
Wildflower Spot – June 2019
John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

DEERBERRY

Vaccinium stamineum

By Helen Hamilton, *Past-president of the John Clayton Chapter, VNPS*

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-tinged 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. ❖

Photo: Deerberry (*Vaccinium stamineum*) taken by Phillip Merritt
For more information about native plants visit www.vnps.org.