



Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

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www.claytonvnps.org

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From the President

Our chapter is gearing up for the **2018 State Meeting of the Virginia Native Plant Society**. I hope you have registered to join us for this exciting event on **September 14–16**. We have great speakers, field trips, and workshops. Our two speakers will address our theme: Sustaining Nature, Sustaining Ourselves. Our Friday speaker is **Jessica Hawthorne**, Director of Programs for the Center for Inclusive Communities, and the Saturday speaker is **Kevin Bryan**, Senior Policy Director at the Keystone. We will learn new things about planning and sustaining our chapters. I love the field trips at our state meeting. The list of field trips in the area includes the Dragon Run in King and Queen County, Colonial Parkway coastal wetlands, Downtown Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia Living Museum, William and Mary's Woody species, Freedom Park Ferns and Mosses, William and Mary's College Woods, Williamsburg Botanical Gardens, the Blackwater Ecological Preserve at the Zuni Pine Barrens, Grafton Ponds and White Oak Trail at Newport News Park, the Wahrani Nature Park in New Kent, New Kent Forestry Center, and New Quarter Park in York County. These varied field trips will give our visitors a true vision of this great coastal area. For butterfly enthusiasts, we have a field trip to see butterflies of this area and the plants they use as hosts or food sources. One indoor field trip is a tour of William and Mary's Herbarium. There will be two workshops. One will be about the Virginia Flora App led by its lead botanist, **John Townsend**. The second is about Invasive Species: Identification and Eradication. Both workshops will be most useful—all in all a most impressive list of events for our attendees. Join us at these events and enjoy meeting other native plant society members from around the state; I know you will find it most worthwhile. I am collecting plants to have a plant lottery. I hope you can win one! The great and exciting news for our chapter is that we have found a candidate to be our vice-president: Caitlin Cyrus, who is an environmental scientist with VHB, based in Williamsburg. Her specialty is in rare, threatened, and endangered plant species surveys. We are all

enthusiastic to have her join our Board. We will vote for candidates at our November meeting. At the same time, we are most urgently searching to find someone to replace our wonderful treasurer, Alicia Garcia. (She says it is not a difficult job). I ask you to please volunteer—our chapter will not be able to continue its activities without a treasurer.

The Master Naturalists had a butterfly count, and apparently it was successful. They found many new skippers not seen before in my garden and in New Quarter Park. Today, however, I saw my first beautiful Pipevine Swallowtail butterfly in my garden. It has beautiful blue bottom wings and lovely spots on the other side. I planted pipevines in my garden and was successful in seeing that butterfly emerge. Yes, pipevine does spread around in your garden but it is worth putting up with that. That success spurred me to buy seeds so that I can grow some unlikely plants that host other beautiful butterflies. These plants may not be so beautiful, but the butterflies will be worth it. I studied the list of host plants that was prepared for our 2018 plant sale and set about to try to attract new varieties of butterflies. Join me in trying to increase *your* butterfly count!

Lucile Kossodo

New Members

We welcome **Laurie Brunk** of Newport News, **Brenda Taylor** of Yorktown, and **Teresa Kay Brown, Judy Kinshaw-Ellis, Caitlin Skinner, Frank and Lark Smith,** and **Mark and Linda Wenger**, all of Williamsburg, to the John Clayton Chapter.

In Review: "An Introduction to the Flora of Virginia Mobile App" at our July Meeting

The Flora of Virginia hardcover contains 1,572 pages, is over three inches thick, weighs seven pounds, and features one illustration—a map of Virginia. In comparison, a quarter-inch-thin iPhone fits in a pocket and holds all the same information on the same 3,164 species, with the addition of 1400 original illustrations, a botanical help section, an innovative graphic key—in addition to traditional dichotomous keys—and a reference library! If that's not impressive enough, it can also be updated periodically, which keeps the science current.



Speaker Bland Crowder and Lucile Kossodo

Go to <https://floraofvirginia.org/> and click the Keeping the Science Current tab to read about this Initiative.

What better way to learn to use this app by getting instruction from the Executive Director of the Flora of Virginia Project—**Bland Crowder**! Before having free time for questions and individual help, Bland gave us a little background on the process of organizing the information for the app. For example, he said that they were first going to use only the dichotomous keys but decided on one based on characteristics. First, they organized the plants into 11 major groups:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. ferns | 7. other monocots (not orchids or grass-like) |
| 2. fern allies | 8. composites |
| 3. grasses | 9. other dicots (not composites/asters) |
| 4. sedges | 10. broad-leaved woody plants |
| 5. rushes | 11. needle-leaved woody plants |
| 6. orchids | |

Those on the committee each volunteered for one of the eleven groups. Sixteen characteristics were then decided upon, resulting, in my opinion, a very user-friendly interface. The icons for the plant groups are colorful, the layout is clear, and navigation is simple. If you don't know which of the 11 groups your specimen belongs to, you can start the Browse Screen at a beginner level. If you don't understand some of the botanical terms, the glossary and the flower and leaf basics illustrations help. You can also choose to see a range map, read a complete botanical description, or see more photos. In addition, you can save plants to a favorites list which pairs nicely with the “sort” feature if you are making a list of suitable plants for a specific purpose. Something else you can't do with a print edition is choose your location. When I select to use my current location, James City County, I see that the total number of possible species goes down from 3,164 to 2,255. Just out of curiosity, I set the location to Albermarle County, and the possible species rose to 2,499. In the field, you do not have to have an internet connection to access any of the information. Information abounds. Rare, threatened, and invasive species are so noted. Moisture and sunlight requirements are also indicated, as is bloom time.

A wonderful bonus is the amazing Reference Library. It contains outstanding, in-depth information that is sure to make us educated, informed, and ever more appreciative of our Virginia Flora. I have resolved to read it through. Slowly, little by little. A sincere thank you to all who worked on the Flora of Virginia Mobile app project.

To keep up to date with news regarding corrections, updates and more, go to <https://floraofvirginia.org/> and click on the Stay Flora Informed tab.

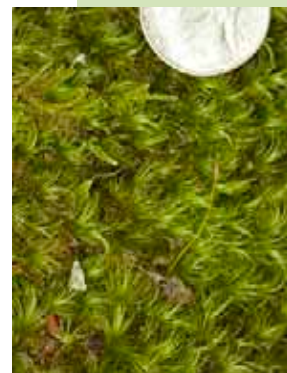
Cathy Flanagan

Recent Plant Walks

July 14's Ferns, Mosses, and Forest Plants Walk

On July 21, **Helen Hamilton** led a group of aspiring botanists on a short informative hike in Freedom Park. Though her walk and talk presented an overview of the types of plants that grow in the area, she highlighted mosses and ferns. Helen addressed conditions that encourage moss growth and explained that some gardeners focus on moss gardening. Before heading out into the woods, the group got a look at Fern Moss, Broom Moss, and Cord Glaze Moss.

As the group descended into the ravine behind the playground, the differences in plant life were apparent between the upland and lower land areas. At the top and near the forest edge, specimens of Netted Chain Fern and Sensitive Fern lined the path. Along the trail, Rustwort was observed on downed logs that had lost their bark; it is a liverwort that is green in the summer but turns to a rusty color in the winter. Closer to the bottom of the ravine, ferns and mosses were abundant. The group was introduced to Royal Fern, Christmas Fern, Bracken Fern, and New York Fern. The mosses found there included *Fissidens* (pocket moss) and *Aulacomnium* (ribbed bog moss).



Some of the ferns and mosses seen on the walk: top left, Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*); bottom left, New York Fern (*Thelypteris noveboracensis*); top right, Broom Moss (*Dicranum scoparium*); bottom right, Pocket Moss (*Fissidens* spp.)

Photos: Helen Hamilton

Judy Kinshaw-Ellis

...and a second one led by Helen on August 18

I didn't get any list of this walk's findings, but here is a note from Helen:

This walk showed much more diversity of bryophyte species than vascular plants... only blooms seen were elephant's foot, crane fly orchid, and a lawn weed, *majus japonica*. Meegan identified a beak sedge, *Rhynchospora* sp, near the playground.



Shirley Devan

The second walk's participants pose for a photo. From left: Shirley Devan, Jim Cole, Dave Lauthess, leader Helen Hamilton, Chuck Deffenbaugh, and Meegan Wallace

August 4's Tree Walk

A perfect August morning drew about a dozen people to Wellspring Methodist Church on August 4 for a tree walk with **Dr. Stewart Ware**. The grounds of the church offered a wide assortment of trees for both novice and more experienced tree enthusiasts.

Sand and mockernut hickories grow adjacent to each other, so it was easy to see the differences in the twig and leaf sizes, the mockernut being the larger of the two compound-leaved trees. The area includes many of the common trees of the region, such as tulip poplar, beech, dogwood, sassafras, American holly, and southern, white, and scarlet oaks. It also has a few more unusual trees, such as black gum, slippery elm, and chinkapin. Dr. Ware explained that the chinkapin is closely related to native chestnuts, which have been nearly eliminated by chestnut blight. The chinkapin also is affected by the blight, but is able to reproduce more successfully because it produces seeds as a younger tree while the chestnuts take many more years to produce seeds.

The group also got a look at two common pines, the loblolly and the Virginia. Another common evergreen, the red cedar, was also pointed out, and Dr. Ware noted that it is actually a juniper, as no native cedars grow naturally in North America.

In addition to identifying trees by leaves and bark, the group's other senses were tested as well. They noted the smell of the sweetgum, wax myrtle, and the wild black cherry and the taste of the sourwood. The walk presented a solid overview of many local trees.

Judy Kinshaw-Ellis



Dr. Ware explains *discula* anthracnose (Dogwood anthracnose disease) to Keith Navia and Judy Kinshaw-Ellis.

Upcoming Walks



Saturday, Sept. 29, 9–11 am: York River State Park

Donna Ware will lead this walk to identify plants along the **Taskinas Trail** in York River State Park. She expects to see several species of fall goldenrods and asters and also oaks and hickories with maturing fruits that will help us identify them. Meet at 9 am in the parking lot near the trail head.

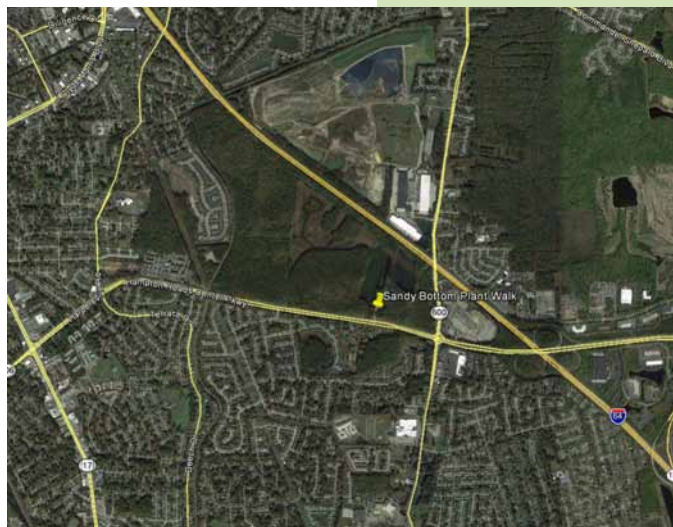
Contact Donna at 757-565-0657 or dmeware1001@gmail.com for directions or questions.

Saturday, Oct. 6, 10 am: Freshwater Wetlands and Woodland Trail at Sandy Bottom Park, Hampton

Join **Meegan Wallace** for a look at a wetland restoration and forested wetland plants.

Sandy Bottom Park is located at the intersection of Hampton Roads Center Parkway (West) and Big Bethel Road (Rte. 600)—see map at right. Enter the park from Big Bethel or Hampton Roads Center Parkway and meet at the nature center for a 1 mile walk through woods and wetlands.

Contact Meegan at clmoo3@verizon.net to register and for more information about plants that will be seen.



Saturday, Nov. 10, 10:00 am: Fall Colors Walk at White Oak Trail, Newport News Park

Susie Yager will lead a level, easy walk through a lakeside woodland, with a portion of the trail on boardwalk over a beaver-dammed swamp. The walk will take us through several habitats, home to a variety of hardwoods, moisture-loving shrubs, herbs, and forbs. The trail is a 2.6 mile loop, level and easy, but may have some wet or muddy spots. Meet at Newport News Park's Discovery Center, Constitution Way. Use the NNPark entrance at Constitution Way. From Jefferson Ave, turn onto Constitution Way; drive 0.9 mile; the Discovery Center will be on the right (GPS coordinates 37.181682, -76.537173). The Discovery Center has restrooms.

Contact Susie to register at soozigus@cox.net.

An update on the Stonehouse Habitat

During July and August the Stonehouse Schoolyard Habitat was transformed!

The Stonehouse Habitat garden became a National Wildlife Federation Certified Schoolyard Habitat in 2009 and has been maintained as a native plant garden by members of the local chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society (primarily by Jan Newton until 2013). This summer at the request of school officials we have reduced the size of the native plant habitat to primarily the courtyard of the lower elementary grades.

School officials expressed concerns about the garden in late June but we reached an agreement to let us thin, prune and reduce the garden size. In early July VNPS members and Master Naturalists helped to rescue (dig) plants from areas no longer part of the garden (along the sidewalks). Thanks to advice from landscape designer Peggy Krapf, native plant grower and garden designer Denise Greene, and Jody Turner & Barb Turner from the York County 4-H Schoolyard Habitat

Outreach program, the courtyard has a new garden design with additional pathways.

Denise drew up a new garden plan for the courtyard with extra paths to create smaller garden areas. Gregg Ripple (teacher at SES) took the initiative and during the summer he personally cleared some garden areas, installed edged pathways and picnic table patio with some donated and some purchased supplies, and he has transformed the courtyard. Master Gardener Lynn Trott assisted me in pruning up some of the shrubs so they can remain in the garden.

Ralph Charlton, SES parent and vegetable garden leader, has planted a late summer garden in the newly replaced raised beds along the south sidewalk beside the building and in the small raised beds near the end of the west sidewalk (outside the courtyard). We have another Boy Scout who has expressed interest in following Ryan Rivas' Eagle Project with more enhancements to the Stonehouse gardens. We'll meet with him on Sept. 8 during our "Second Saturday morning" garden work-day.

On August 30 during the Stonehouse Elementary School Open House I collected the names of 14 parents who are interested in helping to maintain the habitat this year.

Our first Fall Habitat work-day will be held on Saturday, Sept. 8 from 9-11:30 am. Anyone interested in helping to weed and replant the garden is welcome to come that day. I will be happy to give brief tours and show you what you can do to help the garden be welcoming to students and staff. Suggestions for a new butterfly garden just outside the courtyard would be welcome.

Please come on the morning of September 8 at 9 if you can.

Sue Voigt



Sue Voigt took these photos after the transformation: top, Gregg Ripple installed crush & run pathways this summer. center, the finished picnic area bottom, pathway behind benches near hallway windows

JCC had a booth at August 18th's Farmer's Market

At the Williamsburg Farmer's Market on Saturday, Aug. 18th Sara and Ray Nugent, Cathy Flanagan, and Gary Driscoll greeted people and introduced them to our chapter and what we do. We displayed information on the upcoming Annual Meeting & Conference at William & Mary and we even had people who sounded interested in attending! We also displayed Helen's August Wildflower of the Month article and photo (Purple passionflower). We handed out our rack card (which has a membership form on it), a VNPS wildflower of the year brochure, the deer resistant plant handout, the host plants for butterflies handout, and our plant sale list from this year. We had a great turnout and got a few names and email addresses for follow up.

Cathy Flanagan



Cathy Flanagan

Sara is ready to talk native plants with visitors.



Sara Nugent

Cathy displays some of our educational material.



Cathy Flanagan

Gary Driscoll interacts with a visitor to our booth.

Getting the Word Out

As chapter members, we understand the value of native plants and are pleased when we can obtain them. That's partly because we have the advantage of being reminded whenever there is an opportunity to learn by taking a native plant walk or listening to an expert lecturer. We also have the newsletter to keep us up to date if we miss an event. In this way, we pick up a lot of information over the years. In my encounters, I have found that people are very receptive to learning about our activities, and it is my task to make sure they can find out. To that end, every plant walk and lecture event is submitted to local papers, and we always include a representative photo. Occasionally, at the discretion of the editors, we get our notices in print. Most of the time, however, they are only available online in the community news sections of the papers or on our Facebook page. There are now many "Neighborhood" magazine publications, and online community events calendars such as WY Daily, Local Scoop, or Next-Door Neighbors. If you know of other similar publications or websites, please let me know so I can add them to our list! I believe the more we can inform and engage people, the more likely they will become advocates for native plants.

Publicity efforts for the plant sale began early with handing out flyers to gain exposure at events such as the Horticultural Extravaganza in Newport News, the CNU Gardening Symposium, and the Williamsburg Farmer's Market. Our brightly colored plant sale notice was posted to community bulletin boards in libraries and parks. Local businesses put our signs in their windows or at their registers. Our Facebook page was updated many times with photos and posts about the benefits of native plants. These efforts were relatively inexpensive and were an opportunity to talk face to face about what we do. Not so for advertising in the newspaper. This year, though, the *Virginia Gazette* included a one-week digital campaign along with our B&W print ad. What I learned is that our response rate to these digital ads was about twice the national average! To me, that means that people are paying attention online and that there is plenty of demand for us to meet by offering more chapter activities.

A suggestion I received from Jim Etchberger was to reach out to parents with young children. As we know, preschoolers and kindergartners are highly receptive to learning and very much enjoy nature activities. One way to engage more with young families is to have a Farmer's Market booth. For help with ideas for children's activities, I spoke with Jan Newton and am looking forward to planning with her. We also have Sara and Ray Nugent to thank for volunteering at the Farmer's Market and for purchasing two lightweight tables for JCC/VNPS to keep for the purpose. Getting the word out isn't just about advertising our sale once a year. It's about our everyday encounters with friends and neighbors. It's about what we do in the community—and we all can participate.

Cathy Flanagan, Publicity/Membership

**From *Sempervirens*, Summer 2018—
"Fun on Facebook: Ferns, Fungi, Lichens, and Mosses"
by Nancy Vehrs, VNPS President**

Facebook devotees already know that our Society has a page with more than 14,000 followers that is administered by Caitie Cyrus. We also have a Facebook group, administered by Marty Nielsen, which allows for exchanges among members. It is a popular site for plant identification. Now we've added another group page: "VNPS Ferns, Fungi, Lichens, and Mosses." Helen Hamilton of the John Clayton Chapter was interested in developing an exchange of knowledge about non-vascular plants. There are other groups devoted to this subject, but they go far afield. Helen and I wanted to create something local to Virginia. The new group is open to members only by request. You need not be an expert to join, but those of you with an interest in bryophytes may find this group to your liking. Check us out and have fun.



Photos: Helen Hamilton, Louise Menges

John Clayton Chapter Calendar

**Friday–Sunday
September
14–16**

The 2018 VNPS Annual Meeting, hosted by the John Clayton Chapter, will be held at the William & Mary School of Education, 301 Monticello Avenue.

We are excited to announce a theme of sustainability; considering ways that we can make our organizations healthier and more viable, which in turn will allow us to multiply our efforts to preserve Virginia's natural plant populations. And of course, we'll have some excellent walks; outings and presentations; great food, and charming companionship!

Information about the meeting's events is on the VNPS website at vnps.org.

Hope to see you there!

**Saturday,
September 29**

9–11am: A walk on the **Taskinas Trail in York River State Park**, led by **Donna Ware**.

Meet at 9 am in the parking lot near the trail head.

Contact Donna at 757-565-0657 or dmeware1001@gmail.com for directions or questions.

(See Page 5.)

**Saturday,
October 6**

10 am: **Freshwater Wetlands and Woodland Trail at Sandy Bottom Park, Hampton**

Join **Meegan Wallace** for a look at a wetland restoration and forested wetland plants.

Contact Meegan at clm003@verizon.net to register and more information about plants that will be seen.

(Map and directions on Page 6)

**Saturday,
November 10**

10 am: **Fall Colors Walk at White Oak Trail, Newport News Park**

Susie Yager will lead this level, easy walk through a lakeside woodland, with a portion of the trail on boardwalk over a beaver-dammed swamp. The walk will take us through several habitats, home to a variety of hardwoods, moisture-loving shrubs, herbs and forbs.

Contact **Susie Yager** to register at soozigus@cox.net.

(See Page 6 for details and directions.)

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.

Below is a membership renewal form. Please contact Membership Chair **Cathy Flanagan** at 757-879-1997 or at **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