

Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

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www.claytonvnps.org

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Our July 18 meeting: "Growing Community through Farming and Gardening"



Our speaker will be **Pam Dannon**, Board President of Williamsburg Community Growers. Pam is the Registered Dietitian for Williamsburg/James City County Public Schools' School Health Initiative Program (SHIP) and coordinates their farm to school programming. In former lives, she has been an egg specialist, corporate trainer, preschool and science lab teacher, Master Gardener, and restaurant inspector. Her presentation will be about the evolution of WCG to their current 40 plot community garden, one acre urban farm, and about their conservation demonstration projects. The mission of Williamsburg Community Growers is to educate the public regarding the benefits of producing and consuming locally grown produce, provide gardening space for individuals and organizations, promote healthy, sustainable lifestyles for the community, and demonstrate and promote conservation practices.

The meeting begins at **7:00 pm** in **Room C** of the **James City County Recreation Center**, 5301 Longhill Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23188-2700.

See you there!



From the President

Last year in June I wrote that spring was here at last, but this year I am writing that summer arrived very early. It has been very hot and humid since May. Now my motto is taken from a saying that Cathy Flanagan wrote on a composite photo she created in May—“the long and winding road to the plant sale.”

Indeed, two weeks into May we had a huge potting party in which we potted over 45 Common Milkweed, 45 Swamp Milkweed, 50 Whorled Coreopsis, and 72 Butterfly Weed. It was a great potting time with many joyful volunteers. At the end of the day, Cathy took this photo and added other natives on the edges of her composition. The pots were lined three abreast from my front door to the gate of my mailbox. This does not include the other areas where pots are lined up. Then, in late May we had a smaller potting party and got 50 Wild Geraniums, Native Plant of 2020, potted, as well as Skullcap Hyssop and Wood Asters.



Another view of freshly potted natives

This time there were three volunteers doing the work. It was a fun time, we told stories and joked as we planted. Then in early June, I visited a member in Ford's Colony who gave me Christmas Ferns, Ostrich Ferns, Brown-eyed Susans, and Iteas. The following week I visited Edie in Gloucester and there I got Downy Lobelias, NY Ironweed, and Great Blue Lobelia. Imagine—these plants were growing in her lawn! She also had some ferns she donated for the sale. It was a hot day so I stopped for my favorite coffee ice cream. This ice cream shop is located on the road to Gloucester. They make wonderful ice creams and milkshakes! I recommend it if you should drive that way. In my own

neighborhood, I visited Libbey, who donated Cardinal Flowers, Fire Pinks, and Tall Coreopsis. From my own garden, I have potted Northern Wild Indigo, Woodland Sunflowers, Narrow-leaved Sunflowers, and Garden Phlox. I also potted Wild Bergamot and White Vervain, both of which I had grown myself for the sale. The White Vervain is not that showy but is known to be an extremely good pollinator and butterfly attractor. We had great rainstorms; the bountiful water meant that the plants grew to huge and healthy sizes. I have a fenced front yard and normally deer do not enter. All would be great were it not for a little rabbit that grew so big it could not leave through the fence anymore. It is cute and alas, has a voracious appetite for the many plants it likes. Imagine, it even ate the young common milkweeds, poisonous or not... Yes, now, not only do I water but I also spray plants with both liquid and granules that repel rabbits and deer for the plants for our sale. There are over 400 plants now. Nothing is easy on this long road, as you see. Do you have something you can donate for our sale? Let me know. I hope to see you at our fall potting parties later, when it cools.

On a very different subject, I read an article by Paul Simons in the *Guardian* about the ancient British rainforests. I had no idea they existed. These are temperate rainforests, far cooler than the hot steamy rainforests of the tropics, but just as wet and humid, drenched in huge downpours of rain and very clean air off the Atlantic, and mild all year round thanks to the equable ocean currents originating from the Gulf Stream. Amazingly, these rainforests are just as lush as the tropical ones, but far rarer and in milder weather. They are relics of the great Atlantic forests dating back to the end of the last ice 10,000 years ago, and some of the best surviving forests are in Scotland. They are magical places like something out of Tolkien—gnarled old trees and rocks dripping in moisture and smothered in carpets of fungi, ferns, mosses, liverworts, and lichens, with fabulous names such as the golden specklebelly lichen and greater fork moss. It is also true that some of the species found here exist nowhere else in the world. Don't you wish you could visit them? I wish I could hike there. It would be a great field trip with Helen Hamilton as our expert. One can dream. Unfortunately, these non-tropical rainforests are largely forgotten and not considered special. Scotland's ancient rainforests are in trouble. They are not regenerating, and overgrazing deer and livestock, conifer plantations, invasive plant species, and ash dieback disease are threatening them. The Atlantic Woodland Alliance of 16 charities and organizations has recently proposed eradicating alien plant species such as Sitka Spruce (from Washington State) and *Rhododendron ponticum* (our common light purple flowering rhododendron), to give the rainforests a chance to regenerate. Our native plants can become invasive in British environments just as some of theirs such as ivy can invade our environment!

Lucile Kossodo

New Members

We welcome new member **Elise Hayes** of Williamsburg to the John Clayton Chapter!

From Cathy...

In Review: May 16 Chapter Meeting: Blue Ridge PRISM

If you missed the May meeting held at Coleman Nursery—which is a very nice classroom space—our speaker was Ashton Stinson from Blue Ridge PRISM. First, some clarification of abbreviations is needed. PRISM stands for Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management. Blue Ridge PRISM, founded in 2014, is the first CWMA or Cooperative Weed Management Area headquartered in Virginia. CWMAs are much more common out west—there are over 100—and are usually owned by fewer landowners with larger tracts of land. Blue Ridge PRISM's coverage area encompasses 3 million acres of natural and agricultural land in 10 counties in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Shenandoah National Park contains 200,000 acres. The Shenandoah National Park Trust, a 501 3c nonprofit, is the fiscal sponsor of Blue Ridge PRISM. In this wide area, there are 50,000 landowners that own five acres or more. While measures can be taken to eradicate invasive species in one area, the seeds of invasive species from an adjacent area are easily carried back into it by rivers and streams, animals, hikers, vehicles and so forth. The need for cooperation is clear. Invasives can completely devastate native habitats, and in many cases, these areas can never be restored without adjacent lands taking similar measures. Ashton pointed out that while Blue Ridge PRISM's mission is to decrease invasives, it's also to get VDOT to stop planting them!

Through the sharing of best practices and assisting with devising long-term strategies for the cooperative management of invasives, Blue Ridge PRISM provides education and outreach to landowners and strives to be a vehicle for support, awareness and information. They provide free consultations to landowners to identify and control the invasive species on their land. They also help with where to find contractors and how to connect with others with the same problems. Blue Ridge PRISM can also provide financial assistance to get the work done either through their own grants or through other programs. One such program, for example, the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) Partnership program, awarded \$640,000 to 94 landowners to treat 2000 acres. Additionally, the Dupont Settlement Wavyleaf (*Oplismenus undulatifolius*) Project grant awarded \$250,000 for five years of treatment at six sites.

Part of Ashton's presentation was a more interactive engagement about the control of specific species, such as Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimenium*), and about efforts to get more noxious weeds on the DCR invasive species list. Her presentation was very well received and informative. Visit the website at <https://blueridgeprism.org/>

A Report on June's VNPS Board Meeting

I attended the June 15th meeting at the Fairfield Library in Henrico. If you have a chance to attend one of the meetings, you'll find the board welcoming and the atmosphere casual and inclusive. I also found that the discussion included plenty of topics of interest and relevance—no matter what chapter you represent. The meeting is in the morning and coffee and lots of snacks are provided. Below are some of the highlights.

First there was a reminder that the 2019 Annual Meeting will be held in Piedmont in Front Royal on Sept 27–29. One of the events that I am very excited about taking part in is the tour of the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute. It will be a three-hour driving excursion of the property. I understand that along with beautiful native meadow demonstration plots and an American Chestnut breeding orchard, one can also see endangered wildlife such as cheetahs, Hartmann's mountain zebras, Addra gazelles, Przewalski's horses, Whooping cranes and more. The Skyline Drive tour and Drawing Wildflowers and Nature Journaling workshop will be on my agenda as well. However, as pointed out at the meeting, that there are over 32 walks and programs, and all can be found on the VNPS website right on the front page—just click beneath the photo of the Shenandoah River National Park. You will be taken to a page where you can choose to see the walks and programs, the schedule of events, and to register. You can also read about the opening and closing speakers.

It looks to be a great meeting, and I am looking forward to attending as a visiting, rather than a hosting member this time. Last year, the threatening path of the hurricane forced us to cancel and reschedule a few weeks later. It was hard on volunteer members who had put so much work into the organization and planning, which brings up a topic that was discussed at the meeting. Even without a hurricane, many chapters feel that the arrangements for accommodations, food, and venue are difficult, and it was proposed that VNPS look into providing more support for those services while the chapters focus more on the walks, field trips, workshops and speakers. A motion to run a test trial in 2021 was proposed and accepted.

Following up on a theme from our last annual meeting, VNPS heard from Latino Outdoors, a group we were made aware of by our last speaker, Kevin Bryan of the Keystone Policy Center and the Next 100 Coalition. How best to reach out was the subject of discussion. Set up a meeting with key individuals of both groups? Meet up at a local event? Make some tickets to the annual meeting available to those from Latino Outdoors?

Another topic of discussion was the budget, and the floor was opened to all to give their thoughts on what VNPS should put into next year's budget. One request was for the state to provide a standardized video presentation about the benefits of native plants that chapter members could use as a resource supporting and supplementing their own customized talk. There was a lengthy back and forth, with

some not fully understanding the need noting there are written pamphlets and resources and photos and talks are usually specific to the area. Another expenditure proposed was for more mobile equipment for hearing-impaired on walks.

Although John Townsend, staff botanist, DCR Division of Natural Heritage, could not be at the meeting, he filed a report announcing that the 2019 Rare Plant List Revision has been published. You can see the updated list here: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/document/plantlist19.pdf>.

Cathy Flanagan

Pictures from the potting party at Lucile's home

(Next time you see a cry for help at potting parties, don't turn it down—you'll miss all the fun!)



Tim Costello wrestles a yucca at the Stonehouse garden.



Adrienne Frank found this funny photo of a dog among the newspapers brought to line the bottoms of pots.



Cathy Flanagan and Edie Bradbury hard at work



Chuck Deffenbaugh, Alice Kopinitz, Anne Negus, and Lucile Kossodo add to our collection of potted plants for the next sale.

Upcoming Plant Walks

Saturday, July 13, 10:00 am— Woodland Plants and the Butterfly Garden at New Quarter Park

Over 100 plant species were identified in this area during a recent walk, plus many butterflies are sure to be seen in the habitat.

Meet in the parking lot at 1000 Lakeshead Drive, Williamsburg.

Contact **Meegan Wallace** at 757-291-1099 or clmoo3@verizon.net to register and for more information.

Saturday, July 27, 9:00 am—Ferns, Mosses, and Forest Plants

Join **Helen Hamilton** to look for summer forest plants, ferns and mosses, on a short trail in **Freedom Park**. The Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists were involved in developing a path that leads to a deep ravine, heavily covered with low herbaceous plants. Bring a magnifier to look at tiny plants and a camera to photograph the larger ones. Use the parking area by the trail entrance that is opposite the 3 restored cabins (look for the VNPS Plant Walk signs).

Contact Helen at 757-564-4494 or helen48@cox.net after July 15 for information and to register.

Saturday, August 10, 10:00 am—Flowers of Late Summer at White Oak Trail, Newport News Park

Meet at Newport News Park's Ranger Station, Constitution Way. Use the NN Park entrance at Constitution Way. From Jefferson Ave, turn onto Constitution Way; drive 0.4 mile; the Ranger Station will be on the left (GPS coordinates 37.180092, -76.545788); plenty of parking at nearby picnic shelters. Peninsula Master Naturalist **Susie Yager** will lead a walk through this lakeside woodland. Strawberry Bush and Beautyberry should be in fruit and numerous late summer flowers in bloom, including Swamp Loosestrife, Jewelweed, Groundnut Vine, Crane-fly Orchid and Meadow Beauty. With luck we will catch delicate Butterfly Pea in bloom, too. The round-trip walk will be about 2.6 miles. The Ranger Station has restrooms.

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

Other Events

October 9, 12 & 20—Botanical Workshops at Freedom Park

Helen Hamilton will offer a workshop on mosses and liverworts (and maybe a few lichens) that will allow participants to identify these plants by their appearance and with a hand lens/magnifier. Powerpoint slides and examples in the classroom, and a walk outside to observe and collect samples.

The class will be at the **Freedom Park Interpretive Center** on three days, or any two of these, depending on enrollment—**Wednesday, Oct 9** and **Saturday, Oct 12** from 9:30–noon, and **Sunday, Oct 20** from 1:30–3:00.

Contact Helen at 757-564-4494 or helen48@cox.net to register. Helen will be out of town until July 15, but you can register anytime between August and the end of September. Watch for online notices.

Recent Plant Walks

June 8: Plants Near Water at College Landing Park

College Landing Park is lined with marsh plants, principally Arrow Arum (*Peltandra virginica*), almost a monoculture from the bridge. Growing on the creek side were two species of Arrowhead, Common and Bulltongue (*Sagittaria latifolia*, *S. lancifolia*), and Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), in bloom with hovering bees and butterflies, as well as Olney's Threesquare Bulrush (*Schoenoplectus americanus*). We studied the arrow-shaped leaves of *Peltandra*, *Pontederia*, and *Sagittaria* carefully to distinguish the differences among them.

Both Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and Honey Locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) grow along the edge of the lawn, the first with short spines on the twigs, while long, sharp thorns cover the stems of Honey Locust. An unusual growth of mistletoe was just appearing on the trunk of the Honey Locust.

Helen Hamilton

May's Wildflower Spot: Yellow Trout Lily or Dog-Tooth Violet (*Erythronium americanum*)

In early spring, look for a bright yellow flower drooping towards the ground (“its eyes look downwards”). Each stem is only 4–6 inches tall with a solitary flower on top. A member of the lily family, the trout lily has flower parts in threes, i. e., 3 yellow “sepals” and 3 yellow “petals” and 6 stamens in two circles of three. The fleshy green leaves with purple mottling are equally distinctive in the forest litter.

Because trout lilies are difficult to grow from seed, many bulb suppliers and nurseries sell the bulbs, which can be planted in the fall. Remember to buy from nurseries that guarantee nursery-propagated seeds or plants, as our native plants and habitats are at risk from being depleted.

If left undisturbed, plants will slowly spread by underground shoots. Despite its ability to spread, the trout lily is not considered an aggressive spreader but rather a delight to have in one's garden. Trout lily grows best in moist, acidic woodland soils, but can adapt to growing in many types of gardens.

The flowers have a short life, but the leaves remain as ground cover throughout the growing season. It is important to choose an appropriate site, with sun in the



The blooms and mottled leaves of Yellow Trout Lily

spring—to warm the earth and provide enough light for the lilies to make and store food—and shade or partial shade in the summer. Trout lilies are lovely intermingled with other spring ephemerals such as bloodroot or spring beauties. They do not transplant well.

The common name refers to the appearance of the flowers during trout fishing season, and to the brown and purple spotted leaves. “Dogtooth violet” refers to the appearance of the bulbs, although this plant is not related to violets. Trout lily is found throughout the state of Virginia, and ranges south to Florida and Alabama.

While not recommended today because of some toxicity, Iroquois women ate the leaves to prevent conception, and the plant has anti-bacterial properties.

Helen Hamilton

Wildflower Spot for June: Deerberry (*Vaccinium stamineum*)

Deerberry is a member of a large genus which includes blueberries and cranberries. This species is a tall (to 10 feet) deciduous shrub with variable foliage, mostly egg-shaped. Leaves are thin and not toothed, typically whitish underneath.

Unlike the closed, tubular buds and flowers of blueberry, the flowers of deerberry are open and dangling along the stem. The petals are flaring, with the stamens and styles extending outside. Greenish-white, pink-tinted flowers appear May–June; in late summer and fall greenish-purple fruits, sometimes white-powdered, appear, furnishing food for birds and small mammals.

Found over eastern U.S. and Canada, Deerberry is native to all counties in Virginia, growing in dry woods. “*Vaccinium*” is the classic name for blueberries; “*stamineum*” refers to the prominent stamens. While edible, the berries are not as flavorful as those of other species.

Helen Hamilton



Helen Hamilton

A closeup look at Deerberry's leaves and fruit

John Clayton Chapter Calendar

- Saturday, July 13** **10:00 am: Woodland Plants and the Butterfly Garden at New Quarter Park**
Over 100 plant species were identified in this area during a recent walk, plus many butterflies are sure to be seen in the habitat. Meet in the parking lot at 1000 Lakeshead Drive, Williamsburg.
Contact **Meegan Wallace** at 757-291-1099 or clmoo3@verizon.net to register and for more information.
- Thursday, July 18** **7:00 pm: Our July meeting—"Growing Community through Farming and Gardening"**
Our speaker will be **Pam Dannon**, Board President of Williamsburg Community Growers, whose presentation will be about the evolution of WCG to their current 40 plot community garden, one acre urban farm, and about their conservation demonstration projects.
The meeting begins at **7:00 pm** in **Room C** of the **James City County Recreation Center**, 5301 Longhill Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23188-2700. (See Page 1.)
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(See Page 7 for more details.)
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Contact Susie to register at soozigus@cox.net. (Details and directions on Page 7)
- October 9, 12, & 20** **Botanical Workshops at Freedom Park**
Helen Hamilton will offer a workshop on mosses and liverworts at the **Freedom Park Interpretive Center** on three days, or any two of these, depending on enrollment:
Wednesday, Oct 9 and **Saturday, Oct 12** from 9:30–noon and **Sunday, Oct 20** from 1:30–3:00.
Contact Helen at 757-564-4494 or helen48@cox.net to register.
(See Page 7 for more details.)

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