

Ephemeral Spring Wildflowers



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Spring ephemeral wildflowers are native perennial woodland plants that sprout from the ground early each spring, quickly bloom and seed before the canopy trees overhead leaf out.

Once the forest floor is deep in shade, the leaves wither away leaving just the roots, rhizomes and bulbs underground.

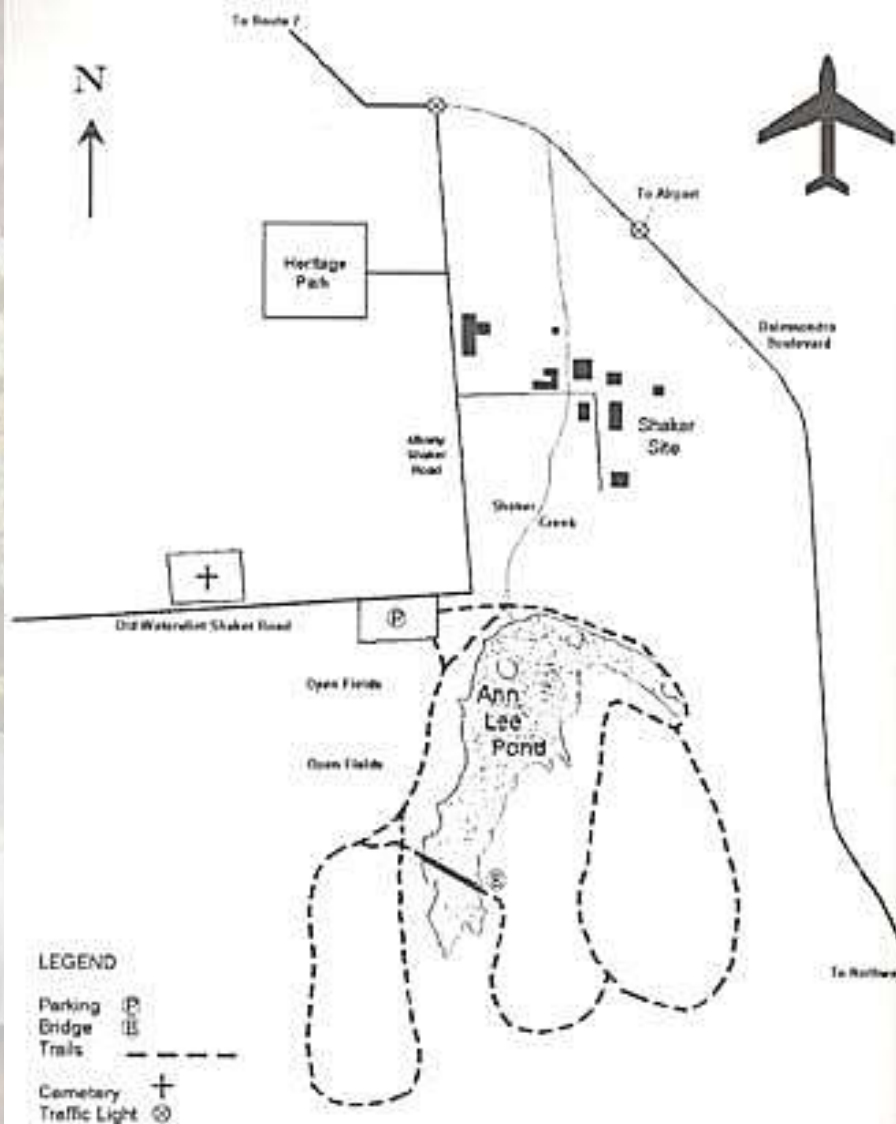
It allows them to take advantage of the full sunlight levels reaching the forest floor during early spring.

Those featured at Ann Lee Pond Nature & Historic Preserve:



- **Carolina Spring Beauty (*Claytonia caroliniana*)**
 - Begins blooming April week 2
- **Nightcaps (*Anemone nemerosa var. quinquefolia*)**
 - Begins blooming April week 3
- **Rue Anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*)**
 - Begins blooming April week 3
- **Dwarf Ginseng (*Panax trifolius*)**
 - Begins blooming April week 4

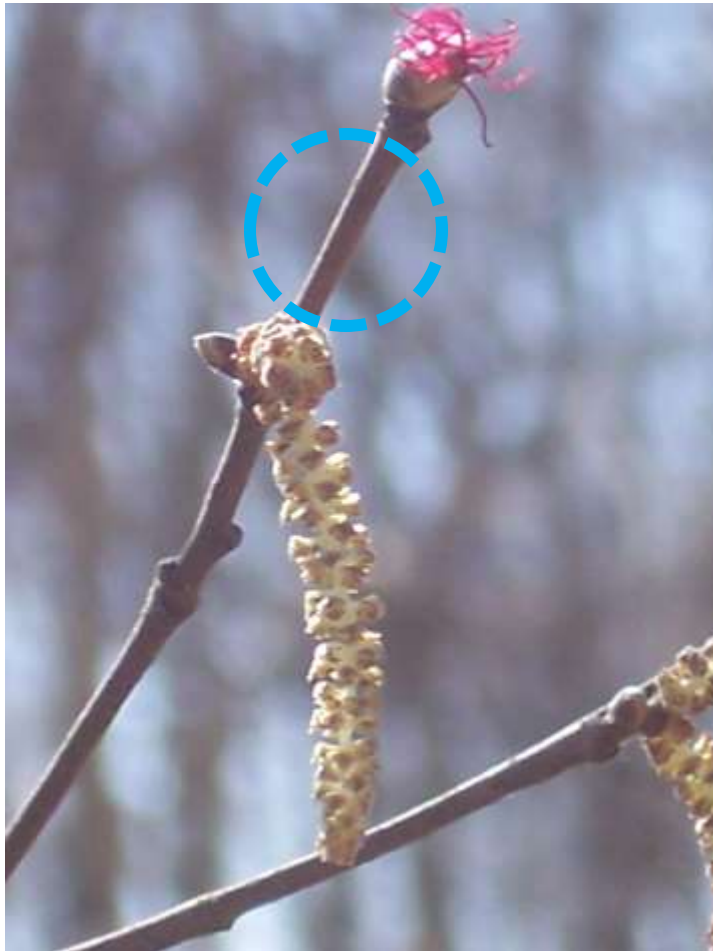
Ann Lee Pond Nature And Historic Preserve



Wildflowers blooming late March through April

- 
- **Beaked Hazelnut**
 - **Coltsfoot**
 - **Red Maple**
 - **Skunk Cabbage**
 - **Whitlow Grass**
 - **American Hazelnut**
 - **Bloodroot**
 - **Carolina Spring Beauty**
 - **Common Dandelion**
 - **Round-lobed Hepatica**
 - **Selkirk's Violet**
 - **Spring Beauty**
 - **Blue Cohosh**
 - **Canadian Wild Ginger**
 - **Common Shadbush**
 - **Early Blue Cohosh**
 - **Early Buttercup**
 - **Marsh Marigold**
 - **Nightcaps**
 - **Rue Anemone**
 - **Wake Robin**
 - **American Fly Honeysuckle**
 - **Canada Violet**
 - **Cut-leaved Toothwort**
 - **Dog Violet**
 - **Dwarf Ginseng**
 - **Garlic Mustard**
 - **Goldthread**
 - **Highbush Blueberry**
 - **Hobblebush**
 - **Japanese Barberry**
 - **Large-flowered Bellwort**
 - **Long-spurred Violet**
 - **Marsh Blue Violet**
 - **Small-flowered Crowfoot**
 - **Sweet White Violet**
 - **Toothwort**
 - **Trout Lily**
 - **Woodland Strawberry**

Beaked Hazelnut



Herbalists use a decoction of the bark to alleviate children's teething pain.

Coltsfoot



Leaf used to make a home remedy that soothes sore throat pain and inflammation.

Red Maple



U.S. Forest Service recognizes it as most abundant native tree in eastern North America.

Skunk Cabbage



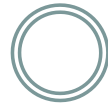
One of few plants to exhibit thermogenesis – i.e., generation of heat due to self-induced chemical reaction in its root.

Sharp-lobed Hepatica



Official flower of the Swedish Democrats political party.

Whitlow Grass



“Draba” from *A Sand County Almanac*, by Aldo Leopold

Draba

Within a few weeks now Draba, the smallest flower that blows, will sprinkle every sandy place with small blooms.

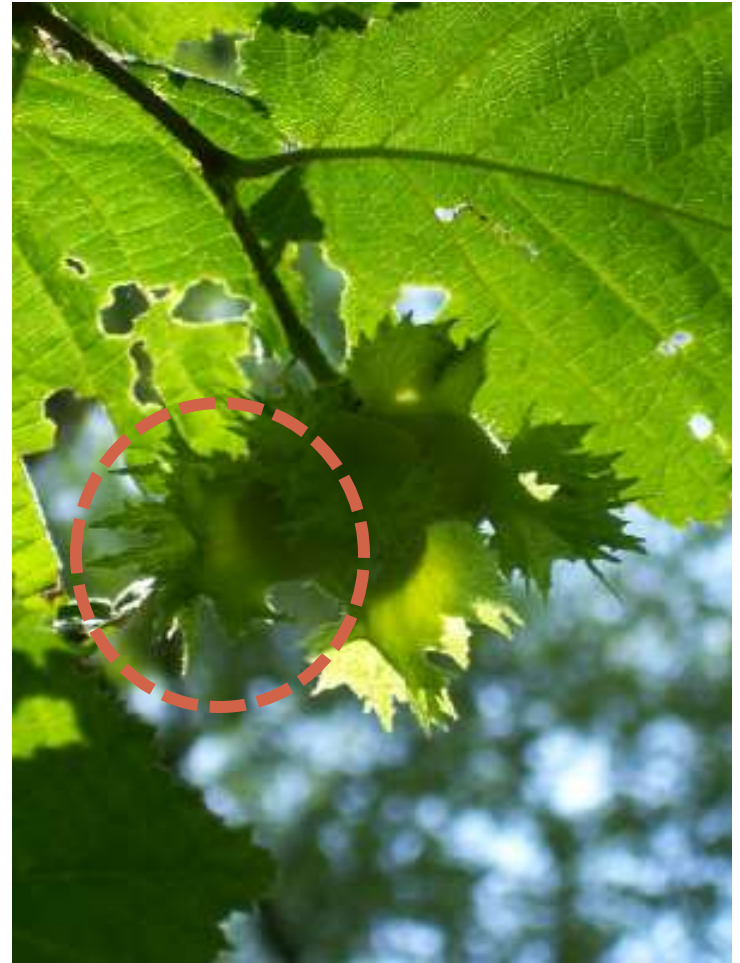
He who hopes for spring with upturned eye never sees so small a thing as Draba. He who despairs of spring with downcast eye steps on it, unknowing. He who searches for spring with his knees in the mud finds it, in abundance.

Draba asks, and gets, but scant allowance of warmth and comfort; it subsists on the leavings of unwanted time and space. Botany books give it two or three lines, but never a plate or portrait. Sand too poor and sun too weak for bigger, better blooms are good enough for Draba. After all it is no spring flower, but only a postscript to a hope.

Draba plucks no heartstrings. Its perfume, if there is any, is lost in the gusty winds. Its color is plain white. Its leaves wear a sensible woolly coat. Nothing eats it; it is too small. No poets sing of it. Some botanist once gave it a Latin name, and then forgot it. Altogether it is of no importance—just a small creature that does a small job quickly and well.



American Hazelnut



Nut milk used for coughs and colds and the roots were used as a blue dye for fabrics.

Bloodroot



Red root juice used by American Indians as a dye as well as an insect repellent.

Carolina Spring Beauty & Spring Beauty



Some of our spring ephemeral woodland wildflowers.

Round-lobed Hepatica



Ants carry seeds to their nest to eat the fleshy appendage ('elaiosome') and then discard the seeds, thereby helping to disperse them.

Round-lobed Hepatica & Sharp-lobed Hepatica

Hepatica (Greek for 'liver') refers to the shape of its leaves; also called Liverleaf.



According to the [Doctrine of Signatures](#), this plant was believed to be good for treating liver ailments.

Dog Violet & Selkirk's Violet

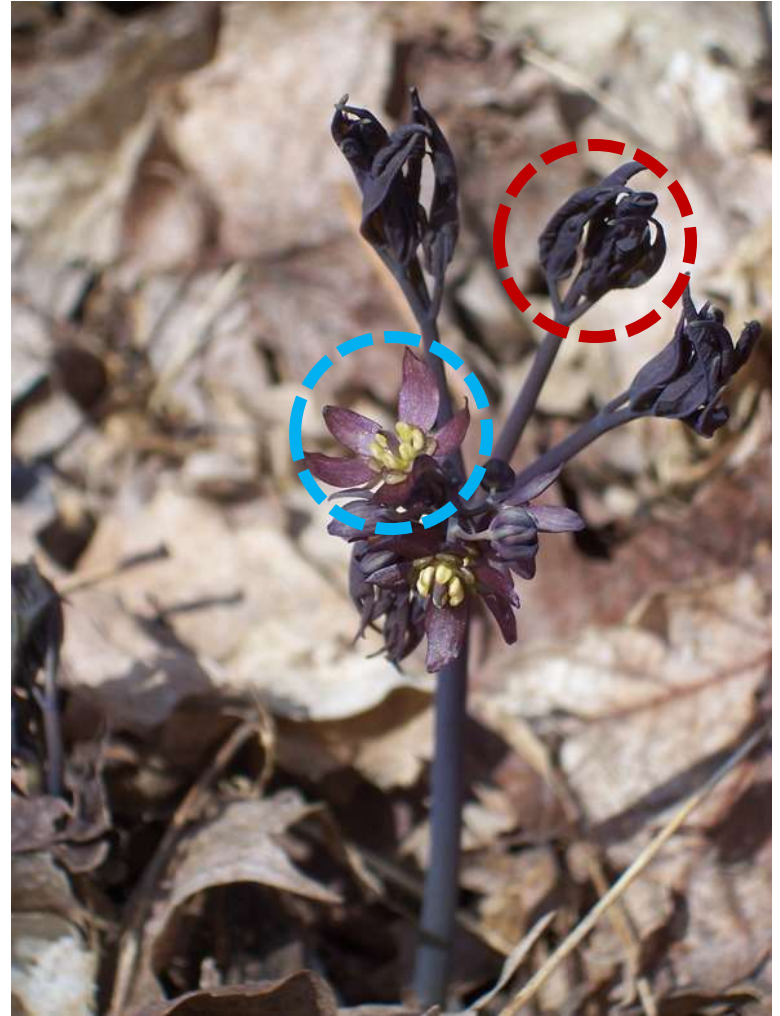


Ojibwa used infusion of whole plant to treat heart trouble



Named for 5th Earl of Selkirk, who chose the botanist for an expedition of what is now Manitoba

Blue Cohosh & Early Blue Cohosh



American Indians used both for medicinal purposes due to their anti-inflammatory properties.

Canadian Wild Ginger



WARNING! – Do **NOT** ingest this plant; it contains a known carcinogen.

Common Shadbush



Name refers to [shad](#) runs in some NE U.S. streams, which occur when this tree blooms.

Early Buttercup



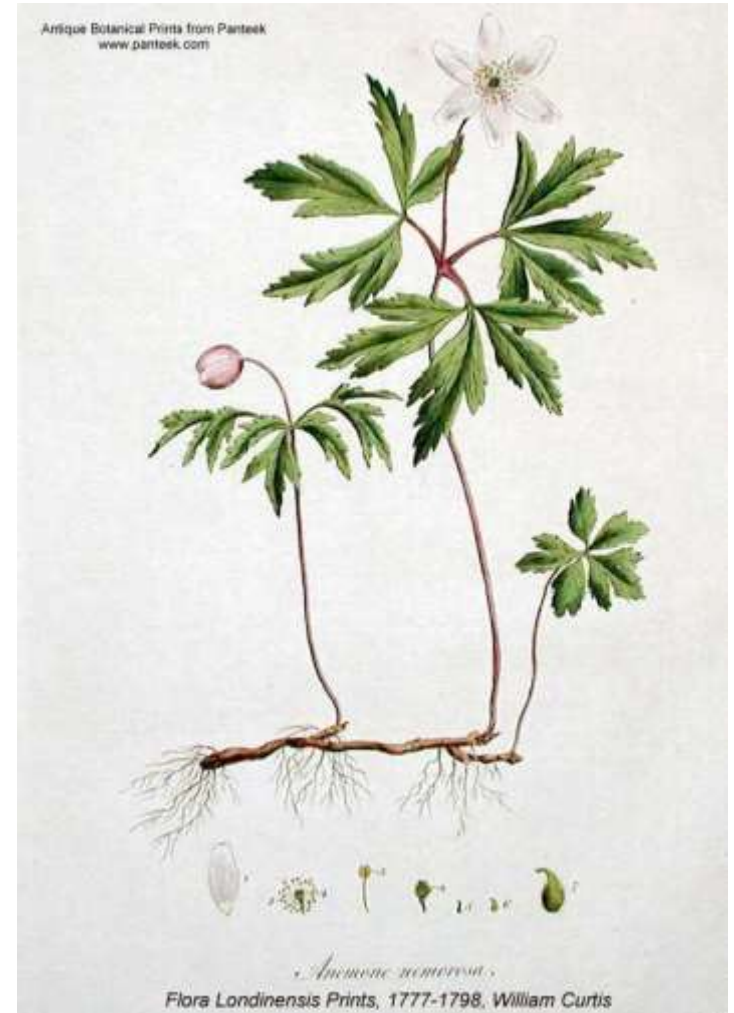
Earliest of buttercups to bloom, benefiting first emerging pollinators (e.g., Mason Bees, Halictid Bees, Carpenter Bees and Syrphid Flies)

Marsh Marigold



“Marigold” refers to its use in medieval churches at Easter as a tribute to the Virgin Mary, as in “Mary gold.”

Nightcaps



Spreads as little as 6' per century in its native UK forests; often used as indicator for ancient woodland.

Rue Anemone



One of our spring ephemeral woodland wildflowers.

Red Trillium...

AKA “Stinking Benjamin” (mispronunciation of benjoin, which is derived from plants in Sumatra and used in perfume and, since the scent of this plant is not sweet or spicy, it was dubbed “stinking”...)



Most common color variant; foul-smelling

... and Red(?) Trillium...



Odorless

...and Red (?) Trillium!



Rarest of the three color variants

Red Trillium (AKA Wake Robin)



Each color variant exhibits a dark maroon ovary in the center of each bloom.

American Fly Honeysuckle



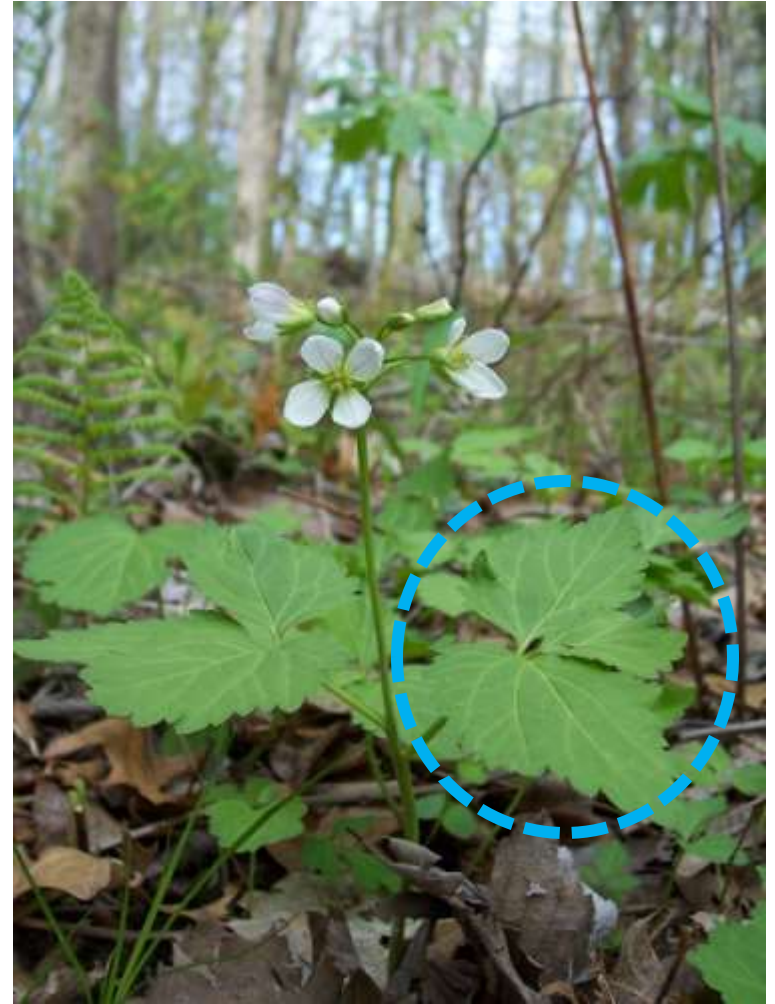
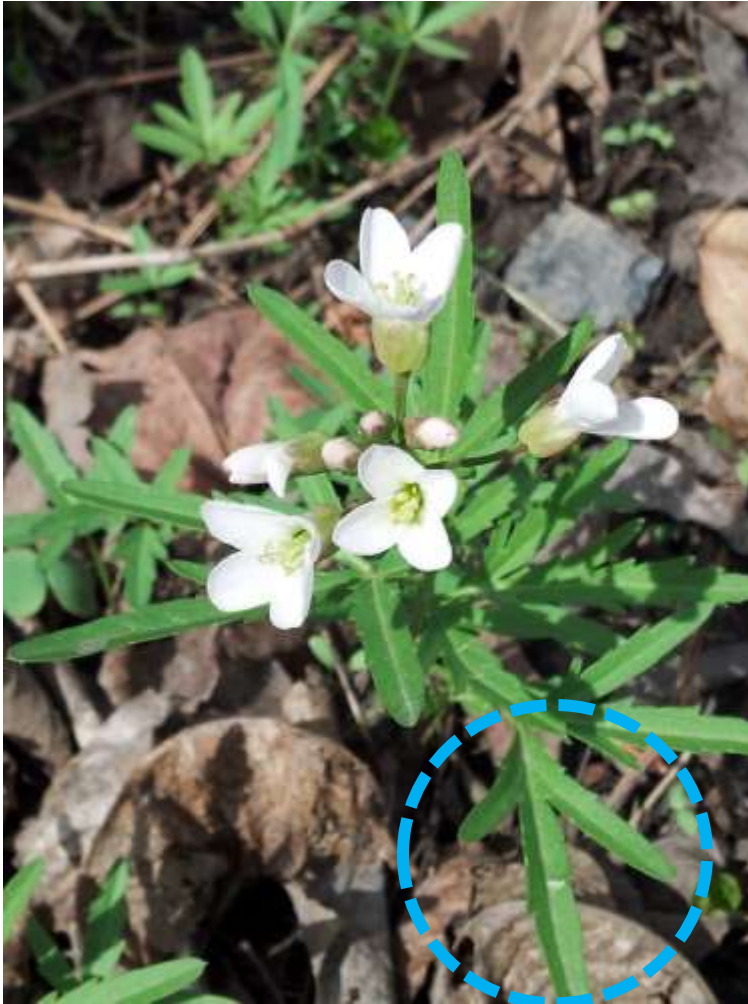
Flowers attract hummingbirds; red fruit a preferred food of American Robin and Northern Cardinal.

Canada Violet



Ants help disburse seeds of violets.

Cut-leaved Toothwort & Toothwort



Some of our spring ephemeral woodland wildflowers.

Dwarf Ginseng

(diminutive cousin of species best known in herbal medicine)



One of our spring ephemeral woodland wildflowers.

Garlic Mustard



Produces allelopathic compounds that inhibits seed germination of other plants, including trees!

Goldthread

(name derived from its long golden-yellow root)



Root chewed by American Indians to relieve canker sores; thus, its other common name, *canker-root*.

Highbush Blueberry



Hobblebush



Large showy flowers framing the cluster are sterile; small inner flowers are fertile.

Japanese Barberry



Creates humid microclimate favoring survival of deer ticks, which principally spread Lyme disease.

Large-flowered Bellwort



Foliage heavily grazed by deer; overpopulation of deer can cause sharp decline in this species.

Long-spurred Violet



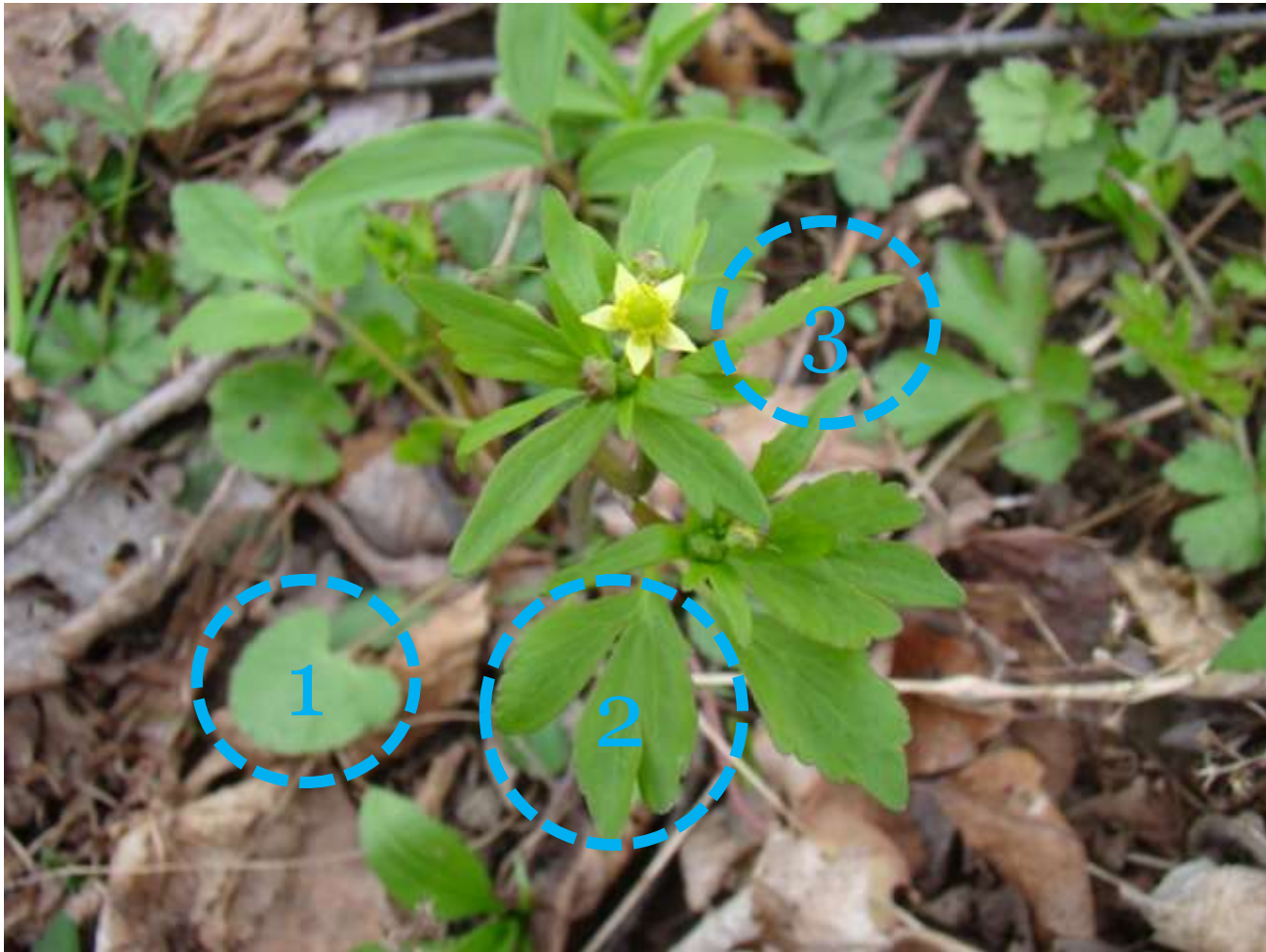
West Virginia White (*Pieris virginiensis*) is one of earliest-flying butterflies to visit violets each spring.

Marsh Blue Violet



Leaves can be added to soup to thicken it.

Small-flowered Crowfoot



Varied leaves: (1) basal & lower leaves are spade shaped; (2) leaves farther up have lobes; (3) leaves at top either lanceolate or broader with lobes on the end.

Sweet White Violet



Smallest of the native violets

Trout Lily



Most common of our ephemeral spring woodland wildflowers.

Woodland Strawberry



Evidence from archaeological excavations suggests it has been eaten by humans since the Stone Age.

Wildflowers blooming early May

- 
- American Black Currant
 - Common Blue Violet
 - Downy Yellow Violet
 - Dwarf Raspberry
 - Early Meadow Rue
 - Field Pussytoes
 - Foamflower
 - Fringed Polygala
 - **Ground Ivy**
 - Hawthorn
 - Jack-in-the-pulpit
 - Miterwort
 - Ovate-leaved Violet
 - Pin Cherry
 - Plantain-leaved Pussytoes
 - Purple Dead Nettle
 - Red Baneberry
 - Red-berried Elder
 - Sessile-leaved Bellwort
 - Smaller Pussytoes
 - Smooth Yellow Violet
 - Spring Cress
 - Star-flowered Solomon's Seal
 - Striped Maple
 - Tower-mustard
 - Wild Plum
 - Wild Strawberry

American Black Currant



Birds that eat the fruit include Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, and Cedar Waxwing.

Common Blue Violet



Ancient Athenians wove blossoms into necklaces, which were believed to moderate anger, strengthen the heart, and help prevent hangover headaches.

Downy Yellow Violet



In late 19th century, European women chewed on blooms as breath mint.

Dwarf Raspberry



Eastern North American Indians used a decoction of roots to relieve stomach ailments.

Early Meadow Rue



Species name “dioicum” is derived from Greek word meaning two households and alludes to fact that male and female flowers are on separate plants.

Field Pussytoes



Host plant for Painted Lady Butterfly caterpillar.

Foamflower



Tiny flowers and fine texture of stamens resemble foam, which accounts for its name.

Fringed Polygala

(in Latin, “poly” means “many, much” and “gala” means “milk”)



Believed to increase production of milk in mammals, such as cows.

Ground Ivy



Prior to 15th century, widely used as flavoring to brew ale and, prior to use of hops, to brew beer.

Hawthorn



Name derived from Anglo-Saxon term haguthorn, meaning "a fence with thorns."

Jack-in-the-pulpit



spadix = Jack

spathe = the pulpit

Spathe: bract forming a sheath to enclose flower cluster; Spadix: fleshy stem bearing a spike of small flowers

Miterwort



Petals
resemble a
snowflake

Little blooms mainly visited by small pollinators – sweat bees, small carpenter bees and hoverflies.

Ovate-leaved Violet



Iroquois used a compound of this plant to detect bewitchment.

Pin Cherry



American Indians used bark for many purposes: infusion used to treat coughs and sore eyes; as a burn salve; also used to make baskets.

Plantain-leaved Pussytoes



As with all Pussytoes, their fuzzy, tightly packed flower heads resemble the pads of a cat's paw.

Purple Dead Nettle



Due to its diuretic, astringent and styptic properties, infusion used to help heal minor cuts and bruises.

Red Baneberry



Poisonous plant, especially the berries; American Indians used berry juice to poison arrows.

Red-berried Elder



Brown Thrasher, Catbird, Veery, Wood Thrush and White-throated Sparrow eat its red fruit.

Sessile-leaved Bellwort



All species of bellworts are pollinated by bumblebees.

Smooth Yellow Violet



American Indians used a decoction of plant for indigestion.

Spring Cress



Nectar attracts cuckoo bees, mason bees, little carpenter bees, Halictid bees, Andrenid bees, bee flies, dance flies, Syrphid flies, small- to medium-sized butterflies, and skippers.

Star-flowered Solomon's Seal



North American Indians used a decoction of leaves in treatment of rheumatism and colds.

Striped Maple



Also known as Goosefoot Maple because leaf shape resembles the foot of a goose.

Tower-mustard



Infusion made from leaves used as general preventative measure for sickness.

Wild Plum



Ripe fruit eaten fresh and used in jellies and preserves.

Wild Strawberry



This is sweetest wild strawberry; cultivated strawberries are hybrids developed from it.

SAVE the dates!



Join me for the remaining sessions of **Ephemeral Spring Wildflowers** –

- May 1 @ 6:30pm: *featuring Ballston Creek Preserve*
- May 6 @ 5:30pm: *featuring the unnamed 41-acre property along the Mohawk River owned by the Town of Clifton Park*

Please check the [Events page of my blog](#) for details and any updates on each upcoming event: www.curiousbynature.wordpress.com.

THE END

