



# The Naturalist

The monthly newsletter of the Historic Rivers Chapter  
Virginia Master Naturalist Program

<http://historicrivers.org>

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 No. 1 January 2009

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## President's Message

### A Zoo in His Luggage

"I, like many other people, have been seriously concerned by the fact that year by year, all over the world, various species of animals are being slowly but surely exterminated in their wild state, thanks directly or indirectly to the interference of mankind. While many worthy and hard-working societies are doing their best to tackle this problem, I know a great number of animal species, which because they are small and generally of no commercial or touristic value, are not receiving adequate protection. To me the extirpation of an animal species is a criminal offence, in the same way as the destruction of anything we cannot recreate or replace, such as a Rembrandt or the Acropolis." ~ Gerald Durrell

When I first met Clyde Marsteller, I never suspected that he was a zookeeper. It turns out that Clyde has a zoo, but not the type you might expect. It's so small; he can carry it in his luggage.



What sort of zoo can be carried in one's luggage? The kind that can be collected from the decomposing remains of trees felled by Hurricane Isabelle. Clyde has all sorts of small wonders in his zoo including spiders, insects, amphibians, and even a reptile or two.

He uses his zoo to educate children and adults about the food web that develops within the rotting corpse of a tree. He emphasizes decomposers and their role in the ecosystem, and brings attention to the importance of these small faunal elements in the environment.

Clyde will share his zoo at our upcoming January Membership meeting on Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, in the Multi-purpose Room of the Human Services Building. The business meeting will start at 6:00 pm. Clyde's program, "A Zoo in My Luggage" will start at 7:00. Clyde will also present "Extinctions" a program he has recently developed that highlights some of the major extinction events that have occurred in the past.

As always, we can stay as long as anyone likes, or until 9:00 pm, whichever comes first. Anyone who attends the meeting will receive up to two hours of advanced training.

I hope to see you at the January meeting.

Susan Powell, President  
Historic Rivers Chapter  
VA Master Naturalist Program

Part of Clyde Marsteller's "luggage"  
Photo courtesy of Clyde Marsteller

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*Photo courtesy of Michael Fuchs 2009*

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Virginia Master Naturalist programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

**1st 2009 Full Membership Meeting**

Our first membership meeting of 2009 will be Wednesday, January 14, 2009 at the Human Services Building on Olde Towne Road in the Multi-purpose Room. 6 - 7 pm: Short Business meeting including guest Dorothy Geyer, from Colonial National Historical Park, who will briefly explain volunteer opportunities at the Yorktown Battlefield and Historic Jamestowne. You can earn volunteer service hours by helping out in either location. Find out how from Dorothy.

7 - 9 pm: Clyde Marsteller, our own Historic Rivers Master Naturalist and guest speaker, will present his "Zoo in My Luggage." Clyde uses his zoo to educate children of all ages about the food web that develops within the rotting corpse of a tree. He emphasizes decomposers and their role in the ecosystem, and brings attention to the importance of these small faunal elements in the environment. This is a fun learning experience and Clyde loves to share how and where he finds and cares for his critters. Clyde will also present "Extinctions," a program he has recently developed that highlight some of the major extinction events that have occurred in the past.

**February 7 Field Trip to the New Kent Forestry Center**

Finally, the long awaited field trip to the New Kent Forestry Center will be Saturday, February 7, 2009. Time is 9 am – about 1 pm.

This trip will be in place of our monthly membership meeting.

Our tour guides for the morning will be Lisa Deaton, Forest Education Specialist with the VA Department of Forestry, and Forester Billy Apperson, who is doing research at the Center on the American Chestnut and the Longleaf Pine.

According to the Center’s web site: “Ten different tree species are commonly grown at the facility now. A variety of research projects are under way including American chestnut, Christmas tree studies, Atlantic white cedar, native warm season grasses and longleaf pine. There is a state of the art greenhouse facility used for grafting, potting and rooting various species. And it maintains a unique nature trail/boardwalk built by local Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts through a cypress swamp.”

You can read more about the history of the Center at: <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/regEast/nkt-50th.shtml>

Fun factoid: Camp Peary was once part of the VA Department of Forestry!

Carpooling is recommended. As a reference point, the Center is 23 miles and about 30 minutes from our usual meeting spot at the Human Services Building at 5249 Olde Towne Road. Since everyone knows where the Human Services Building is, those who want to carpool should be in the parking lot there by 8:15 am on Saturday, February 7. Please let Shirley Devan know if you plan to carpool: [sedevan52@cox.net](mailto:sedevan52@cox.net)

[FYI: The street address for your GPS navigation system is 11301 Pocahontas Trail Providence Forge, Virginia 23140.]

## Ninth Ward, New Orleans: Turning Wild Again

By Kathi Mestayer

In early December, Mac and I visited New Orleans, where a large and impressive art biennial ("Prospect 1") is going on throughout town. We had only one morning to devote to it, so we spent our time in the Ninth Ward, which was completely transformed by Hurricane Katrina. Between the art installations (many of which were outdoors), the whole area is basically deserted. You can drive along the roads, and see the remnants of driveway, utility hookups in yards, and stilts (or foundations, if you like), but there is an average of about 1 house for every two blocks, most of them (but not all) deserted.

When we were there in November, 2006, it kind of looked like this :



However, two years later, nature is not wasting time filling in the blanks with a staggering variety of plants.



I recognized some (the goldenrod) but not anywhere close to all, or even most. If they had been blooming, now, I could have done a better job, but there it is. The other thing we noticed was that there were LOTS of hawks in the air, which makes sense, given the habitat for their prey.



The final shot is from an open drawbridge, in which you can impute the water level in the canal by the height of the tugboat in the background. A sobering sight.



## Local Non-native Invasives Awareness Day

By Kathi Mestayer

The Virginia Native Plant Society is holding a Non-native Invasives Awareness Day on **May 2, 2009**. The idea came from Fairfax County, and the VNPS Board has decided to jump on board. The idea is to post "before" and "after" shots of invasives removal projects. I want to do a couple of local "tree rescues" (english ivy removal) and am looking for a few good trees (big trees with bad infestations) along well-traveled roadways, so we can have some visibility. Ideas are welcome—please forward them to Kathi Mestayer.

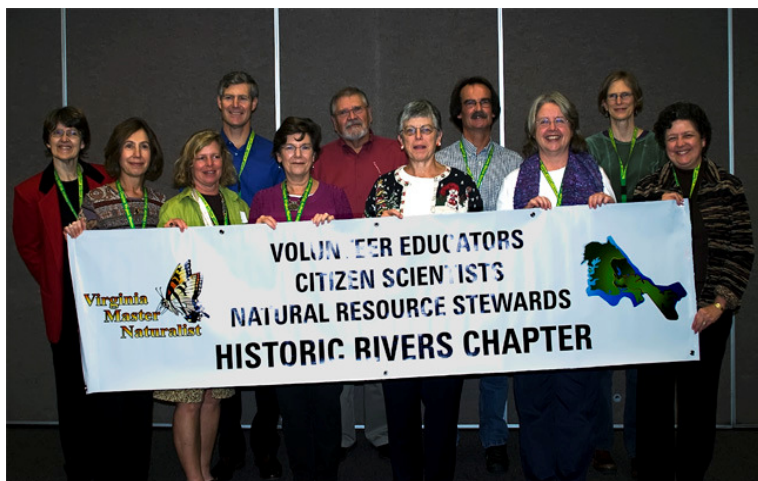
[kwren@widomaker.com](mailto:kwren@widomaker.com)

HISTORIC RIVERS CHAPTER CERTIFIED MASTER

We would like to recognize our members who have reached their advanced training and volunteer goals and have achieved their certification.

Kari Abbott	Susan Engle-Hill	Mike Powell
Cherie Aukland	Gary Hammer	Susan Powell
Felice Bond	Bruce Hill	Larry Riddick
Julie Breeden *	Sheila Kerr-Jones	Patty Riddick
Tim Christensen	Alice Kopinitz	Angela Scott
Linda Cole	Seig Kopinitz	Margaret Ware *
Shirley Devan	Clyde Marsteller	Jordan C. Westenhaver
Gary Driscoll *	Joanne R. Medina	
Barbara Dunbar	Kathi Mestayer	*Cohort III members

COHORT III GRADUATES DECEMBER 2008



**Advanced Training Opportunity from the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.**

*Please note registration date of 1/14/09*

Here is a great advanced training opportunity with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. It is short notice, but it just happens that there are a few extra spots open so they are making it available to all Master Naturalist volunteers who have completed a basic training course. Details are below and in the attachment. Please share them with your chapter members and please contact Susan Alger at [Susan.Alger@dgif.virginia.gov](mailto:Susan.Alger@dgif.virginia.gov) if you would like to register.

**“Nuisance Wildlife”— Understanding the Issues and Finding Solutions** - an Advanced Training now available to Master Naturalists. The training is being OPENED TO MASTER NATURALISTS WHO HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED THEIR BASIC TRAINING, until both workshops are full. \*\*NOTE: it is intended that upon completion of this new training, participants agree to be part of an active volunteer list who may be called upon by DGIF to conduct programs related to “nuisance wildlife” issues, as the need arises.

**TRAINING CONTENT:** This is a full-day program that provides a broad overview of the most common problems encountered with “nuisance wildlife,” such as deer, bear, bats, woodpeckers, geese, raccoons and other small mammals. Our goal is to give you the tools to

understand: 1) why these animals are sometimes viewed as a nuisance; 2) how to minimize the conditions that may attract these animals; 3) how to deal with wildlife issues once they arise; and 4) what are the most constructive facts you’ll need, in order to help answer basic questions from the public, which often start with the phrase, “what do I do about...”

**EXPERIENCED INSTRUCTORS:** The training features the following DGIF biologists who will present topics in a lecture format, with time for Q & A—  
**Nelson Lafon**, Deer Project Coordinator;  
**Mike Fies**, Small Mammals & Furbearer Biologist  
**Jaime Sajecki**, Bear Biologist  
**Tom Bidrowski**, Waterfowl Biologist  
**Rick Reynolds**, Nongame Biologist

**QUESTIONS** about training content? Contact [Carol.Heiser@dgif.virginia.gov](mailto:Carol.Heiser@dgif.virginia.gov) or call 804-367-6989. Participants must attend the FULL DAY to receive ALL materials and a certificate.

**TO REGISTER:** Registration is required and will be taken on a first come, first-served basis; limit 50 at each program. Feel free to register

at whichever location is most convenient to you, since the trainings are both the same. Please fill out the attached form and mail or e-mail to SUSAN ALGER, CWF Program Coordinator, VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries, P.O. Box 481, Herndon VA, 20172 ([Susan.Alger@dgif.virginia.gov](mailto:Susan.Alger@dgif.virginia.gov)). If faxing is preferred, please call Susan first for fax instructions, at (703) 481-2102.

**Registration Form**  
 “Nuisance Wildlife” Advanced Training...for Master Naturalists who have completed their basic training through a local Chapter

Name  
 Work/Daytime Phone  
 Cell Phone  
 E-mail (we’ll use this to send you a confirmation)  
 Street Address  
 City  
 State Zip

1. Which workshop would you like to attend? Please sign up for only ONE, whichever is most convenient: Sat., January 24—at VA Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries Headquarters, Richmond (Deadline: registration must be received on or before Jan. 14)  
 Wed., February 4—at Wetland Studies & Solutions Inc., Gainesville (northern VA region)

(Deadline: registration must be received on or before Jan. 26)

2. Indicate the NAME of your Master Naturalist Chapter and WHEN you completed your basic training:

Chapter Name

When you completed basic training:

3. Please tell us if there are any particular questions or concerns you may have about various aspects of the “nuisance wildlife” issue. We will share your comments with the instructors and make an effort to address some of these during the training.

4. Please indicate any dietary restrictions or ADA needs we should be aware of.

PLEASE MAIL or E-MAIL FORM TO SUSAN ALGER, CWF Program Coordinator, VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries, P.O. Box 481, Herndon VA, 20172 ([Susan.Alger@dgif.virginia.gov](mailto:Susan.Alger@dgif.virginia.gov)).

If faxing is preferred, please call Susan first for fax instructions, at (703) 481-2102.

## More Advanced Training Opportunities

Each Master Naturalist needs 8 hours of Advanced Training to become certified and then another 8 hours each year after that. Check out these opportunities and mark your calendars. If you discover an event that you believe would qualify as Advanced Training, send information to Joanne Medina and Susie Engle-Hill, Co-Chairs of the Advanced Training Committee.

### Virginia 4-H Natural Resources Weekend for 4-H Members Ages 9-19 and 4-H Volunteers

Date: January 31 – February 1, 2009

Location: Holiday Lake 4-H Center, Appomattox, VA

Fee: \$50 per person which includes all meals, lodging, snacks & workshops

Mail registration to: VCE – Bath, P.O. Box 357, Warm Springs, VA 24484

Registration Deadline: January 16, 2009

Contact Jennifer Mercer at 540/245-5750 or by e-mail at [jamercer@vt.edu](mailto:jamercer@vt.edu)

Natural Resources weekend is a great way to get folks interested in the 4-H natural resources competitive events such as Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program (WHEP), Forestry Judging, Soils Judging, and Envirothon. It is also a great opportunity for 4-H agents to learn about all of the opportunities that the 4-H Natural Resources and Environmental Education committee offers for their 4-H members and volunteers. In addition, we will be offering a coaches training for any adult interested in starting a 4-H WHEP team.

Workshops: Wildlife ID & Tracks; Orienteering/ GPS; Critter Calling; Wildlife Anatomy & Dissection; Intro to Wildlife, Soils & Forestry Judging & Envirothon; Non-Game Species Mgmt; Watchable Wildlife; Collecting Wildlife Specimens; Natives vs. Exotics; Reptiles & Amphibians; Road Kill; Snakes; Sounds of the Night; Trapping; Wildlife Damage Mgmt; Identifying Wildlife Signs. Demonstrations: Taxidermy, Falconry. Evening Activities: Nature Crafts, Quiz Bowl, Night Hike, Snakes Alive!, and Wildlife Movie

### 6th Annual Landowners' Woods & Wildlife Conference

January 31, 2009 - Manassas

This all day conference is a great place to meet various natural resource professionals, learn something about taking good care of your woodland and meet other like-minded landowners.

This year's conference focuses on Forest Threats with a smattering of "unthreatening" topics as well.

Sessions planned include the following: Insect & Disease Threats, Wildland Fire Risks, Bio-mass & Energy Primer, Regeneration Oak, Wetlands & Amphibians, Beekeeping, Nature Observation, Soil Management, Threatened & Endangered Species, and more!

The day will appeal to large and small acreage landowners alike.

To learn more about this conference content or registration information, please go to <http://info.ag.vt.edu/vce/offices/webinfo/files/Tri-foldBrochure%20W&W.pdf> to download a brochure. (Alternatively, go to: <http://offices.ext.vt.edu/madison> then click on <local programs> then on <Forestry & Natural Resources Related Programming>.)

Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Registration deadline is January 16.

If you have any problems with the above link(s) please call or e-mail Sandra Lillard (540948-6881 [slillard@vt.edu](mailto:slillard@vt.edu)) for a brochure to be sent to you.

## Walk and Talk

New Quarter Park hosts a "Walk and Talk" on the first

Saturday of each month. Here is a list of the upcoming topics.

January 3 – Lorena Walsh – The Burwell's New Quarter

**The Burwell's New Quarter Farm** by Lorena Walsh. Hear the facts, details, and clues pieced together by researcher Walsh and others to create the picture of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century plantation life published in *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*. Learn about the organization of plantation labor carried out on Burwell family plantations. Hear the names of the real people enslaved at New Quarter farm and see the sites where they lived that bring the story of the past to life.

February 7 – J. Michael Moore – Civil War Battle of Williamsburg

**Civil War Battle of Williamsburg** by J. Michael Moore. Learn why this engaging Civil War historian and Endview Plantation curator is back by popular demand! Walk with him to Redoubts 12 and 13 at New Quarter to hear more about Civil War battle strategy on the Virginia Peninsula. Imagine what it must have been like to be a soldier fighting in the Hampton to Richmond skirmishes and pitched battles of the Peninsula Campaign.

March 7 – Steve Living – New Quarter's Natural History

Join Watchable Wildlife Biologist Steve Living of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries on a walk along the hiking trails at New Quarter to learn more about the park's natural history. Discover tracks and trails as well as other evidence of wildlife in the parks varied habitats. Learn how to look and listen for birds, mammals, reptiles, insects, and more.

April 4 – Bill Williams – Watching for Migratory Birds

Learn more about the birds that stop by Williamsburg on their flight along the East Coast each spring in search of food and nesting locations. Well-known Williamsburg birder and educator Bill Williams will inspire you to get excited about our tiny feathered friends and learn to identify them by field marks and calls. See osprey as they settle in for the summer on Queens Creek and learn to listen for and spot songbirds that are just passing through.

May 2 – Vicki Shufer – Edible Flowers

Look for new blooms on the forest floor with naturalist and author Vicki Shufer. The Virginia Beach wild foods expert will lead walk and talk participants along the park's trails on a foraging excursion to see and learn how to identify native and edible plants.

June 6 – Gregory Millslagle – On the Bluebird Trail

Take a look inside the bluebird boxes at New Quarter Park with Gregory Millslagle, who installed and has been tending to the boxes at New Quarter Park for many years. Millslagle is the owner of the Wild Birds Unlimited store in the Village Shops at Kiln Creek.

July 4 – No Walk and Talk

August 1 – Katie Sanford – Environmental Education: James versus York River Habitat

Discover York River habitat features and learn how they differ from those on the James River, about ten miles away. Sanford is the environmental educator at Jamestown 4-H Center who teaches children to appreciate the turtles, snakes, fish, and other creatures that inhabit the swamp, river, and educational center on Greensprings Road in Jamestown.

September 5 – Helen Hamilton – Growing a Beautiful Bobwhite Habitat

October 3 – Jerre Johnson – It's All Downhill from Here: New Quarter's Geology

November 7 – Clyde Marsteller – What's Crawling Under that Log?

December 5 – Flora and Fauna of the Holiday Season

[http://www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec/parks/new\\_quarter/1nqp\\_info.htm](http://www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec/parks/new_quarter/1nqp_info.htm)

For more information on upcoming events at New Quarter Park, check out

[www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec/parks/new\\_quarter/1nqp\\_info.htm](http://www.yorkcounty.gov/parksandrec/parks/new_quarter/1nqp_info.htm)

## A Zoo In My Luggage goes to school

By Clyde Marsteller, Historic Rivers Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalist Member

1. Start out introducing yourself and explaining what a Master Naturalist is and what we do.
2. Tell a silly joke, “ What do you call a fish without an eye?” Then write on the blackboard **FSH** minus an “i”. Explain there are actually cave fish and some deep sea fishes that have no eyes. A second joke falls in nicely when you let the Giant Millipede crawl over your hand.

*A small boy wanted a pet but his family was so poor they couldn't afford to get him one. One day he found a millipede and took it home and put it in a matchbox as his pet. He thought it looked like a girl millipede so he named her “ Millie”. He would talk to her and fancied she answered him. One Sunday morning he asked her if she would like to go to church with him. She didn't answer so he asked again in a louder voice. Again no answer. He opened the matchbox and yelled, “Millie, do you want to go to church with me?” A small voice answered” Hold your horses, I'm still putting my shoes on”!*



3. Give a short explanation about the science of geology to lead into a shorter geologic history of the Peninsula. Tell them about the evolution of the cockroach (describe it but don't identify it yet ) How it is a living fossil and hasn't changed for 400 million years. Explain it has survived the dinosaurs and ice ages , and lives in the backyard or in some cases in homes & schools. Tell them you met one and asked if it wanted to meet the children. Then show them a live pair and identify them as Mr & Mrs cockroach.
4. Note: At this point I introduce them to the Dreaded Robo Wasp. I have bought and assembled a battery operated robotic wasp that I have in a large paper bag. I cautiously and slowly reach into the bag and turn it on. It buzzes loudly , its legs claw at the bag and the wings vibrate. I let out a yell and quickly pull my hand out and

put a finger in my mouth. Then I reach in quickly and pull out the robot and set it on a desk where it busily walks around. The first time I did this I looked up and found 32 children and three adults plastered against the back wall with the dickens scared out of them. Fortunately it is readily evident that it is artificial and quickly becomes a teaching tool to revisit what is an insect.

5. This leads into the story about the inland sea and the dinosaurs living on its shores near what is now Montana & Wyoming. Mention the Dinosaur Killer meteorite hitting Central America.
6. Go over the story of T. Rex and explain T. Rex's modern descendants are probably chickens.
7. Talk about Ice Ages and the impact on the Peninsula. Explain about formations of fossils and the York/Eastover strata. Show pictures of York Strata and distribute fossils. Explain they are 4-6 million years old. Point out Jefferson Scallop. Ask who was Jefferson & what did he do? Third President, wrote Declaration of Independence. He was also a naturalist. Scallop named after him and is our state fossil.
8. Talk about the formation of the Chesapeake Bay ( name 5 rivers flowing into it: Susquehanna, Potomac, Rappahannock, York and James).
9. Tell story about Grafton Ponds & drillings finding pollen 24,000 years old. This meant that area was covered by forests for at least 24,000 years.
10. Tell story about a squirrel 500 years ago who lived in Hampton and wanted to visit its' cousins in Richmond. It climbed a tree and jumped from tree to tree all the ways to Richmond and never had to run on the ground.
11. Tell them about General's Oak on Ft Monroe, it is 454 years old (oldest tree on Peninsula). Ask them why there aren't lots of other old trees. Mention 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of settlement of Jamestown. Colonists cut down the old tree forest for lumber and clearing lands for farming. Mention that's why we need to conserve our forests and become their stewards.
12. Ask them even though the forest were cut down for 24,000 years there were autumn leaves falling and trees being knocked down by storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, lightning and old age why aren't we living in tunnels under millions of tons of leaves and dead trees?
13. Question them about the big storm in 2003 – Hurricane Isabel. Ask them if any of their families or friends had trees knocked down. Tell them a million trees were knocked down by Isabel in Virginia.
14. What is happening to all our fallen leaves and to the Isabel logs
15. Introduce them to **DECOMPOSERS** .
16. Talk about finding a miniature ecoworld living around and in the logs—explain what ecology means.
17. 16.Begin to show a Zoo in my Luggage creatures and their interactions:

a. plants: pass out examples of lichens, fungi and mosses

b. animals in leaf litter: isopods & millepedes in leaf box and worms (put them on paper plates and pass around). Show Giant Millipedes( these were captured at Massanutten & are about 4 inches long compared to our local one inch long variety).

c. animals under log bark: (pass examples of logs with termite & Patent Leather Beetle galleries)

d. slugs & snails, termites, Patent Leather Beetles, Carpenter ants, wood roaches & House roaches. Have them listen to Patent Leather Beetles “talking”.

Ask them why we aren't up to our chins in these animals.

Go on a mental trip to the grasslands of Africa. Tell them to imagine immense herds of grazing animals: wilderbeasts, antelopes, zebras, etc. Then tell them that something is sneaking through the grass towards these animals- closer & closer.

Then **ROAR**.

Introduce **PREDATORS**

Centipedes, spiders, wire worms, mantis (if in season).

Talk about difference between insects & spiders. I now have a Robo Spider . Before the class I put it under my table and I use the remote control to send it running around the floor.

**ANIMAL PREDATORS**

Salamanders (pass out both red back and pair of Reds caught at Massanutten), skink, toad (talk about difference between amphibians & reptiles), Turtle and snakes.

Explain about the apex predator, the black racer – show shed snake skin and preserved eggs.

Tie together the ecology of the ecoworld of the leaves & Isabel logs.

Talk about trees & forests – how we interact – carbon dioxide / oxygen cycle.

What trees give us: lumber, food, shelter, shade, beauty, homes for animals prevent erosion and finally how trees end up as compost & soil.

Talk about becoming aware of the natural world around us.

Give teacher & class booklet with our state symbols and show them last page with the picture of our island home -Earth and tell them this is your gift to them. Ask them to take care of it.

Needless to say I am continually refining my presentation and adding to the Zoo.

**Cautions learned** Small snakes are easier to handle than large ones.

Pass out the Zoo Crew in tightly sealed jars.

Don't pass out individual Patent Leather Beetles in Dixie cups to the class. Boys love to tease and frighten girls ( I should have remembered that) !

Even though small snakes are easier to handle their defense is to defecate on you. The poop is odorous , long lasting and hard to get off.

Finally never, never go to bed without checking that all cages and containers are securely closed so that nothing is slithering down the hall towards your bedroom when your wife decides to get up before you do.

**THE END**

## Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards

On behalf of Governor Tim Kaine, the Governor's Advisory Board on National and Community Service, Virginia Corps, and the Office on Volunteerism and Community Service are working together to recognize the significant contributions of Virginia citizens to the life and welfare of the Commonwealth and its people. In April during National Volunteer Service Week, awards to recognize these exceptional contributions will be made at a reception in Richmond.

Awards will be presented to organizations, businesses, families, and individuals whose volunteer and community service efforts focus on building and strengthening the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Nominations for the 2009 Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards are now being accepted. All nominations must be postmarked, faxed, or submitted online no later than 5:00 PM, Monday, February 2, 2009.

Selection Criteria: Recipients of the Governor's Community Service and Volunteerism Awards exemplify the following characteristics:

- Engage in the creation, organization, and/or mobilization of volunteers, groups and resources that are involved in projects benefiting the greater community.
- Demonstrate sustained commitment to meeting community needs.
- Utilize unique and creative approaches to meeting needs.
- Develop and foster the virtues and skills of civic engagement and social responsibility.

For more info, go to: <http://www.vaservice.org/go/volunteer/award/>

## Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center by Shirley Devan

My native plant and birding friend, Cynthia Long, has often told me about the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center in Texas and what a wonder it is. As we planned our “birding” trip to Texas, I found the opportunity to include it on our itinerary when my husband insisted on a trip to Austin to hear some music. “Great idea,” I replied, “while we’re in Austin, we can visit the Wildflower Center the next day.” Our trusty Garmin Nuvi GPS device led us directly to the Center outside Austin. [All information in this article about the Center is excerpted from the “Map and Guide” to the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center.]

In 1982 Ladybird Johnson and actress Helen Hayes founded the National Wildflower Research Center. In 1995 it was renamed the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center. “The Center was intended to help conserve the biological richness of North America. To Mrs. Johnson it was clear that native plants are critical to regional identity – they tell us where we are in this great country.”

The “Center” is much more than a garden – and it is quite an impressive garden, even in mid-December when strolling around the trails and the different garden habitats: Courtyard Garden, Café Garden, Little House Garden, Seed Silo Garden, Meditation Garden, Hill Country Stream, Member’s Garden, the Butterfly Garden, and several more. Each plant is labeled with its common name and family, its Latin name and family; when it blooms; its range in America; and its natural habitat.

The Center includes 279 acres and approximately 650 species of Texas native plants with a focus on the Texas Hill Country. The architecture is pure Texas Hill Country – sandstone, limestone, and galvanized metal roofs with a touch of Spanish Mission flavor. “The meadows and woodlands look much as they did when Native Americans were the only inhabitants.”

From the very first moment I approached the entrance, I realized that water conservation and management was an important goal for the Center. From the Center’s Guide: “The Center’s striking architecture is constructed to conserve resources. A central irrigation system collects rainwater from 17,000 square feet of roof, or about 10, 200 gallons per inch of rain. The separate entry cistern is fed by 1,167

square feet of roof, collecting 700 gallons per inch of rain. Another cistern and ponds collect water for re-circulation.”

What goes on behind the scenes is just as important as what visitors enjoy

*“Wildflowers and native plants are as much a part of our national heritage as Old Faithful and the Capitol Building.”*

*- Ladybird Johnson*

visually with each visit. The Center is a research unit of the University of Texas at Austin. The Center consults with organizations to repair and restore damaged landscapes and ecological systems, such as the San Antonio Mission Trail and the Advanced Micro Devices campus in Austin.

The Center is one of five US organizations participating in the Millennium Seed Bank Project, developed by the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, in the United Kingdom. The Center’s seed collectors are “banking” seeds of Texas native plants.

The Center developed the Sustainable Sites Initiative along with the American Society of Landscape Architects to create standards to motivate site developers and landscapers to reduce the negative impact of landscapes and to conserve water, manage runoff, protect biodiversity, and reduce pollution.

Education is a big role of the Center. “Go Native U” teaches gardeners of all ages how to design and maintain native plant gardens. The Center’s Native Plant Information Network is a free online resource with information and images of 6,000 North American native plants for researchers and gardeners: [www. Wildflower.org](http://www.Wildflower.org)

So what did we see at the Center? I could not keep my eyes off the Queen butterflies nectaring on the Gregg’s Mistflower. What a delight to see and photograph! Even though most plants were not blooming, many deciduous trees and shrubs had berries and were distributed all over the different native habitats, including my favorite for the day, Possumhaw, *Ilex decidua*. Large-scale bronze artwork decorated many areas – a 7 foot tall Dragonfly was my favorite.

Oh yes, we did see some birds! Our first look at a Greater Roadrunner came in the Entrance Garden. Plus White-crowned Sparrows and an Orange-crowned Warbler were bathing in the stream in the Woodland Garden.

The Garden’s Interpretive Audio Tour required the use of your cell phone. I dialed the Center’s phone #: 512-366-8057, and then entered the prompt number in the red circle on the sign in the garden. If you want to hear Ladybird Johnson’s wonderful welcome, enter 111 when prompted. Try it if you’ve got 3 minutes to spare on your cell phone. Who doesn’t have a few minutes to listen to Ladybird Johnson’s wonderful Texas accent

describe her love of native plants? Most messages are about 2 minutes. Garden prompts are numbered 1 through 16.

Needless to say, I was enthralled with the Center, the wonderful gift shop, and the Gardens, even on a day with a cold front blowing in at about 20 mph. I will definitely return for another visit and I encourage you to stop by if you’re within a 100 miles of Austin.





“Wherever I go in America, I like it when the land speaks its own language in its own regional accent.”

-- Ladybird Johnson

## Volunteer Service Projects

The following projects have been approved. Feel free to contact the “go to” person listed for each event and find out how you can join in and earn those hours. Meanwhile, if you have a service project that you think will fit with HRC VMN talents, contact Bruce Hill at [euplotes@msn.com](mailto:euplotes@msn.com) Chair of the Volunteer Service Committee.

### Prothonotary Warbler Nest Box Project

*Date:* TBD

*Time and Location:* TBD

This is a joint project with Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory (CVWO) to provide boxes for a species of “special concern.” Our boxes will be part of network of nest boxes from Henrico County to Virginia Beach. We’ll be supervised by and report our observations to Dr. Bob Reilly, VCU and CVWO.

*Update:* Our plan is to set out a total of 16 boxes at York River State Park and at Dragon Run in Gloucester County.

Several members met on Saturday, December 6th, at the Maintenance Shop at York River State Park at 1:30 p.m. to complete the boxes, attach the hardware and poles and scout out sites at the York River State Park.

Contact Gary Driscole [[adrienne-gary@erols.com](mailto:adrienne-gary@erols.com)] or Jim Booth [757-220-2822] if you can help out or have any questions.

### Ellipse Garden Botanical Demonstration & Education Project

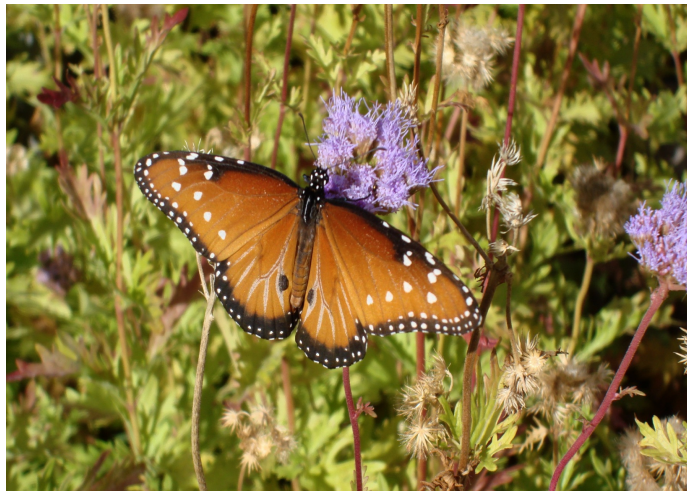
This is an ongoing project. Volunteers meet each Friday morning at 9:00 a.m., weather permitting, at the Ellipse Garden to assist Donna Ware, Helen Hamilton, Carolyn Will and Ralph Will in completing botanical and education projects at the Garden. Contact Gary Driscole [[adrienne-gary@erols.com](mailto:adrienne-gary@erols.com)] to get more information. Hanging out at the Garden with Donna, Helen, Carolyn and Ralph is a valuable learning experience.

### Invasive Plant Removal at New Quarter Park

This project will start formally in the spring. Volunteers will meet one Saturday morning a month to remove invasive species. Even now though, Master Naturalists can go out to the park anytime to remove stilt grass and any other invasives you can positively identify. The Park will supply plastic garbage bags. When you come out to work, stop by the office to say hi and get some bags from their supply room. Note that during the winter, the park is open Friday - Sunday. Contact Jeanne Millin, [scotfarquhar@cox.net](mailto:scotfarquhar@cox.net) or Sara Lewis, [saralewis@cox.net](mailto:saralewis@cox.net) to learn more.

### Invasive Plant Removal at Colonial National Historic Park

This is a new ongoing project. Volunteers meet each Monday morning from 9 - 12, weather permitting, to remove invasives at Yorktown or Jamestown under the supervision and direction of their staff. For details, contact Angier Brock, [abrock@vcu.edu](mailto:abrock@vcu.edu) or Kathi Mestayer, [kwren@widomaker.com](mailto:kwren@widomaker.com)



Queen Butterfly

Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Museum

### Acorn Collecting

It's that time of the year again! The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) collects acorns to preserve native Virginia tree species. Growing Native is a year-round volunteer project that collects hardwood seeds and plants trees to help restore and protect rivers and streams in the Potomac River watershed. Citizens can help preserve native Virginia tree species by collecting acorns and delivering them to the VDOF nurseries. The Department of Forestry needs these acorns: Black Oak, Cherrybark Oak, Chestnut Oak, Chinese Chestnut, Northern Red Oak, Pin Oak, Southern Red Oak, Swamp Chestnut Oak, Swamp White Oak, White Oak, Willow Oak.

Check the web site for the specific “how-to” instructions (one of the most important rules is -- Do not combine acorns from different species of oaks in the same bag.)

<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/mgt/acorn-collect.shtml>

### School Tree Counting Project

Counting the number of trees that are within 100 feet of the school for all of the James City County Schools for Dr. Jeff Kirwin at VA Tech. Volunteers will:

1. Go to the school site and count, measure, and record the types of trees and saplings within 100 feet of the school building.

2. Report data back to Dr. Kirwin for loading into the school site web page.

*Contact:* Kari Abbott, [bearsbaskets@cox.net](mailto:bearsbaskets@cox.net)

*Location:* James City County Schools

*Time Frame:* One time project. The project will take about 1/2 day for each school and there are 8.

### New Quarter Park Native Plant Teaching Trail

Work continues at the Native Plant Teaching Trail at New Quarter Park. Contact Laurie Houghland at [wwoovee@cox.net](mailto:wwoovee@cox.net) or call at 259-2169.

### Trail and Garden Maintenance, York River State Park

This is an ongoing service project you can do anytime. Organized days are Tuesday mornings and Friday afternoons, but you can go out any time. Contact Mary Apperson at the Park, phone 566-3036 or at [bmapp44@msn.com](mailto:bmapp44@msn.com)

### Wildlife Mapping

York River State Park, Greensprings Trail, New Quarter Park, Freedom Park or your own backyard. If you've completed the Wildlife Mapping Training program, visit already “mapped” areas regularly to record your wildlife observations. Contact Susan Powell, [smapowell@cox.net](mailto:smapowell@cox.net), 757-564-4542

## News from the Virginia Native Plant Society

### Thursday, January 15 at 7:00 pm: Iceland!

Join us for a photo-illustrated talk by chapter president Helen Hamilton on the habitat, the history, the people, and the plants of Iceland. Land of steam vents, roiling mud holes, lava landscapes, glaciers, and yes, green agricultural lands. Plus a great variety of flowering plants tolerant of arctic winters. Share the experience of a 17-day driving tour around the rim of the island, walks to waterfalls, and snowfalls, and across lava fields yielded many photographs of buttercups, campions, daisies, lupines, ground-hugging willows, figworts, mustards, roses, and sea lavenders, among others. Helen reports they even found a few orchids! And grasses, of course! Helen tells about many adventures: a visit to Leif Ericson's home, a Saga Museum, whale-watching, rift zones, and an airplane ride to the Westman Island which underwent a five-year addition to the landscape from a long-running lava flow.

The meeting takes place at Yorktown Public Library on Rt. 17 and Battle Rd. in Yorktown. For more info call (757)564-4494.

Free and open to the public. Refreshments served.

**February 28: 9 am - 2 pm: Big Tree Drive Around** in Hampton and Newport News. Meet at the VA Living Museum parking lot at 9 am for a tour of champion trees, led by the "Big Tree Guy" Byron Carmean. The National Champion Swamp Bay tree is near the CNU campus. Others are at Hampton University, Ft. Monroe, Ft. Eustis and some are on private property. Group will do lunch at a local restaurant or bring your own if you prefer. Contact Mary Hyde Berg at 804-693-3568 to register.

**March 19: 7 pm.** John Clayton Chapter meeting at York County Library on Route 17 in Yorktown. Workshop on the Origins and Meaning of Botanical Names of Native Plants. Leaders will be Lee Bristow and Donna Ware. For more information go to <http://www.claytonvnps.org/index.htm>  
All of the local and state events sponsored by the VA Native Plant Society are approved for Advanced Training. The local chapter is the John Clayton Chapter.

## Scholarship Competition



The John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society and The Holly Society

are now considering candidates for three scholarships for Summer 2009 sessions of **Nature Camp** at Vesuvius, Virginia. The Camp is a coeducational, academic camp that emphasizes education in natural history and environmental studies. It is intended for those with a genuine interest in the out-of-doors and the natural world. Campers attend class daily and are expected to complete a written project for each class. Students currently in 5th grade or above are eligible to apply.

For more information about Nature Camp visit [www.naturecamp.net](http://www.naturecamp.net).

Session One, June 21-July 4, Grades 10-12

Session Two, July 5-July 18, Grades 8-9

Session Three, July 19-August 1, Grades 7-8

Session Four, August 2-August 15, Grades 5-6

Scholarship application and essay requirements can be found online at [www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org) or by calling (757) 220-2310.

**Application and essay must be submitted to and received by the John Clayton Chapter's Nature Camp Scholarship Committee**

**by January 15, 2009.**

**Send Scholarship Application and Essay to:**

John Clayton Chapter, VNPS  
Nature Camp Scholarship Committee  
PO Box 1128  
Williamsburg, VA 23187

Scholarship winners will be notified in early February 2009;

Results will be posted online at [www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org).

For more info call (757)220-2310

## Chesapeake Foundation VoiCes Program

Sarah Lewis provided the following information about the Chesapeake Foundation VoiCes Program:

*I participated in it last year and it was great. It's similar to Master Naturalists training, but shorter and no tests!! And there are boat rides involved! If you love the Bay as much as I do, this is a great way to get involved with CBF and learn more about environmental advocacy work.*

VoiCeS, a key volunteer program for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, is Volunteers as Chesapeake Stewards (VoiCeS), an adult education/CBF volunteer training program designed to create a deeper understanding of the Chesapeake Bay and the efforts to restore it. Begun in 2004 on the Eastern Shore, the program is now offered on both the Western and Eastern Shores of Maryland and in Southern Virginia. It has filled to capacity each successive year.

There is a nominal materials fee, but no registration fee to enroll in the VoiCeS training. Participants are instead asked to commit to attending the series of classes and completing 40 hours of volunteer work. The VoiCeS course is offered each year during the winter months (January - March.)

For more information and to view an agenda and registration sheet, go to [www.cbf.org](http://www.cbf.org)

VoiCeS Training – Hampton Roads  
Wednesdays, January 14 – March 4 6:00 pm.-9:00 p.m.  
Bass Pro Shops- Hampton, VA

## Horticultural Horizons 2009 Registration Form

Note: Your name will appear on nametag as you specify below

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State VA Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Email to be used for registration confirmation only

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

MG County Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

**REGISTRATION = \$40 IF RECVD BY MARCH 1ST; OTHERWISE \$45  
LAST DAY TO REGISTER: APRIL 1ST**

Boxed Lunch Choice (select one):

- A: Veggie Wrap
- B: Turkey Sandwich
- C: Ham Sandwich

Make checks payable to: VCE  
Chesterfield County  
**DO NOT SEND CASH**

### Advanced Training Master Gardener Symposium

Please detach this registration form and remit with payment to:

Chesterfield County  
Cooperative Extension Office  
P.O. Box 146  
Chesterfield, VA 23832

Phone: (804) 751.4401  
Fax: (804) 751.0515

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is located at  
1800 Lakeside Ave. Richmond VA 23228

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

Directions will be sent with your  
registration confirmation

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Sherry Minnicino, Chesterfield Co. Office at (804) 751-4401/TDD\* during the business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. \*TDD number is (800) 828-1120.

**Chesterfield  
Master Gardeners  
Present**

*Register by March 1st for  
Early Bird Discount!*

3rd Biennial Horticultural Horizons  
Symposium

# Conserving the Commonwealth: Keeping Virginia Green

Tuesday, April 21, 2009  
Joan Massey Conference Center  
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden  
Richmond, Virginia

Advanced Training  
Master Gardener  
Symposium

**Virginia  
Cooperative  
Extension**



VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

**VirginiaTech**  
*Invent the Future*

[www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu)

See page 12 for additional information

## Join Us for an Exciting Day!

Learn of conservation activities throughout the state

Take home ideas to use in your own county & backyard

### Register Now

- Symposium limited to first 200 registrants
- **Early Bird Discount** applies to registrations received by March 1st
- Win great door prizes
- **New!** Extended lunch for touring the gardens

Questions? Call us at (804) 751.4401

### Schedule

**8:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.**

8:00—8:20 Registration

8:20—11:30 Morning Session

11:30—1:00 Lunch

1:00—3:30 Afternoon Session

### Lunch Options

- A. Fresh veggie wrap with hummus
- B. Smoked turkey and havarti
- C. Honey ham and Swiss

All served with fresh fruit cup, cookie, and bottled water

Free coffee, hot tea, and water available all day

## Speakers & Topics

Mr. Dave Close, State Master Gardener Coordinator, Virginia Tech **Opening Remarks and MG Stewards Programs Overview**

Dr. Annette Meredith, Director for Scientific Outreach, Conservation International **What's Buzzing in Your Garden? Interesting facts on pollinators, their benefits to gardeners, and how to protect them**

Chris Burkett, Wildlife Action Plan Coordinator, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries **Virginia's Wildlife Action Plan and Contributions Gardeners Can Make to Protect Wildlife**

Ms. Margo Dawley, Global ReLeaf Program Director, American Forests **Global ReLeaf: American Forests' Tree Planting Grant Program**

Dr. Holly L. Scoggins, Associate Professor and Garden Director, Hahn Horticulture Garden at Virginia Tech **Great Natives for Your Virginia Garden! Wonderful natives that can help the environment AND satisfy our "new plant" cravings**

### **Registration Fee of \$45 Includes:**

**(\$40 if registered by March 1st)**

- Admission to the MG Advanced Training Program, approved as 5 hours cont. ed.
- Gourmet Boxed Lunch
- Admission to Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden on day of event