
Wildflower Spot – July 2013

John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

SEA OXEYE

Borrichia frutescens

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

Sea Oxeye is a low-growing, little-branched deciduous shrub, up to 2 feet tall, typically forming dense stands. Both the stem and leaves are grayish-hairy, and the oblong, opposite, fleshy leaves have sharp-pointed tips and tapering bases. This plant reproduces by underground stems (rhizomes) and seeds. Large flowers, to over one-inch wide, have yellow daisy-like rays and brownish-yellow disc flowers. Hard, sharp, erect spines surround the compact flowering heads at the tips of the branches. The seeds are four-sided, black nutlets.

Blooming from May through September, Sea Oxeye has been reported in only ten coastal counties in Virginia. It occurs in seacoasts, especially in salt marshes, from District of Columbia to Florida, Texas, Mexico and Bermuda. The plant grows in full sun, tolerating extended flooding, acid or alkaline soils, sandy or loamy.

Many butterfly species are attracted to the flowers, among them is the Salt Marsh Skipper butterfly. The genus name honors Ole Borrich, a 17th century Danish botanist. *Frutescens* means “shrubby.” ❖



Photo: Sea Oxeye (*Borrichia frutescens*) taken by Helen Hamilton
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