helen, then switching leaders and sites.



**Louise Menges**

Just a few of the folks who joined Helen and Gus on the Sept. 10 walk. Back row, from left: Gus Hall, Judy Tucker, Lee Bristow, Seig Kopinitz. Front row, from left: Thad Hecht, Alice Kopinitz, Cathy Millar. Helen took this photo after the walk, when many participants had already headed home.



Photos: Louise Menges

Left, saltmarsh fleabane (*Pluchea odorata*) growing along the creek's edge; right, mistletoe available for inspection at eye level (as advertised!) on the trunk of a honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*).

## September 16's Chickahominy Riverfront Park walk

Six of us learned a lot from **Charlie Dubai** this morning. We met in the picnic shelter at Chickahominy Riverfront Park, where Charlie gave us copies of his key to the oaks and a list of the plants we could expect to find. In the first hour we learned that it is indeed possible to identify oaks from their leaves, bark and acorns, if you are willing to take a broad view of the difference between a rounded and a slightly V-shaped leaf base.



Photo: Helen Hamilton

A photo of the walk's participants: From left, Alice and Seig Kopinitz, David Monahan, Gus Hall and our leader, Charlie Dubai. Not shown is Roger Gosden.

During the next hour we took a fast walk around the park, where we saw most of the plants on Charlie's list, with a running patter between Charlie and Gus about the fine points of plant IDs.

We hope to schedule Charlie for a couple of Nude Tree Walks this winter, because, as Gus says, "you go bud-watching so you can become bud-wiser (*this one attributed to Marty Mathes, however*).

**Helen Hamilton**

## A visit to Northern Neck on October 8

In honor of its 25th anniversary, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation held field days at natural area preserves across the state, and I traveled with Helen Hamilton to Northumberland County on Northern Neck to join a field trip through the Dameron Marsh and Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserves, which overlook the Chesapeake Bay.



Photo: Louise Menges

Shiloh School is at an intersection and surrounded on two sides by cornfields, as it probably was while in use during the first quarter of the 20th century.

Shiloh School, the meeting place for this event located about halfway between the two preserves, is an unaltered one-room schoolhouse in use from 1906 until 1929. Largely because it became a farm storage building after a larger school opened in 1929, the structure survived essentially unchanged. It was given to Northumberland Preservation, Inc. in 1987 and restored by

NPI volunteers to its original configuration. Due to NPI's efforts, Shiloh School is registered as a Historic Virginia Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The contact person for the event was **Rebecca Wilson**, Steward for the region which includes Dameron Marsh and Hughlett Point Preserves, and a number of other DCR folks were also on the walk. Helen learned a **lot** from botanist **Karen Patterson**, who helped her sort out a few *Polygonums*, identified an *Eragrostis* that was a mystery to her, and distinguished among the 4 species of glassworts.

The walk through Dameron Marsh led us along the Bay's edge and through woodland habitat; we broke for lunch (and birthday cake) at the historic Shiloh School, returning to another Natural Area Preserve



Photo: Louise Menges

We trek along the shoreline at Hughlett Point. Our hosts provided birding experts as well, and many of our companions carried binoculars, and at least one a spotting scope.



at Hughlett Point in the afternoon. As Helen told me, “Walking the bay shore and enjoying the dune grasses was fun—it’s been a long time since I saw American beachgrass, *Amophila breviligulata*, and *Panicum virgatum* var. *amarum*, but there it was, crawling through the sand with its reproducing rhizomes”.

**Louise Menges**



Two of the plants we saw growing in the sand of the beaches: left, *Polygonum glaucum* or seaside knotweed (threatened or endangered in several states); and right, a glasswort (*Salicornia* spp.) with coral-red stems in autumn.

*Photos: Louise Menges*

## Splitbeard Bluestem: Wildflower of the Month for October 2011

Splitbeard Bluestem, *Andropogon ternarius*, is a beautiful grass in the fall, with the autumn sun backlighting the silvery white seed tufts. The distinctive flower clusters (racemes) are in pairs, forming a “V,” hence the common name “Splitbeard.” The flowers are much larger than those of Little Bluestem and Broomsedge. This perennial grass grows in clumps, reaching 1–4 feet in height. The narrow, ribbon-like leaves often turn coppery-colored in the fall.

Preferring well-drained, sandy or gravelly soils, especially acidic ones, Splitbeard Bluestem is found in dry, thin woodlands, sandhills and old fields. The species ranges from Delaware and Missouri south to Florida to Texas, including eastern and central counties of Virginia.

Seeds are eaten by wild turkey, juncos, chipping sparrows, and the foliage is often browsed by white-tailed deer.

**Helen Hamilton**



*Photo: Helen Hamilton*

## Buttonbush: Wildflower of the Month for November 2011

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) is a much-branched, native shrub which grows 6-12 feet, or occasionally taller. Glossy, dark-green leaves are in pairs or in threes, on stalks, with narrow, oval blades up to 8 inches long. The tips are pointed, and the edges are smooth. Unusual, long-lasting blossoms are well-named—they resemble pincushions followed by button-like balls of fruit. White or pale-pink globes, one inch across, are in dense spherical clusters with a fringe of pistils protruding beyond the white petals. Subsequent rounded masses of nutlets persist through the winter.

This shrub or small tree grows in moist, humus soils in full sun to part shade, in swamps, thickets and stream/pond margins. Native to every county in the state of Virginia, the plant ranges from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec to Minnesota, south to Mexico and the West Indies. The flowers appear from June through August.

A nectar source for two species of sphinx moths, the flowers are attractive to many species of bees, birds and butterflies. Ducks and other water birds and shorebirds consume the seeds. The poisonous foliage of this species is unpalatable to livestock. While the bitter bark has been used in home remedies, its medicinal value is doubtful.

*Cephalanthus* comes from the Greek *cephale* for “head” and *anthos* for “a flower.” The species name *occidentalis* is Latin for “western.”

**Helen Hamilton**



Photo: Helen Hamilton





Photo: Helen Hamilton

## A loving tribute to Carolyn Will

Carolyn passed away on September 10th, and members of our John Clayton Chapter participated in a memorial service for her at York River State Park on September 18th. Following is the heartfelt eulogy Donna Ware gave at that service for her good friend.

*Carolyn Will has left her mark—on our hearts, our minds, and on the landscape of our community.*

*I first met Carolyn over 25 years ago when she began a volunteer project to augment the William and Mary Wildflower Refuge with native plant species that she and her cohorts on the Williamsburg Plant Rescue Team (Ingrid Jahn and Ralph Will) had saved from construction sites. The walkway through the Refuge is a major thoroughfare for the students, and, in addition to offering them the chance to enjoy their beauty, these plantings allow students to “meet” more different kinds of native species. In fact, the Wildflower Refuge has become a field trip destination for Dr. Martha Case and her botany students...right on campus! To give just two examples of many, on the upland part of the Refuge, Carolyn aggregated large numbers of rescued pink lady’s slippers to form a robust colony that is a marvel to behold each April. On the slopes, she planted countless crane-fly orchids. They grace the slopes with filmy masses of small pale-greenish-purple flowers in the summertime.*

*Before Carolyn and Ralph’s youngest son, Travis, was in school, sometimes he would be with her when she would stop by to see Marty Mathes, who headed up the Refuge project at the College, or to see me at the herbarium. Middle son Jeff remembers working with her there, too, and the oldest of the three, Greg, got in on plant rescue action at other times. No doubt, those experiences were one of the ways their mom was teaching them about the wonders of the natural world, just as her father had taught her about such things as they meandered together along beckoning tracks through the fields and woods on their farm in the Shenandoah Valley.*

*The Williamsburg Botanical Garden was another endeavor to which Carolyn totally invested herself. Even as recently as late August, she walked the trails there, helping us make records of the sources for various rescued plants residing there. Carolyn’s efforts at the Garden were particularly focused on the Native Woodland and fernery, the meadow, the wetlands, and the calcareous ravine. She also enjoyed creating a goldenrod garden and a country roadside garden.*

*She drew from the continually growing repository of rescued plants stored in pots in the woods adjacent to her home to enrich these habitat exhibits at the Botanical Garden, contributing such key specimens as sweetbay*



Photo: Helen Hamilton

Carolyn, Donna Ware and Jerre Johnson plan for the construction of the calcareous ravine in the Botanical Garden.



*magnolia, swamp azalea, butterfly-pea, southern sundrops, Elliott's goldenrod, rue-anemone, alternate-leaved dogwood, and leatherwood, to name just a few favorites. Carolyn was a member of the Garden's Horticulture Committee and devoted Friday mornings (and other times, too) to boots-on-the-ground work there. Among her biggest contributions was an inventory of the plantings of the entire garden. She knew the garden better than anyone! It was the opportunity to work side-by-side with Carolyn for five years at the Botanical Garden that exposed me more fully to the depth and breadth of her knowledge of plants (and of things-in-general!) and that led me to appreciate the rigor of her hands-on, workhorse (grubbing-in-the soil) approach to gardening—and life in general! O we had so much fun, and she was a good teacher! In addition to showing me how best to install new plantings, she schooled me in the joys of mulching, in special weeding techniques, and about tools-of-choice, especially the “little mattock”. In addition, I learned how helpful it is to have all those tools close at hand, corralled in a convenient pail to tote around and/or attached to one's person by means of a tool belt.*



*Photo: Helen Hamilton*

Carolyn at work in the Botanical Garden.

*Carolyn's third major project is located right here in YRSP—the riparian planting. She and Ralph have worked together to maintain this area and to continue the Park's original purpose of highlighting native plants which are typical of and useful in stream-side habitats, like the native grasses little bluestem, big blue stem, and switchgrass. Each Tuesday morning was set aside for work on the slopes right below us here. Later today, right after this service, you will have a chance to walk the trail through this habitat and learn more about it from guides from the John Clayton Chapter of the Native Plant Society.*

*In addition to these three major, long term efforts, Carolyn and her rescue team have contributed native plants to many gardens and natural areas:*

*Via rescue-and-return:*

*Greensprings Greenway  
Warhill Nature Trail  
Freedom Park Interpretive Center  
Little Creek Reservoir Trail*

*Using “rescues” from local sites elsewhere to add to gardens at:*

*YRSP native plant beds at the Interpretive Center  
Grafton/Bethel Elementary School Native Plant Garden  
James River Elementary School  
Stonehouse Elementary Native Plant Habitat  
New Quarter Park Rain Garden  
New Quarter Park Quail Habitat  
Heritage Humane Society BMP Pond plantings  
Hospice House trail  
William and Mary campus (via Buildings and Grounds Dept.)*

Carolyn was a very active member of JCC/VNPS. In addition to other aspects of her involvement with the Society (such as providing material for plant sales), her plant rescue organization operated under the sponsorship of the Chapter. Carolyn was sought after as a field trip leader for the Chapter and by various other groups, such as the Master Gardeners. She gave wonderfully varied types of information on her trips, including folklore related to various species and their uses by the native Americans and the Europeans—and best of all, she gave tips on how to cultivate them!



Photo: Helen Hamilton

Carolyn and Ralph settle in and water rescued plants.

Carolyn directed the Williamsburg Plant Rescue Team's three most recent rescues just this past spring. They took place at Courthouse Commons, Hampton Aerospace Institute, and the new Riverside Hospital site. She reserved the plants saved from the Aerospace Institute site for them to use for landscaping after the building is finished.

As so many of you well know, Carolyn was devoted to her family and to her friends. Plants, as well as people, were sheltered beneath the umbrella of her definition of "friends"! She had a special pact with the plants she rescued that assured that as long as she was in charge, they would never be left to wither away untended. Instead, she potted and repotted them as needed, met their other special needs, and saw that they were watered appropriately (Ralph!)—and finally, that they were installed properly. She was also into raising plants from seed in nursery beds and nurturing puny plants back to health. I was delighted to find one four-inch-tall specimen of New Jersey Tea present naturally on the Garden site before garden development began, but it was truly scrawny, and when it disappeared, I thought it had died. Then, one day this past summer, Carolyn took me aside and showed me that it was alive and well and even flourishing in the Native Woodland Section! She had taken it to "Willsville" and nursed it into a robust shrub now about two feet tall.

On yet another day later last summer, Carolyn called me aside at the garden to give me a different, yet in some ways similar, kind of message. She said she realized she was going to have to leave some of her work unfinished but that with her whole being she was determined she was not going to leave anything unsaid—she wanted her family and friends to know that whatever happened related to the wretched disease that was destroying her body, she, Carolyn, was **okay**. She said, "It's you guys I'm worried about!" She had come to accept the reality of her situation, and her concern was now focused even more than ever on her family and friends. Furthermore, she expressed curiosity mingled with a kind of faith-filled excitement that now she was going to learn exactly what lies 'round the corner on down that road through the woods—that road that turns and passes beyond this life.

**Donna Ware**



## Fungusamungus

I probably don't have to tell any of you that the last couple of months have been great for mushroom-spotting; even if you haven't noticed them yourselves, it would have been hard to miss the newspaper and magazine articles about them.

I have had a nearly lifelong interest in mushrooms (my high school yearbook: "loves mushrooms and baseball"), although I made no real attempt to identify those I saw until moving to Williamsburg in 1974. I began noticing them as my walk to work took me through wooded parts of William and Mary's campus, so I bought field guides, tried to get spore prints of mushrooms I picked along the way, and noted where and when I had seen them. Unfortunately, I never met any other mushroom enthusiasts to compare notes (mushrooms may not make the list of most chemists' interests), and so relied entirely on my own judgement (always risky!).

Here are photos of a few of the fungi I've seen this season, mostly on visits to Jamestown Island and along the Yorktown Battlefield Tour Road.

**Louise Menges**



A beautiful polypore I'd never seen before (maybe *Merulius incarnatus*?) growing on a decaying log with other polypores.



*Pluteus ostreatus* or oyster mushroom on a decaying log.



These look like *Armellaria tabescens*, ringless honey mushroom; it usually grows in clusters like this on hardwood roots.



*Hericium Erinaceus* (bearded tooth or lion's mane) growing from a cavity in a beech's trunk.



Since I didn't pick it to examine its underside, I don't know if this one had gills or pores. If it is a gilled mushroom, it might be a *Russula emetica*.



An orange-capped mushroom with pores, not gills (no guess).



*Chlorophyllum molybdites*, I think.





Photo: Helen Hamilton  
Potters at Cynthia's: from left, Judith Kator, Lucile Kossodo, Cynthia Long, Phyllis Putnam, Louise Menges and Dorothy Whitfield.

## The 2012 Plant Sale has already started!

The plant sale is going forward with great enthusiasm, and we are already storing many labeled pots waiting for spring to arrive. The first potting party was held at Cynthia Long's home on October 26; five volunteers helped out and we worked until about noon digging and potting perennials in her garden. The second potting party was held on October 8 at Stonehouse Elementary Habitat Garden. Six volunteers worked from about 9 am until 11 am digging plants, and then we traveled to Joan Etchberger's home where we potted them all, finishing at 3 pm. On September 28 we received a large load of shrubs and trees which we have to repot so that they will survive the winter. Hopefully by the time you read this letter,

we will have finished that job on Wednesday, October 26. The plant sale committee has met and will meet a second time on October 26. We are thankful for the help of our volunteers who have helped us so far.

We still need your help in finding the following plants: butterfly weed, swamp milkweed, red and John Clayton honeysuckle, coneflowers, asters, ginger, both evergreen and non-evergreen, spiderwort, black-eyed susans, ferns and any other treasures you may have in your yard and wish to generously share with us. If you can donate plants, please call me at home 757-565-0769 or write me an email at [lkossodo@cox.net](mailto:lkossodo@cox.net). This will help us to know what we need to order and what will be donated to us. We can either arrange for a potting party at your home or you can bring them to a potting party in the spring. Let me know at our next meeting if you wish to volunteer to hold a potting party at your home.

Our plant sale will be held at Freedom Park this year. Our set-up day will be Friday, April 28 and the sale will be held on Saturday, April 29. Come and support our big fundraising effort!

**Lucile Kossodo, Plant Sale Co-Chair**

## Calendar

**Wednesday, November 16**      **7 pm: Friends of Dragon Run meeting** in the Community Room of the **Gloucester County Library** in Gloucester Courthouse. Their speaker, **Kevin Heffernan** of the Natural Heritage Division of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (VDCR), will talk about **"The Ecology, Distribution and Management of *Phragmites* and Other Invasive Plants."** Meetings are free and open to the public.  
*The Library is at 6920 Main St. in the Grace City Shopping Center.*

**Thursday, November 17**      **6:45–8:45 pm: John Clayton Chapter meeting at Yorktown Public Library: "Botanical Exploration and Documentation in Virginia in the 20th Century".** Our speaker is **Dr. Donna Ware**, botanist and Curator of the William and Mary Herbarium for 30 years.  
*(See Page 1.)*  
*The Library is located at the intersection of Battle Rd. and Rt. 17 in Yorktown.*

**Check our website at [www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org) for additional walks and events which may not have made this newsletter issue.**

## 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 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2  
Boyce, VA 22610