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**Wildflower Spot – September 2013**  
John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

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## SEASHORE MALLOW

*Kosteletzkya virginica*

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

A very showy plant with profuse display of pink and yellow flowers, blooming in terminal, often leafy clusters, closing at night. The flower looks like Hibiscus, but they are much smaller and a deep pink. A single plant can have hundreds of 3-inch flowers, normally blooming July through October. In wet summers, seed pods will form earlier.

As in other members of the Mallow Family, the stamens are fused into a yellow central column. The gray-green leaves are egg-shaped, pointed, and usually with triangular lobes at the base. Lower leaves are maple-like with 3-5 lobes. The erect, branching stems are 1-3 feet tall.

Growing in full sun in brackish marshes, wet meadows, swamps and shores, Seashore Mallow occurs only in Virginia's Coastal Plain. Moderately salt tolerant, the plant prefers sand and soils with high acidity, but will tolerate clay habitats. These plants prefer mucky soils, but will grow well in garden soils that are regularly irrigated, as in rain gardens. This species ranges from Long Island to Florida and Texas and to the West Indies.



Seashore Mallow attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. The genus was named for Vincenz Kosteletzky, 1801-1887, a Bohemian botanist. ❖

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**Photo:** Seashore Mallow (*Kosteletzkya virginica*) taken by Helen Hamilton  
For more information about native plants visit [www.vnps.org](http://www.vnps.org).