



# Claytonia

Newsletter of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

Volume 28, Number 1

January–February 2012

[www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org)

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## Board Member-at-Large

Mary Hyde Berg 804/693-3568

## Our Jan. 19 Meeting: Denise Greene on "Landscaping with Natives"



Denise Greene, owner and operator of Sassafras Farm Nursery in Hayes, will speak on "Landscaping with Natives" at our January meeting, and will discuss and illustrate how to incorporate native plants into a landscape, and what plants to use for dry shade, moist shade, and for sun. Her list of recom-

mended plants includes more than fifty native species.

Denise says her love of native plants began when she hiked the mountains around Blacksburg, Virginia, while she was earning a BS in Horticulture and Landscape Design at Virginia Tech. At Sassafras Farm she grows over 100 species of perennial plants native to the Eastern U.S. She also does landscape design and consultation, specializing in using native plants to create low maintenance and wildlife friendly gardens.

Our speaker is a certified member of the Virginia Society of Landscape Designers and has served on that Board of Directors, and is also a member of the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society.

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

On the recommendation of our Treasurer Judith Kator, the board authorized the transfer of all our funds from Chesapeake Bank to 1st Advantage Credit Union. The differences between the structure of banks and credit unions are compelling reasons for making this change, and

Judith and I were impressed with the ease of transition, and the many services offered by 1st Advantage.

Thanks to our successful plant sales, and our members' contributions, our treasury is strong enough to permit some significant donations. As we look at requests for donations, we follow the guidelines adopted by the board last January.

Each year the Chapter Board votes to approve donations from the treasury to support efforts which further our mission. In choosing from the many worthy causes, we are guided by, but not limited to, the following questions:

1. *Does this donation directly relate to education about and/or conservation of Virginia native plants?*
2. *Does this donation have particular relevance to the coastal plain region?*
3. *Is this a single occasion donation or a commitment to continuing annual support?*

- Our scholarships will permit four students to attend Nature Camp this year, two of them funded by the newly established **Carolyn Will Memorial Scholarship Fund**, and two from our treasury.
- New this year is a **Student Research Fund to the Herbarium of the College of William and Mary**. Judith and I talked with Herbarium Director Martha Case, who told us her continuing need is for funds to buy supplies to allow students to pursue a project, requiring equipment not in the budget of the Botany Department. The board authorized an initial donation of \$1,000 to the William and Mary Herbarium Student Research Fund, to be funded annually as funds permit.
- An annual **Travel Award** has permitted a college student to attend a botanical conference.
- John Clayton Chapter has made significant donations to the **Flora of Virginia**, totaling \$10,000 over the past five years, placing our chapter in a category not achievable by other chapters. Our own Dr. Donna Ware is on the FOV board, and is writing and co-writing sections of the book.
- Each year we present books to the York County libraries as a “thank-you” for the no-charge use of a room for our chapter meetings. Last year we gave Doug Tallamy’s **Bringing Nature Home**; this year we chose **Attracting Native Pollinators**.
- As volumes of the **Flora of North America** are published, we buy a copy for the William and Mary Herbarium.

We hope we can continue to fund these and other endeavors that educate the public and help train new generations of botanists.

**Helen Hamilton**

## From the Treasurer: John Clayton Chapter budget for 2012

As of 12/31/11

Savings	\$200.73
Checking	\$4092.04
1st Advantage FCU Money Market	\$10,044.30
Chesapeake Bank 182 Day Cert. #296440150	\$5234.20
<b>Total assets</b>	\$19,571.27
W&M Herbarium Student Research Fund	\$1000.00
Coastal Plant book seed money (Bk. Com.)	\$1000.00
Printing & postage	\$1400.00
Outreach	\$450.00
Travel awards (Flora of VA–paid in Dec.)	\$714.00
Nature Camp	
2 students from JCCVNPS	\$1500.00
2 students from Carolyn Wills Mem. Fund	\$1500.00
Donations	\$500.00
Meetings	\$150.00
Audit/box rental	\$142.00
Plant sale	\$2000.00
<b>Total expected expenses</b>	\$11,056.00

**Judith M. Kator, Treasurer**

## New members

We welcome new member **Molly Nash Rouzie** of Brooklyn, NY, and welcome back returning members **Lynn Allison** of Williamsburg and **Bruce Peachee** of Newport News.

## Our Nov. 17 Meeting: "Botanical Exploration and Documentation in Virginia in the 20th Century"

**Donna Ware** described for us the highlights and challenges of 20th century botanical exploration in Virginia and the documentation of that field work by the deposit of pressed plant specimens in herbaria in Virginia. She also talked about the contributions of faculty at many colleges in the state who collected plants for herbarium specimens.

Pat Baldwin laid out for our examination a number of pressed specimens from William and Mary's Herbarium, where he has been a volunteer for many years. Looking over these "dried plants", one gains an appreciation for how invaluable are these collections in herbaria all over Virginia!

**Louise Menges**



*Photo: Jan Newton*

Program Chair Claire Sink, left, and our speaker, Donna Ware.

## John Clayton Botany Awardees

Jan Newton received the John Clayton Botany Award at our September meeting, and at Mary Hyde Berg's suggestion, we include here a list of past recipients:

Charles Dubay	Carolyn and Ralph Will
Penny Cazier	Ingrid Jahn
Donna Ware	Cynthia Long
James Morgan	Robert and Lisa Harper
Sid and Sylvia Sterling	Lorna Wass
Pat and Theresa Baldwin	Mary Hyde Berg
Jane Showacre	Jan Newton

Here also are winners of **John Clayton Community Service Awards:**

Mary Strong  
Tess Matteson  
Ann Messick

## The Wildflower Rescue Team has been busy!

Even as the landscape goes dormant, the native plant rescue team has been in full swing. Ralph Will, Jan Newton and Dennis Waldron teamed up with the National Institute of Aeronautics' Lise Schioler in mid-November to return some of the rescued plants to the Hampton site. The institute's landscapers have agreed to help plant and maintain the plants, which were rescued from the site before construction began in the summer of 2010.

It's a unique story, since the whole project in Hampton began at Lise's request. The rescue team pitched the idea to the Daily Press' Kathy Van Mullekom, who was also intrigued. We hope to see a feature soon on the entire landscaping plan and Lise's initiative.



At Ralph's house, UVA grad student Dennis Waldron, Lise Schioler and Ralph Will load rescued plants to be replanted on their original site at the National Institute of Aeronautics in Hampton.

*Photo: Jan Newton*

Meanwhile, Lise caught the rescue bug and, upon learning that Commander Shepard Boulevard was to be extended, began making plans to coordinate another rescue before construction starts.

County officials in James City have graciously set aside a plot right next to the new interpretative center at Freedom Park to host a new native garden, which will allow us to re-plant many of the plants rescued from the site last winter. The space is highly visible, which we hope will allow us to provide education on the benefits of natives and rescues to a new audience. The site requires a bit of investment in fencing, mulch and gravel though, which the county is unable to fund right now. The team has been soliciting donations to pick up the cost, which totals \$2,000. We were hoping to begin getting plants in the ground before winter, but it's looking like spring is more likely.

Meanwhile, after working in the Ellipse Garden every Friday morning, Ralph Will, Gary Driscoll and Donna Ware have been putting in time getting the new labyrinth at York River State Park ready for the spring. Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists have also been a huge help there. The labyrinth is providing yet another opportunity for public education and enjoyment of local native, rescued plants. A number of other projects are in the idea or planning stages, including re-planting rescues at Riverside's Doctor's Hospital in Williamsburg and possible rescue opportunities with a new waterline running through York and a Dominion high-voltage line that will bisect the entire area.

Lastly, we've set up a Facebook page with the intent of staying in touch, reaching new people, sharing photos, information and just-fun stuff.

“Like” us at [www.facebook.com/Williamsburg.Wildflower.Rescue.Team](http://www.facebook.com/Williamsburg.Wildflower.Rescue.Team).

**Cortney Langley**

## Upcoming walks...

### Saturday, January 28: Skunk Cabbage walk

Come look for skunk cabbage in Longhill Swamp with **Helen Hamilton**! Meet at the Christian Life Center on Longhill Road across from Lafayette High School at 1 pm (and wear waterproof footwear).

To register, call Helen at 757/564-4494 or email her at [helen48@cox.net](mailto:helen48@cox.net).



*Photo: Louise Menges*

## Saturday, February 4: Evergreen walk

Join **Gus Hall** and **Jan Newton** at 10 am on a quest for everything green as they lead a native plant walk at the Wahrani Nature Trail in New Kent County. Winter is a lovely time to enjoy evergreen plants as they are contrasted nicely with the browns, grays, and tans of bare-limbed plants and the leaf layer on the ground. The site has ground cedar, crane-fly orchids, Christmas ferns and, of course, American holly and partridge berry (the VNPS wildflower of the year for 2012). You'll be amazed at the different types of mosses and lichens and even a few sedges that are green this at time of year. Dress for the weather and expect uneven trails and some muddy areas along the trail.

Please register so that, in case the walk has to be re-scheduled because of inclement weather, we will be able to let you know. To register, contact Jan Newton at 757/566-3646 or [jnewton110@cox.net](mailto:jnewton110@cox.net). Please leave your name, phone number and how many are attending.

Directions from the east (Williamsburg): Take 64 west towards Richmond, then take the 2nd West Point exit (Exit 220). Travel approximately 4 miles on Hwy. 33 towards West Point; trail entrance will be on the right hand side.

From the north (West Point): Take Hwy 33 across the bridge at West Point towards New Kent and travel approximately 3–4 miles on Hwy. 33 past the bridge; trail entrance will be on the left hand side.

For more information and a map, visit [www.hikingupward.com/ovh/wahrani](http://www.hikingupward.com/ovh/wahrani).

## February 10 and 11: Nude Tree workshop and walk

**Charlie Dubay** will lead a tree identification workshop on Friday, February 10 from 4 to 6 pm at the Williamsburg Library on Scotland Street, Room B. The following day, Saturday, Feb 11, meet Charlie at the College Woods for a winter tree walk from 10:00 to 11:30 am. Participants may park in the William and Mary Hall parking lot, which is open to the public on weekends. Attendance at both sessions is not required, but come for both sessions for maximum benefit.

If weather prevents either the Friday or Saturday event, both are re-scheduled for the following Friday and Saturday, Feb. 17 and Feb. 18. And remember—although most trees will be nude at this time of year, decency suggests that walk participants be clothed!

Contact Charlie Dubay at 757/870-0284 to register.



Tulip poplar twig in winter. *Photo: Jan Newton*

## White Oak: Wildflower of the Month for December 2011

White Oak (*Quercus alba*) is a beautiful tree—pretty leaves, attractive bark, and with a graceful shape when grown in the open. These tall forest trees can grow to 100 feet tall. This species is the most widespread of the white oak group, identified by short-stalked, evenly lobed leaves, pale ashy gray bark in strips or blocks, and acorns with knobby, shallow cups. The leaves are not glossy, and more grayish or bluish than other oaks, with pale undersides. Leaf bases are rounded and the lobes are moderate to deep. Leaves turn reddish in autumn, becoming brown before falling off. Both male and female flowers appear on the same tree in May, along with the emergence of leaves.

Drought resistant and adaptable to a wide variety of soils, White Oak may be the most abundant native tree in North America. It grows throughout eastern North America, preferring full sun and rich, moist, acidic well-drained loamy soils.

Within the genus *Quercus*, two major groups are recognized: the white oaks with rounded lobes, and the red oaks with spines or sharp points at the ends of lobes. Acorns of the red oak group are bitter-tasting, and not as readily taken by wildlife. White Oak acorns are popular food sources for birds, squirrels and deer. Heavy crops appear every 4–7 years, and are quickly consumed by wildlife or germinate soon after falling.

The wood is hard, dense and durable, and was used for shipbuilding in colonial times. Today it is prized for furniture, flooring, and wine and whiskey barrels. The genus name *Quercus* is the ancient Latin name for “oak;” *alba* means “white” and refers to the pale bark, wood, and lower leaf surfaces.

The largest known white oak specimen had a circumference of 32 feet and grew in the Wye Oak State Park, Talbot County, Maryland. It was destroyed during a storm on June 6, 2002.

**Helen Hamilton**

## Spanish Needles: Wildflower Spot for December 2011

An unusual, tropical-looking plant, Spanish Needles (*Yucca filamentosa*) forms clumps of stiff, dagger-like, blue-green leaves, with loose threads on the edges. The leaves grow 2–3 feet tall, and have evergreen, woody stems. Cream-colored flowers grow in large terminal clusters on a six-foot tall stem, followed by oblong, pickle-shaped fruit.

This is a plant of dry, sandy soils and sand dunes, especially near the coast. Spanish Needles is native to eastern and central United States and grows in nearly every county in Virginia, blooming June through September.



Photo: Helen Hamilton



Photo: Helen Hamilton

Yucca fruit can be cooked and eaten after the seeds are removed; the large petals are used in salads. Yuccas depend on the Yucca Moth as their agent of pollination, and these moths depend on yuccas for food.

**Helen Hamilton**

## Ebony Spleenwort: Wildflower of the Month for January 2012

Ebony Spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*) is a small fern with fronds tapering at both ends. The leaflets are oblong, narrow, and pointed, with a projection (ear) near the base; they are distinctly spaced, not opposite, with toothed edges. The fronds with reproductive spores grow to 10 inches long; the sterile fronds are shorter, spreading and evergreen. From the underside, the frond-stem (rachis) is red-brown in color; the fertile frond shows oblong spore cases. In summer the tall ladder-like fertile leaves with shining dark stems stand out prominently through the undergrowth, and especially as silhouettes against roots and rocks, alongside which they like to grow.

This little fern grows in moist but well-drained locations throughout eastern U.S. Very adaptable, it occurs in open woodland, on rocky banks, and on rotting logs, but thrives especially in thickets and other disturbed areas. Frequently colonizing masonry in urban and rural sites, it prefers calcareous rocks (or mortar joints) but will also grow on sub-acid rock. Ranging from Quebec to Kansas and Colorado and south to Florida, Texas and Arizona, Ebony Spleenwort is found in every county in Virginia. Spores are formed May through September.

Linnaeus provided the genus name, derived from *aspelon*, a name used by the ancient Greek Dioscorides for some fern supposed to cure diseases of the spleen. The plant should be named the “Brown-stem Spleenwort,” since nothing about the fern is black. **Helen Hamilton**

## Wintergreen: Wildflower Spot for January 2012

Although a small plant, Wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*) is well-named, with its distinctive dark green leaves striped with white appearing just above the dry leaf litter. The leaves are pointed and finely toothed, wider toward the tip and whorled or scattered along the stem. Growing no more than 10” high, small white or pinkish, nodding waxy flowers appear in a cluster on a slender stalk. Flowers appear June through August, and mature to small capsules with seeds that are dispersed by the wind.

Wintergreen grows in dry, often sandy pine and oak forests. Found in every county in Virginia, and in the eastern United States, the plant



ranges from Maine to Florida, west to Illinois and Mississippi, and also occurs in parts of Arizona.

This is not the edible wintergreen used to flavor candies—that species is *Gaultheria procumbens*, which grows in many counties of Virginia other than those along the coast. The genus name *Chimaphila* is derived from the Greek *chima*, meaning “winter” and *philein*, “to love.” The species name *maculata* means “spot” or “spotted,” referring to the coloration of the leaves, which are, however, striped, and not spotted.

**Helen Hamilton**

## Jan's photos featured in poster



The Stonehouse Elementary Habitat Garden is featured by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries on their new poster. The two-sided poster, titled “Habitats Bring Schoolyards to Life,” promotes using the Standards of Learning in outdoor classrooms such as the Stonehouse Habitat, which John Clayton member Jan Newton oversees and helps maintain. The front of the poster (above) includes a number of photos taken by Jan. The back of the poster is a wonderful resource for teachers, listing native plants for wildlife habitats, books, lesson plans and websites for connecting SOLs to habitat activities. To view a better image of the poster, and for more information about the Stonehouse Habitat, visit the Stonehouse Elementary Habitat website ([www.claytonvps.org](http://www.claytonvps.org)), click on “Habitats and Education” and then “Stonehouse Elementary Habitat”.

## At the Williamsburg Library on January 17— "With Paintbrush and Shovel: Preserving Virginia's Wildflowers"

This program showcases the botanical watercolors of Bessie Niemeyer Marshall, whose beautiful paintings are the primary surviving record of a unique WPA project that put women to work creating a wildflower sanctuary in Petersburg, Virginia during the 1930s. It is jointly presented by the Williamsburg and Petersburg Garden Clubs. Free of charge and open to all.

10:00 am in the Williamsburg Library Theater

## Piedmont Landscape Association Seminar on February 16

Below is a notice sent us from the Piedmont Landscape Association about their Feb. 16 Annual Seminar. Their registration brochure was not ready at our press time, but it will be posted on their website once it is finalized ([www.piedmontlandscape.org](http://www.piedmontlandscape.org)).

### SAVE THE DATE!

The Piedmont Landscape Association  
29th Annual Seminar

Speakers:

- **William McShea**, White tail deer specialist with the Smithsonian Institute
- **Catherine Zimmerman**, Author and Consultant on native and warm season meadows
- **Bill Cullina**, Author and Curator of the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens
- **Gordon Hayward**, Author of *Stone in the Garden* and contributing editor for *Fine Gardening*

**The Paramount Theater**  
215 East Main Street, Charlottesville, VA  
Thursday, February 16, 2012

For more information:  
[www.piedmontlandscape.org](http://www.piedmontlandscape.org)



Photo by Bill Mauzy

## 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

## Calendar

**Thursday, January 19** **6:45–8:45 pm: John Clayton Chapter meeting at Yorktown Public Library:** “Landscaping with Natives” will be the topic for Denise Greene, owner and operator of Sassafras Farm Nursery in Hayes, at our January meeting. (See Page 1.)  
*The Library is located at the intersection of Battle Rd. and Rt. 17 in Yorktown.*

**Saturday, January 28** **1 pm: Helen Hamilton will lead a Skunk Cabbage Walk in Longhill Swamp.** Meet at the Christian Life Center on Longhill Road across from Lafayette High School. (And wear waterproof footwear!)  
*Contact Helen at 757/564-9964 or helen48@cox.net to register.*

**Saturday, February 4** **10 am: Evergreen walk at the Wahrani Nature Trail in New Kent County,** led by Jan Newton and Gus Hall. See Page 4 for more information and directions.  
*Participants must register by calling Jan Newton at 757/566-3646 or emailing her at jnewton110@cox.net.*

**Friday, February 10 and Saturday, February 11** **Charlie Dubay will lead a Nude Tree Workshop on Friday, Feb. 10,** followed by a walk on **Saturday, Feb. 11** in the College Woods. (Details on Page 2.)  
*Contact Charlie Dubay at 757/870-0284 to register.*

**Check our website at [www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org) for additional walks and events which may not have made this issue.**