



# 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 September 21 meeting: "How Local is Local Enough? Examining Monarch and Milkweed Interactions from the Great Plains to the Atlantic Ocean"

Our speaker, **Dr. Harmony Dagleish**, Assistant Professor of Biology at William and Mary, will provide an overview of her monarch and milkweed research, which focuses on trying to understand “how local is local enough?” when considering milkweed replanting efforts. She has sampled common milkweed from 55 populations ranging from Oklahoma to North Dakota and Georgia to Maine in order to understand patterns of genetic and chemical diversity in this species and how this spatial diversity may impact the monarchs that feed upon them.

The meeting begins at **7:00 pm** in **Room A** at the **James City County Recreation Center**, 5301 Longhill Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23188-2700. **See you there!**



Left, Professor Dagleish samples milkweed in Nebraska.

Right, a long-horned milkweed beetle on a milkweed plant in Virginia



## From the President

Two months have passed, and we do not have any volunteers to be in charge of the plant sale. We need the financial benefits of a plant sale to continue our chapter's existence beyond 2020. We are only a society of volunteers; it is volunteers who write articles,

publish this newsletter, organize our finances, find speakers for our programs, organize our memberships, find students for nature camp, represent our chapter at community events, help at our plant sale, come to the Board Meetings, and write our minutes.

This coming year, volunteers will organize our state meeting. We recently found a new volunteer, Cathy Flanagan. Cathy has agreed to be both the Membership Chair and the Publicity Chair. We welcome her to our Board! However, we still need a volunteer for our plant sale...

On a different note, let us talk about weeds. Weeding may not be what most excites us about gardening, although some find it peaceful. Weeding is an integral part of the practice of bringing beauty to our nearby spaces, and restoring nature and our connection to it. There is a sense that it is something continual and when done mindfully yields rewards beyond the simple task. When we finish, it inspires us sometimes to change and improve our landscape. If you are into gardening, you are probably weeding trying to get things under control. Do you hate to weed? Do you love to weed? Are you confused about what is a weed and what is not? I found a lovely book on weeds at the bookstore. Nevertheless, beware, in this book, some native plants which we love to have in our gardens are considered weeds. The problem may be that the authors are agricultural specialists, not native plant specialists. You may want to check the Digital Atlas of VA before removing a plant to see if it is native or not.

On the Houzz website, I saw an article listing what weeds or natives show up according to the soil you have. Wet or poorly drained soil: ground ivy, violets (natives), moss, chickweed, sedges, sorrel; acidic soil: common yellow oxalis; alkaline soil: Virginia pepper weed, goosefoot and bladder campion (a native); hardpan (compacted) and crusty soil: mayweed, bindweed, mustard, horse nettle and quack grass; dry soils: sheep sorrel, black medic, prostate pigweed, common yarrow, sweet clover, mullein, rabbit foot clover; poor soils with low fertility: clover, sheep sorrel, common mullein, mugwort; good fertile soil: chickweed, chicory, henbit, pigweed, yellow oxalis, burdock. What should you do? Test the soil to see if you have one, two, or more of those conditions and aerate your soil, then fertilize and check your watering patterns accordingly. Even better, use that information to plant natives that like those conditions and forget the work to change your soil.

Why bother to weed? Are not all plants good? Hardly, as the shelves of herbicides, both synthetic and natural, at any garden center demonstrate. Gardeners put a lot of energy into “editing” their landscapes to include the plants they want and to remove the ones they do not. How do we know which is which? That depends on our definition of a weed. The simplest is “a plant in the wrong place.” This is because our definition is subject to taste or preference. For example, some of our members

do not like too many violets or think that Lyre Leaf Sage spreads too much. Others think that their flowers are beautiful and do not mind keeping them.

It could be that we weed for ecological reasons. A weed is a disrupter of ecosystems, an organism that does not cooperate or play well with others, making life harder for all and upsetting the balances that keep natural and garden communities healthy. Take, for example, chickweed, oxalis, and henbit. For those of us who love native plants, it also means that we bring pollinators to our garden even if they are a bit aggressive. At other times, we remove plants because we do not know what they are. In total ignorance, I used to weed *Elephantus tomentosus* or *carolinianus* (I am not sure which I have) plants until a former member of our chapter told me they are native and that they attract butterflies. Now, I only remove them if they appear where there are gentle growers. In fact, the little purplish flowers are attractive, and they could be a ground cover plant. It is better to leave weeding for a cooler day after the rain; it is easier that way.

**Lucile Kossodo**

## New Members

We welcome **Carol Ball** of Williamsburg to the John Clayton Chapter.

## Notes from the Board

I hope you all are enjoying the cooling temperatures and the opportunity to do more planting, given the milder weather.

The Board met the first week of July and devoted the bulk of the meeting to discussing how we might develop a strategy to reach more people. As noted in a recent issue of *Sempervirens*, in an article written by State VNPS President Nancy Vehrs (“Plants Need More Advocates,” Spring 2017), the threats to our native plant populations continue unabated, while the society needs to evolve new ways to “preach the Gospel” of protection.

There was particular discussion of how we might reach the next generation of advocates.

Some of the ideas included adopting a special student membership rate, rerouting funds reserved for one Nature Camp scholarship toward a yearlong membership drive, developing stronger relationships with the families of students at Stonehouse Elementary and encouraging Nature Campers funded by VNPS to develop and implement special youth programming.

Youth programming might include plant identification mysteries or scavenger hunts in the field and kid-specific, family-friendly plant walks.

This is all to say that the Board would love to hear from you about ideas on how to increase advocacy for the natural world among younger people, whether children or their adult parents. Tell us if you like any of the ideas we’re kicking around now, and what your children and grandchildren would like to see.



It's important that the native plant society cast a wider net if we are going to be an effective voice in the preservation of our native plant populations. Let us know what you think will work and what you think won't.

And if this is an area that interests you, contact any Board member to find out how you might become more heavily involved. We'd love to hear from you and welcome your help.

In other news, the garden at Stonehouse Elementary continues to thrive and delight. Sue Voigt reported that she has seen a lot of species this year that we thought were lost. If you get a chance, check it out! Sue hosts workdays every second Saturday of the month, but is flexible. Contact her to find out about volunteering or even just seeing what all the (good) fuss is about. As most of you know, Stonehouse, in addition to being a fantastic educational garden, also provides a number of the plants we sell at our annual sale.

Speaking of our annual sale, it looks as if it will be held again next year at the Williamsburg Community Building. This was an extremely popular venue, as you well know. Huzzah!

Also keep your ear out for news about next year's annual meeting, which is hosted by the John Clayton Chapter. The Northern Neck chapter has also offered to help organize the weekend event. The Board this month is expected to finalize a venue for the conference, as well as hotel accommodations that will offer special rates. (Of course, being local, we benefit from being able to go home at the end of the day. A budget-friendly perk!) If event planning is a love of yours, or if you're just really good at it, please contact me at 757-291-1500. There is a tremendous amount of planning we'll have to do in the next year for a successful event and we'd love the conference to truly represent an "all hands on deck" effort. **Cortney Will**

## Recent Walks and Other Events

### ✿ Some photos from our May 20th walk at the Turnbull's home

I didn't see any photos from this plant walk until after the July–August *Claytonia* had gone out, but here are some Cathy Flanagan took that day—*Ed*.



One of many different environs and vistas to enjoy



A secluded bench





The property is heavily wooded with a mix of American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), Flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), American Elm (*Ulmus americana*), and Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*).



Stokes Aster (*Stokesia laevis*), one of 73 native species on the property



Patches of bright Yellow Sundrops (*Oenethra tetragona*) spilled over the walkway where we began the tour.



At the end of the tour we gathered on the screened porch where a table with refreshments held a brass planter overflowing with Yellow Sundrops.

### July 29th's Plant/Butterfly walk on the Warhill Trail

Clouds and light rain didn't stop Saturday's plant and butterfly walk at Warhill Trail from being alive with the sights and sounds of nature. The walk was well attended and participants caught glimpses of the Eastern Tailed Blue (*Cupido comyntas*), Variegated Fritillary (*Euptoieta claudia*), and American Lady (*Vanessa virginiensis*) butterflies, heard a chorus of frogs, the songs of Indigo Buntings, watched six ducklings swim behind their mother, turtles poke their heads up from the water, and learned much about our native plants in the process.



A Variegated Fritillary butterfly poses for the camera.



One sobering fact was how quickly potential habitat in the area is being taken over by the invasive Chinese Bush-clover (*Sericea Lespedeza*) and the native, but aggressive, Dogfennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*). It was also sobering to see and learn about some of the native plants these invasive species are pushing out. For example, Dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum*) is a larval host for the monarch butterfly, and interestingly was also known



Cathy Flanagan

Flowering Dogbane

as Indian Hemp, as Native Americans used its fibers to make strong cordage. Beaked Panic grass (*Panicum anceps*) is a good cover for disturbed areas as well as food for cattle and birds. Wool Grass (*Scirpus cyperinus*), which is technically a sedge, is good for erosion control as well as food and cover for wildlife. Native thistles (*Cirsium discolor*) were in bloom and abuzz with

bumble bees. Their leaves are food for the caterpillars of Painted Lady butterflies, and American Goldfinches eat the seeds. Also still in bloom and fruiting were Purple Passion Flowers (*Passiflora incarnata*), the leaves of which are food for the caterpillars of the Variegated Fritillary butterfly. For me, learning about interconnections such as these makes me appreciate how vital it is to manage invasives and promote our native plant species.

Cathy Flanagan



From left, Helen, Nancy, Adrienne, and Gary scout for wildflowers by the pond.



Native thistle blooms



The 9:00 group, left to right: Shirley Devan, Adrienne Frank, Gary Driscole, Joanne Roberts, Nancy Barnhart, Jeanette Navia, Cathy Flanagan, Keith Navia



## 🌸 A Walk in Gosnold's Hope Park on August 5th

Hampton's Gosnold's Hope Park is a typical suburban park with athletic fields and picnic shelters, but with a few botanical surprises! A diverse assemblage of wetland plants can be found in and around the park's small pond and numerous ditches as they transition from freshwater to tidal. The invasive Alligator Weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) dominates the pond and many ditches, but there is a nice fringe of wetland species such as Mock Bishop's Weed (*Ptilimnium capillaceum*), Marsh Seedbox (*Ludwigia palustris*), Fogfruit (*Phyla lanceolata*), sedges (*Cyperus* spp.), and Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*, covered with bees, wasps, and skippers) as well. In one of the more tidally influenced ditches, a dense stand of American Threesquare (*Schoenoplectus americanus*) butts against Saltmarsh Bulrush (*Bolboschoenus robustus*), making for easy comparison of the two bulrushes. The surprise species, first documented by Pat Baldwin some years ago, are the Bloodleaf (*Iresine rhizomatosa*), which is only known from seven counties in Virginia, and Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria*), which is only recorded in four counties by the Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora.



Walk participants Jennifer Schultz, Chuck Defenbaugh, Susie Yager, Meegan Wallace, Susan Crockett, Pat Baldwin

plants such as Saltmarsh Cordgrass (*Spartina patens*), Big Cordgrass (*Spartina cynosuroides*), Virginia Glasswort (*Salicornia depressa*), and Seaside Oxeye (*Borrichia frutescens*) thrive.

Both are city records. A very pretty Saltmarsh Mallow (*Kosteletzkya virginica*) in full bloom was next to these plants.

A different type of habitat was found just a short drive down to the Southwest Branch of the Back River. Here coastal marsh



Fogfruit in flower



The beautiful pale pink blooms of Saltmarsh Mallow

**Meegan Wallace**

## Upcoming JCC Plant Walks

✿ **Saturday, September 9, 9:00 am: Ferns in Bloom**

**CANCELLED**

✿ **Saturday, September 16, 2:00 pm: Flowers and Grasses**

In early fall grass flowers make a nice contrast with blooms of asters and goldenrods, and many trees will show fall colors. Meet **Helen Hamilton** at **College Landing Park**, 2100 S. Henry Street, Williamsburg for a walk around the James River wetlands and lawn area for fall weeds.

Contact Helen at 757-564-4494 or [helen48@cox.net](mailto:helen48@cox.net) for more information.

✿ **Saturday, September 30, 10:00 to 11:30 am: Goldenrods Galore**

Join **Donna Ware** in the **Williamsburg Botanical Garden** at **Freedom Park** to see the exhibit being developed that features goldenrod species typical of open upland habitat. You will also see goldenrods growing in the swamp and calcareous ravine habitats at the Garden. Twenty species of goldenrod (the genera *Solidago* and *Euthamia*) occur on the Peninsula, and most of them are now in cultivation in the Garden. As an aid to learning to recognize goldenrod species, you will see them side by side and learn to sort them according to the shapes of their inflorescences, whether the flowers are borne in a one-sided manner, and whether the stems are hairy.

Park in the Freedom Park Visitor Center lot and follow the pathway to the Botanical Garden. Contact Donna Ware ([dmeware1001@gmail.com](mailto:dmeware1001@gmail.com) or 565-0657) for more information or to register.

✿ **Saturday, October 14, 9:30 am:**

**A Walk in the Stonehouse Habitat Garden**

Join **Sue Voigt** for a walk around a native plant garden with fall flowers and many bees and butterflies getting ready for winter. Meet at **Stonehouse Elementary School, 3651 Rochambeau Drive** (Route 30) in Toano. Park in the school bus parking lot near the far end of the school building.

Contact Sue for more information ([svoigt1@cox.net](mailto:svoigt1@cox.net); 804-966-8487, or cell 804-815-6085)

## Nature Camp is Life-changing

John Clayton Chapter's Nature Camper scholarship recipients have returned from their 2017 summer sessions. Their thank you notes, reproduced here, express their enthusiasm about their experiences as Nature Camp students.

Nash and South McDowell shared a scholarship (they were also recipients in 2016). Former campers Lisa Small and Zoe Averett were also awarded scholarships from our chapter.



The director of Nature Camp has written to our chapter to thank us for our generosity in support of Nature Camp's goal to provide young people with a fortnight in the out-of-doors for an experience that is "not only educational, nurturing and memorable, but truly life-changing."

By October, applications will be ready for students to apply for scholarships to the 2018 Nature Camp sessions—help us get the word out! Please keep in mind that our chapter will not be able to continue this important mission to support future Nature Campers without funding, which comes from our annual native plant sale and the Carolyn Will Memorial Fund. Our chapter needs one or two people to oversee the plant sale for spring of 2018. **Libbey Oliver**

*Dear Virginia Native Plant Society,*

*As always, I cannot thank you enough for all you have done for me. You have not only given me a scholarship to Nature Camp, you have allowed my return to my favorite place and people in the world. You have enabled me to learn more valuable and interesting things here than I could ever learn in a classroom. There is no other place in the world I would rather be. So once again, I thank you from the deepest place in my heart.*

*Sincerely,*

**Nash McDowell**

*Dear Virginia Native Plant Society,*

*Thank you for giving me the opportunity to go to Nature Camp this year. I took dendrology and learned everything there is to know about trees and how they communicate with each other. I learned a lot in every class and I would gladly share my experiences with you. Again, thank you for sponsoring me to go to this wonderful camp!*

*Sincerely,*

**Lisa Small**

*I would like to thank the Native Plant Society for giving me the scholarship so that I could come back to Nature Camp this year. I have had another great time learning and being with friends. Thank you again!*

**South McDowell**

*Dear Virginia Native Plant Society,*

*Thank you so very much for the 2017 second session scholarship! I've had such an amazing time at Nature Camp this year, I've been majoring in dendrology, the study of trees. This year has been amazing and I have learned how to identify both native and invasive trees, just in seconds! Once again, thank you so much!*

*Sincerely,*

**Zoe Averett**

## **Asters and Their Flowers**

(Ref: *Flora of Virginia*, 2012)

I had a lot of trouble understanding how members of the Aster Family do their reproduction. Gus (Dr. Hall, Professor Emeritus, College of William and Mary) tried several times, with drawings, and I read descriptions, and it finally began to

make sense, sort of. The stamens form a tube by fusing their anthers (pollen sacs) that surround the pistil. This tube splits open along the inside, thus releasing pollen onto the backs of the style branches as they are pumped up through the tube. These plants do not self-pollinate, rather the pollen contacts only the outer surfaces of the style, not the stigmatic part, which is usually at the top and is not mature when pollen is being produced. All this is done in the dark centers of the Black-eyed Susans, where tiny flowers are all crowded together. The Asteraceae was formerly known as the Compositaceae, since they produce blossoms that are composites of many individually small flowers.

These plants are the newest members of the plant kingdom, arising in the middle of the Mesozoic, about 150 million years ago. (Algae are the oldest, first appearing early in the Paleozoic, 450 mya.) Also, the Asteraceae are the largest family of vascular plants, with 1,500 genera and 23,000 species.

While most are herbaceous plants, *Baccharis* (High-tide Bush), *Iva* (Marsh-elder) and *Borrchia* (Seaside Oxeye) are shrubby members of the Aster Family. Only a few are grown as food plants—Globe Artichoke (*Cynara scolymus*), Jerusalem artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*), lettuces (*Lactuca sativa*), the leaves of Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), Stevia (*Stevia rebaudiana*), and Tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus*). Seeds of Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), Safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius*), and Niger (*Guizotia abyssinica*) are sold in this country to feed birds.

Keys to help identify members of the Aster Family begin with the leaves (alternate or opposite/whorled), and the types of flowers—ligulate (only strap-shaped flowers), discoid (only tubular flowers, no rays), or radiate (both discs and rays).

Familiar flowers in the ligulate group include those in the genera *Taraxacum* (Dandelion), *Hypochaeris* (Cat's-ear), *Hieracium* (Hawkweed), and *Cichorium* (Chicory). They produce only ray flowers, the stamens and pistils crowded in the center of many rays.

Discoid flowers (without rays) include Ironweed (*Vernonia*), Thistle (*Cirsium*), Elephant's-foot (*Elephantopus*), and Blazing Star (*Liatris*).

More commonly, flowers have radiate heads, with fertile flowers in the disc and non-fertile rays. These include *Rudbeckia* (Black-eyed Susans), *Verbesina* (Crownbeard), and *Solidago* (Goldenrod). Most plants formerly known as “asters” are now separated into several other genera, the largest being *Symphyotrichum*.

An interesting plant to watch while it's reproducing is *Heliopsis helianthoides* (False Sunflower). The heads are radiate, with fertile flowers in the center (disc), but the rays also have fertile flowers, and both groups will produce seeds. Only the disc florets of sunflowers can produce seeds, and only the ray flowers of *Silphium* spp. (Cup Plant) can produce flowers.



These plants are considered the most advanced since they don't follow the rules used by other groups about making flowers. For more information about this fascinating and complex family of flowers, there are many articles online, scholarly and otherwise, and chapters in botanical texts provide more than one usually wants to know. Whenever I ask Gus about reproduction in the Aster Family, I usually receive paragraphs and chapters of plant evolution, most of which I don't understand and are therefore of little interest to me. But one can learn a lot by just watching these flowers as they develop their anther tubes and the style and stigma begin to emerge. Black-eyed Susans and False Sunflowers have been especially interesting to me.

**Helen Hamilton**



Left, a bee visits a *Rudbeckia laciniata* (Green-headed Coneflower)

Below, a *Heliopsis helianthoides* (False Sunflower)



**An order form for purchase of Helen's books:**

**Ferns & Mosses of Virginia's Coastal Plain** (signed)  
 \_\_\_ copies @ \$15 each Total \_\_\_\_\_

**Wildflowers & Grasses of Virginia's Coastal Plain** (signed)  
 \_\_\_ copies @ \$25 each Total \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping and handling per order \$4.00

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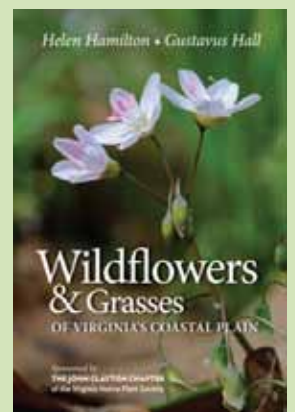
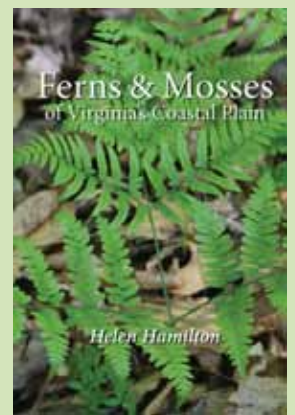
Contact (email/phone) \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed

Credit (card #) \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Send check, payable to Helen Hamilton, or credit card order to:

Helen Hamilton  
 PO Box 314  
 Lightfoot, VA 23090



## John Clayton Chapter Calendar

**Saturday, Sept. 9** **CANCELLED**

**Saturday, Sept. 16** **2:00 pm: Flowers and Grasses.** Meet **Helen Hamilton** at **College Landing Park**, 2100 S. Henry St., Williamsburg to look for for the flowers of fall-blooming weeds and grasses, and fall tree color.

Contact Helen Hamilton at 757-564-4494 or [helen48@cox.net](mailto:helen48@cox.net) for information.  
(See Page 8.)

**Thursday, Sept. 21** **7:00 pm: John Clayton Chapter meeting** at the **James City County Recreation Center**, 5301 Longhill Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23188-2700  
"How Local is Local Enough?" will be the topic as **Dr. Harmony Dagleish**, Assistant Professor of Biology at William and Mary, describes her monarch and milkweed research.

(See Page 1.)

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Contact Donna Ware at [dmeware1001@gmail.com](mailto:dmeware1001@gmail.com) or 565-0657 for more information or to register.  
(See Page 8.)

**Saturday, Oct. 14** **9:30 am: Sue Voigt** will lead a walk around **Stonehouse Elementary's Habitat Garden** at 3651 Rochambeau Dr. in Toano to see fall flowers and many bees and butterflies. Park in the school bus parking lot near the far end of the building.

Contact Sue for more info ([svoigt1@cox.net](mailto:svoigt1@cox.net), 804-966-8487, or cell 804-815-6085)  
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Keep a lookout for announcements about additional walks and other events in the local newspapers and on our website at [www.vnps.org/john-clayton](http://www.vnps.org/john-clayton).



Below is a membership renewal form. Please contact Membership Chair **Cathy Flanagan** at 757-879-1997 or at [flanagan.catherine@gmail.com](mailto:flanagan.catherine@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 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2  
Boyce, VA 22610