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**Wildflower Spot – September 2006**  
John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

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## TURTLEHEAD

*Chelone spp.*

By Helen Hamilton, *President of the John Clayton Chapter, VNPS*

Almost everybody is familiar with these flowers. These flowers are well named because when viewed from the side, they look just like a turtle with its mouth open; push the sides of the blossom and the mouth actually opens. White or rose-pink, the flowers are one inch long in short spikes at the ends of 1-3-foot stems. They will grow shorter when pinched back in the spring.

Turtleheads like partial shade and moisture, so use plenty of humus and mulch to hold in moisture. They can be grown in containers, but the pot should have a saucer of water at all times. These plants grow naturally on the coastal plain along streambanks, in wet meadows, swamps, and marshes. Blooming July-October, they make long-lasting cut flowers and are attractive to butterflies. ❖



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**Photo:** Taken at Seasons Trace development in Williamsburg, August, 2006 by Helen Hamilton  
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