



Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

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www.claytonvnps.org

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Our March 15 Meeting: Dr. Stewart Ware on "Native Plants and Native Soils"

Dr. Ware, Professor Emeritus of biology at the College of William and Mary, earned his Ph.D. in biology from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN and his B.S. degree in biology from Millsaps College, Jackson, MS. His talk will include a description of

native soils and discussion of how soil texture and soil mineral content affect abundance, distribution and growth of native plants on the Coastal Plain of Virginia.

He has been studying the ecology of Virginia plants since 1967, and the effects of soil chemistry on plant distribution for even longer. As a plant ecologist, Dr. Ware's research addresses the distribution and abundance of plant species, and the physical and biotic factors controlling their distribution and their role in plant communities. Dr. Ware is widely published in the peer reviewed literature in botany and dendrology.

In 2006, Dr. Ware received the Thomas Jefferson Medal for Contributions to Natural Science in VA from the Virginia Museum of Natural History. In 1987, he received the Association of Southeastern Biologists Meritorius Teaching Award. He served as President of the Virginia Academy of Science 1988-1989, and was Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of the Torrey Botanical Society*, 1993-1997.

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 Sustainable Landscaping

This is the new "buzz word" for cities, towns and industrial settings, but applicable to the home gardener as well. The goal is to develop attractive landscapes in balance with the local

climate, requiring minimal inputs of fertilizer, pesticides, gasoline, time, and water. Non-sustainable practices are all too familiar: contamination of soil, air and water; toxics in the environment, consumption of natural resources, greenhouse gas emissions.

Since 1998, the U.S. Green Building Council has provided building owners with guidelines for green building design, using rating systems (LEED—Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for the design, construction and operation of green buildings, homes and neighborhoods.

Sustainable landscaping is all about the use of plants native to region, which is where VNPS comes in. Our mission to educate, inform, and lead by example requires that we use every opportunity to promote the installation of native plants. Jan Newton gives talks about her experiences in the Stonehouse Habitat, which nurtures butterflies, bees and a consortium of insects around the native plants. Kathi Mestayer promotes Doug Tallamy's talks on DVD wherever and whenever possible.

Our plant sale is John Clayton's major educative program, where we provide not only plants but growing conditions, and landscaping tips.

The horticulture industry is huge, promoting non-native imports, a practice that began with the colonists bringing their favorite seeds to our shores and returning with samples of our native plants. But with initiatives to "sustainable landscaping," and horror stories of out-of-control imports (kudzu, Japanese beetles, stiltgrass), we can only hope for a surge in the public's perception of the value of our native species.

In June the Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia will present a two-day symposium "Working with Nature for Sustainable, Beautiful Gardens." The website www.mgnv.org provides information and registration.

Helen Hamilton

New members

We welcome six new members: **Jean Balutanski, Stacy Demeo, Thomas Dougherty, Gary Streb** and **Lois Ullman** (all of Williamsburg), and **Patty Kipps** of Norge.

"Landscaping with Natives" the topic at our January meeting

Our speaker was Denise Greene, owner of Sassafra Farm, a nursery in Gloucester which specializes in native varieties of plants. She presented her recommendations for home garden landscaping, illustrated with slides, in 3 groups; plants which thrive in dry shade, those need-

ing moist shade, and plants for sites with full sun, with valuable (and entertaining) information about how to plant them and about their culture. Denise has provided a list of the plants she discussed, which you can find on our Chapter's website at www.claytonvnps.org. Click on "Meetings," then select "Native Plant List" in the January meeting article.

We were shown a beautiful quilt designed and created by J. Pieper, retired York River State Park program support technician, in memory of Carolyn Will, and donated to the chapter. The plan to raffle it at the spring plant sale was being discussed at this January's board meeting when Ralph, who had remained silent for most of the meeting, stepped in to say, "I'll buy it right now for \$750, the cost of a Nature Camp scholarship." The board immediately accepted.



Denise Greene, left, with Helen Hamilton and Callie Newton, who gave a report on her Nature Camp 2011 project.



Carolyn's quilt, with a dedication to her embroidered on its reverse.

Ralph bought the quilt for Carolyn's mother, Ms. Lilly, who lives in Mount Crawford, Virginia. Ms. Lilly recently visited Williamsburg and got the opportunity to spend an afternoon with J. Pieper at her home, talking about Carolyn and seeing where Ms. Pieper designed and created the quilt. **Louise Menges**

Nature Camp 2012 Scholarships announced

Joan, Martha, Libbey, Jan and I met to review 14 applications in order to select the John Clayton Chapter scholarship winners. I am happy to report that every one of these young people submitted good to great applications. We selected five winners, and I have spoken with each one of them. They were quite excited and accepted with gratitude.

Three of them have been advised that they will be receiving The Carolyn Will Memorial Scholarship. They are:

Rylee Worstell, 7th Grade, Hornsby Middle School, Williamsburg

Michaela Van Wicklin, 7th Grade, Hornsby Middle School, Williamsburg

Brianna Gillen, 6th Grade, Hornsby Middle School, Williamsburg

This outstanding group of young women was chosen for this scholarship because of particular interest in plants, biology and/or gardening.

The other two Nature Camp 2012 winners are:

Joshua Haas, 9th Grade, Gloucester High School, Gloucester

Eli Pritchard, 5th Grade, Matoaka Elementary, Williamsburg

Patti Gray, Chair, Nature Camp Committee

From the Wildflower Rescue Team



Cortney Langley

Donna Ware tags a laurel oak sapling.

is “the most common tree on the site and is a current record for Hampton! It is actually probably common in that whole lowland area, but has been overlooked previously or misidentified as black oak or southern red oak. I got a dried, leafy branch off the ground but will need a fresh specimen for the voucher.”

The team began digging that day and scheduled a later rescue, getting plenty of interest from John Clayton Chapter members, as well as Hampton Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists. Unfortunately, weather did not cooperate and the rescue was cancelled. It was rescheduled for Sunday, Feb. 26. Site work will begin in early March.

There are plenty of opportunities to get involved with plant rescue! The team, with the National Institute of Aerospace’s Lise Schioler, recently surveyed the Commander Shepard Extension site in Hampton, off Magruder Boulevard.

Along the one-mile stretch, the team found mostly grape ferns and cranefly orchids, as well as ground pine, partridgeberry, spicebush, violet, hearts-a-bustin’ and Elliott’s goldenrod. Donna Ware noted two real finds in the first laurel oak, which wasn’t noted in Hampton in the 2005 hard copy atlas but is noted in the online edition.

Then cherrybark oak, which Donna said is “the most common tree on the site and is a current record for Hampton! It is actu-



Cortney Langley

Ralph Will rescues a grape fern from the site.

In the meantime, the team was able to find fence materials for the Freedom Park rescued native plant garden, and spent a chilly weekend with Carolyn Will's brother, Jerry, erecting the fence and putting in the garden path. Thank you to the John Clayton Chapter for funding the fence, and to James City County for offering gravel and some equipment! We are working on finalizing the garden plan and will set up at least one planting day soon.



Ralph and Travis Will, with Jerry Lilly, Carolyn's brother, work on the fence at Freedom Park.

In partnership with the Friends of York River State Park, the team has cleared a scenic peninsula jutting into Beaver Pond and installed a labyrinth and a set of stairs. Team members continue to plant rescued shrubs and forbs. York River has an erosion issue that could be solved with Christmas ferns. Contact Ralph Will at 565-0306 or c.will@juno.com if you have some to spare. You got 'em, we'll dig 'em!

Back to Lise Schioler in Hampton. With the institute rescue and ongoing replanting, Lise wanted to honor Carolyn's life work on the site and arranged for a garden bench to be placed at the institute. The bench was recently delivered and the team is working on the wording for a memorial plaque.

On the more mundane side, the rescue team recently adopted a logo, set up an email list and expects to unveil both stand-alone and John Clayton web pages soon. We have re-pitched a story to the Daily Press, after gardening reporter Kathy VanMullekom retired, but have not yet heard back. Expect coverage in the Virginia Gazette presently. Meanwhile, the new Facebook page has proven useful, especially when rounding people up for the Hampton rescue or advising of last-minute changes.

"Like" us at www.facebook.com/Williamsburg.Wildflower.Rescue.Team.

Cortney Langley

(Editor's note: The Rescue Team's new logo was designed by Joshua Langley, Cortney's stepson.)

The Labyrinth

Led by Donna Ware, native shrubs are being installed at York River State Park at the entrance to a stone labyrinth. This is a site for spiritual meditation which is being developed by the Friends of York River State Park. The native plants, provided by the Native Plant Rescue Team, are being used to screen the site from other park facilities and

to enhance its beautiful natural setting. This planting of 22 specimens brings the total number of native shrubs and trees added to the labyrinth site to approximately 75. All of these are being fenced from the resident deer population; several previous individuals have already suffered damage. Master Naturalists Ginny Carey, Nancy Gore and Gary Driscole joined Ralph Will and Donna to install rescued plants at the site. Ron Giese was there also, to learn about the planting and care of native shrubs.

Ralph Will



Cortney Langley



Teta Kain

A Spring Ephemerals walk on Saturday, April 7

Join **Gus Hall** and **Helen Hamilton** for a look at early spring plants such as blood-root, hepatica and spring beauty. Meet at 10 am in the parking lot at Lafayette High School, which has easy access to the school's Nature Trail. Register with Helen Hamilton, 757/564-4494, or helen48@cox.net.

Recent JCC walks...

Skunk Cabbage walk on January 28

About a dozen people turned out in mild weather for the skunk cabbage walk at Longhill Swamp in James City County, led by **Gus Hall** and **Helen Hamilton** on Saturday, Jan. 28.

The cabbages themselves were still small, but profuse, so participants had to watch their step, not only to not get stuck in the muck, but to avoid crushing them. Tiny flowers are embedded in a column (the spadix) covered with a leafy spathe. The purple-and-green mottled spathes were prominent on the low-growing flower, but few spadices could be seen.

Despite the warm winter, the flower's amazing ability to heat up through cellular respiration was evident. This characteristic, along with its rotten smell, serves to attract flies and beetles during the colder months to enable pollination. Unfortunately, the rotten smell the field trippers found was attributable more to a decaying deer carcass nearby.

Ecologically, skunk cabbage prevents soil erosion in muddy places through its deep and extensive root systems. Indeed, later this year Longhill Swamp will be unrecognizable, completely carpeted by the colony's large, bright green leaves.



Phillip Merritt

Longhill Swamp's luxuriant carpet of skunk cabbage leaves later in the year.

The group stopped to admire smooth alder catkins. Helen pointed out the male and female flowers of red maple and told us to be on the lookout for crane fly orchid (*Tipularia discolor*), puttyroot orchid (*Aplectrum hyemale*) and climbing hydrangea. Participants also saw crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*) and low-growing hearts-a-bustin' (*Euonymus Americana*).

Cortney Langley



Jan Newton

Cortney Langley demonstrates that there's more than one way to avoid wet feet (and squashed skunk cabbage plants)!



Jan Newton

Skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) as it looked during the plant walk, with leaves just beginning to emerge.

February 4's Evergreen walk along the Wahrani Trail

Gus Hall and **Jan Newton** led this native plant walk on the Wahrani Nature Trail in New Kent County. Jan provided us with a handout which listed the plants we could expect to see as we followed winding trails through this rather hilly wooded tract not far from West Point. Among the participants was geologist Jerre Johnson, who described for us some of the geology of this area, pointing out that parts of our walk traversed an ancient slope of the York River of ages past (we're talking geologic ages, here).

As we trekked along, at one spot we passed some old brick rubble, which our leaders thought might have been remnants of the 18th-century Warreneye Church that once had stood on this property. In fact, this trail was named "Warreneye Nature Trail" until 2003, when New Kent County renamed the area "Wahrani Nature Park" to reflect the word's Native American origins.

Here is just a partial list of plants spotted during this walk: many different mosses; cranefly, rattlesnake plantain and puttyroot orchids; spotted wintergreen; christmas, ebony spleenwort and grape ferns; heart-leaved ginger; partridgeberry; and of course, evergreen trees like American holly, eastern red cedar, loblolly pine, Virginia pine and wax myrtle.



Jan points out a tiny *Botrychium dissectum* (a grape fern), whose bronzy-brown frond blends into the leaf litter at this time of year.



Cranefly orchid's single pleated leaf; its underside is purple.

Louise Menges



Two clubmosses:

Left, southern ground cedar (*Diphasiastrum digitatum*)

Right, princess pine (*Lycopodium obscurum*)



Leader Charlie Dubay holds up a black oak leaf.

Nude Tree workshop and walk on February 17 and 18

More than 20 people from the JCNPS, trainees from the Historic Rivers Chapter of the VA Master Naturalists, and the public attended one or both sessions of **Charlie Dubay's** Nude Tree Walk. The two parts consisted of a 2-hour talk held at the Williamsburg Public Library between 4–6 pm on Friday and a walk in the William & Mary College woods from 10–12 am on Saturday.

On Friday evening, Charlie used a PowerPoint presentation on how to identify trees in winter. His slides reviewed the features of common trees found in the coastal plain of VA and participants learned to look at bark, branches, twig and buds. Habitat, shape, color and smell helped discern species. Charlie used acronyms and sayings and a few jokes to help participants recall features. For example, MAD are common trees with opposite branches: maple, ash, and dogwood. However, sometimes the opposite branches of poison ivy can fool you.

Just before dark, Charlie offered hands-on practice in the courtyard of the library. Samples branches and twigs were hung and numbered so that participants could practice identification. Two quizzes helped participants practice newly learned identification strategies.

On Saturday morning, the group met near William & Mary Hall and walked up the Squirrel Point trail into College Woods. On the way up, participants learned how to identify trees and other winter plants by inspecting multiple features. On the way down the trail, participants identified trees and plants that Charlie had labeled with numbers early that morning.

College Woods offered a wide variety of species, some not frequently found in local forests. For example, a couple of shortleaf pines that were very tall, like loblolly pines, but with short needles 2–3 in a bundle and very small cones. The large rectangles of bark looked like loblolly but were lighter in color and contained little pin holes.

The distinctive bark of several trees identified in the College Woods:



Left, sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*); Right, tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)



Left, loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*); Center, shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata*); Right, Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana*)

Along the road, the group spotted a very large common persimmon tree by its distinctive dark bark with hexagon shapes. Charlie taught the group that persimmon in bush size can be identified by its twig. The buds are heart shaped and lie close to the twig. These are like a woman's small "purse" held tight so that it won't be stolen. Also, its terminal bud bows at the tip.

Blackgum (i.e., tupelo or sour gum) is common in the coastal woods and can be identified by branches at right angles to the trunk, 1-inch hexagon-shaped bark and red buds with white tips. Flowering dogwood that is in sunny areas typically has very distinctive mushroom shaped buds. By the end of the walk, everyone was able to identify the balls of the sweetgum and sycamore, the muscles of the American hornbeam, the evergreen spiny leaves of the American holly, and the leaves clinging to the American beech trees. **Adrienne Frank**

American Hazelnut: Wildflower of the Month for February 2012

A multi-stemmed shrub, American Hazelnut (*Corylus americana*) can be recognized in the winter by the 2- to 3-inch yellowish-brown catkins hanging from the tips of every branch. These are the male flowers; the female flowers appear in small, reddish, inconspicuous catkins. In late summer the female flowers give way to small, egg-shaped nuts encased within interesting leafy, ragged-edged bracts.

Dark green leaves are oval-shaped and edged with double teeth. In the fall their color ranges from combinations of orange, rose, purplish red, and yellow to a dull yellowish green.

Hazelnut grows in moist to dry well-drained soils, can tolerate clay and drought. It is usually found in dry or moist woods and thickets, and is widespread in Virginia.

Growing 6 to 12 feet tall, the plant can form thickets, creating a dense privacy screen and furnishing nesting sites for birds. Also known as American filbert, the hazelnuts are edible and are eaten by deer, squirrels, foxes, northern bobwhite, turkey and woodpeckers. They have a higher nutritional value than acorns or bechnuts.

Helen Hamilton

Round-lobed Hepatica: Wildflower of the Month for March 2012

Round-lobed Hepatica (*Anemone americana*) is one of the earliest spring wildflowers, blooming March through April. With no stems,



Phillip Merritt

the plant has large basal leaves with 3 rounded lobes. Hairy flower stalks emerge from a tattered clump of leathery, burgundy-brown-tinted leaves from the previous year; new leaves appear only after the flowers bloom. Light blue to lavender or white flowers are easy to find in the forest litter, 1 inch across on 8-inch-tall stalks. The flowers have numerous stamens and are without true petals, the petal-like 5–9 sepals surrounded by 3 bracts.

Round-lobed *Hepatica* grows in dry or moist upland woods over most of Virginia. The range is from Quebec to Minnesota and Manitoba and south to Georgia, Tennessee and Missouri.

Widely used by Native Americans and colonists to treat many ailments, the plant served most commonly as a leaf tea for liver disorders. The common names *Hepatica* and Liverleaf refer to the leaves being 3-lobed (as is the liver) and becoming dark in color with age. Treating organ problems with the plants that most suggest them is known as the “doctrine of signatures,” a former practice that originated in China. “Liverleaf” could also refer to the brownish color of the overwintering leaves.

Helen Hamilton



Helen Hamilton

Two upcoming VNPS field trips

March 25 thru 31—visit Florida's Panhandle

Trip highlights are expected to include visits to Florida Caverns, Angus Gholson Park, several sites in the vicinity of Torreya State Park, stops in the Appalachian National Forest, a boat tour of the Appalachian Basin (limit 13, first-come, first-served), and a guided trip to a dune habitat on St. George Island.

We expect to see trilliums, flowering shrubs, carnivorous plants, a dwarf cypress forest and a multitude of other plants. The cost of the trip will be \$675 and will include lodging, lunches, guides, and admission fees. To reserve a place, send a deposit of \$100 to the VNPS office [VNPS Florida Trip, 400 Blandy Farm Lane #2, Boyce, VA 22620]. Signups will be in the order in which deposit checks are received.

May 6 to 11—Virginia's Southern Appalachian Mountains

This year's tour to Southwest Virginia will focus on old favorites and some new special places in Wise County. We will likely spend our first three nights in Norton visiting High Knob, Roaring Branch and other sites in the Jefferson National Forest. Return visits to Natural Tunnel State Park and Whitetop Mountain are a must. Other sites are still under discussion, but we will complete our tour at Abingdon, with the option of attending the Mt. Rogers Naturalist Rally on Friday night and Saturday.

Plant lists and more information about the places we will visit will be provided to registrants. We try to make these tour hikes fairly slow and easy, but hikes in this area can be steep and rocky, and there may be two to four miles of walking in a day.

Cost of the trip will be \$550. This includes lodging, lunches and guided hikes, and a donation of \$150 to VNPS. Registration for the trip opens on March 10. Please reserve by mailing a check to VNPS, or call the office to pay with credit card. A deposit of \$100 will hold your place, and full payment is due by April 7.

Send payment to **Virginia Native Plant Society, SWVA Trip, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, #2, Boyce, VA 22620.**

Tomorrow's Landscapes: More Birds, Butterflies and Bees for Your Garden, April 14

Piedmont/Blue Ridge Horticulture Society is partnering with the Environmental Studies Department at Shenandoah University to present Tomorrow's Landscapes: More Birds, Butterflies, and Bees for YOUR Garden. Shenandoah University Environmental Studies & Biology professor, Dr. Woody Bousquet, will moderate the conference. Speakers include: Doug Tallamy, Janet Davis, Vincent Simeone, Jeff Lowenfels, Jim McCormac.

The April 14 full-day conference is at Shenandoah University, Winchester VA, and cost is \$99 including box lunch—see link below for details and to pre-register:

<http://www.pbrhs.org/landscape/index.html>

News of 2 symposiums from Carol Hammer

Spring Wild Flower Symposium at Wintergreen

May 18–20

A spectacular location in the Blue Ridge mountains provides the setting for this interesting and enjoyable learning experience. The focus is on native wildflowers and related topics such as ferns, woody plants, and native birds, as well as their supporting eco-systems. Sessions of 1–2 hours include walks, lectures or workshops that are led by professional botanists and naturalists who are experts in their field.

For further information contact Liz Fravel, 434.325.7451, or by e-mail at specialevents@twnf.org

Mailing Address: Wintergreen Nature Foundation, Rt 1 Box 770, Roseland, Virginia 22967

Web Page: www.twnf.org

MGNV/VCE Sustainability Symposium June 9–10: Working with Nature for Sustainable, Beautiful Gardens

Registration is now open for the MGNV/VCE sustainability symposium. This is a public education event to which Master Gardeners also are invited. Some info about the symposium and registration is below. More details are available on their website.

Guest Speakers: Douglas W. Tallamy, University of Delaware, author of *Bringing Nature Home*, and Holly Shimizu, Executive Director, U.S. Botanic Garden

Register now and save! Go to mgnv.org and register through Eventbrite by clicking on the banner or “for complete details” and then on “register now through Eventbrite.”

Registration fee (includes a box lunch): \$40 for early registration; \$50 starting on April 1

A last-minute note from Cortney Langley...

Feb. 23

Hi everyone,

I came across this today at work and plan to do a brief on it for the Gazette this weekend. It's a short survey conducted by Wetlands Watch and the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission on personal water quality practices. It's applicable to us, because it specifically asks whether you are a member of a native plant society, among other things.

It took me all of two minutes to fill it out!

<http://www.hrpdcva.gov/HamptonRoadsReview/post/Take-a-Quick-Survey-What-Changes-Have-You-Made.aspx>

Thanks,

Cortney

From Mary Hyde Berg...

Mary hopes to plan a couple of native plant walks in Gloucester in March, but pollen allergies have prevented her from scouting potential sites so far. She did pass along her response to this recently spotted bumper sticker, though:

Hug a logger—you'll never go back to trees!

*I think that I shall never see
A logger who appeals to me.
You take the logger—
As for me,
I think I'll just go hug a tree!*

Membership Form for John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

(Place checks in the boxes below next to your selections.)

I am a **new member** of the John Clayton Chapter **renewing member** of the John Clayton Chapter

Name		
Address		
City	State	Zip
Email*	Phone*	

I would like to receive my newsletters electronically at the email address above.

Membership dues

Individual (\$30) Family (\$40) Patron (\$50) Sustaining (\$100) Life (\$500)

Student (\$15) Associate (\$40) —for groups who designate one person as delegate

I wish to make an additional contribution in the amount of \$ to John Clayton Chapter to VNPS

This is a gift membership; please include a card with my name as donor.

I have time a little time no time to help with activities.

I do not wish to be listed in a chapter directory.

**Please Note:* John Clayton Chapter does not distribute any of our membership information to other organizations. It is used only by the officers and chairpersons of our chapter.

Make your check payable to **VNPS** and mail to: VNPS Membership Chair
400 Blandly Farm Lane, Unit 2
Boyce, VA 22610

Calendar

Thursday, March 15 **6:45–8:45 pm: John Clayton Chapter meeting at Yorktown Public Library: Dr. Stewart Ware** will speak about “Native Plants and Native Soils” at our March meeting. (See Page 1.)
The Library is located at the intersection of Battle Rd. and Rt. 17 in Yorktown.

Saturday, April 7 **10 am: Gus Hall and Helen Hamilton** will lead a walk to look for early spring plants along the Lafayette High School Nature Trail. Meet in the Lafayette parking lot on Longhill Road. (See Page 4.)
Contact Helen at 757/564-9964 or helen48@cox.net to register.

Check our website at www.claytonvnps.org for additional walks and events which may not have made this issue.

And another thing from Mary...

Do check Friends of Dragon Run’s website (www.dragonrun.org) for information about their wonderful paddle trips this spring.

You may also contact Teta Kain at 804/693-5246 or tkdragonrun@gmail.com.