

Spring Wildflower Fact Sheet



Squirrel Corn (*Dicentra canadensis*)

This member of the Poppy family is in the same genus as the closely related Dutchman's Breeches. It is found in moist woodland soils. It gets its name from the fact that its tubers closely resemble kernels of corn or yellow peas.



Sharp-lobed Hepatica (*Hepatica acutiloba*)

This member of the Buttercup family is a wildflower of the early spring. Considerable color variation may be observed from plant to plant, ranging from white to pink to purple to blue. Each plant usually produces several flowers, each of the same color. Groups of dozens or hundreds of plants may sometimes cover much of a wooded hillside.



Large-Flowered Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*)

Colonies of these flowers are often seen growing near small streams in rich woods of the mountains and upper piedmont. They have characteristic white leaves that turn pink with age. When the leaves of this flower are young they can be used in a salad or cooked. However, once the buds and flowers appear they become quite bitter.



Purple Trillium (*Trillium erectum*)

Also known as Wake-robin, Birthroot or Red Trillium, this plant usually has dark reddish-purple flowers, but occasionally they are white. More rarely, the flowers are pinkish or greenish. White-flowered versions of the flower can be confused with large-flowered trillium, but purple trillium has a purple ovary (in the middle of the flower), and its petals are narrower and do not overlap at the base. This flower grows in rich, moist but well-drained soil and is partial to the shade. Its flower has a foul smell.



Blue Cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*)

Blue cohosh is named for its seeds that resemble dark blue berries, but are highly poisonous. It is also known as Papoose Root and Squaw Root. This plant was used by Native North American Indian women to help ease menstrual and childbearing pain. Today, it has been used by herbalists in combination with Black Cohosh for an effective balanced antispasmodic. It can also be used with other herbs to treat anxiety, bronchitis, sore throat and urinary disorders.



Wild Leeks (*Allium tricoccum*)

This flower is also known as ramp. It has broadly lance-shaped leaves that wither away before the flowers bloom. Both the leaves and the flowers smell like onions. This plant is edible and is often used as wild onion. It grows in moist woods.



Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)

This flower is also known as Devil's apple, hog apple, Indian apple, umbrella plant, wild lemon, and American mandrake. The roots, leaves, seeds, and green fruit are strongly cathartic and should not be eaten. The plant's long, thin rhizome, a horizontal underground stem from which the roots grow is the most poisonous part, but also the most useful because it contains high concentrations of the compounds podophyllotoxin and alpha and beta peltatin, which have anticancer properties. Extracts of the plant are used in topical medications for genital warts and some skin cancers.



Trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*)

Another common name for this plant is Dogtooth Violet, which refers to the shape of the white bulb of the plant. This plant is easily recognized by its small, yellow lily nodding from the top of a leafless stem. Traditionally, the bulbs and leaves of this species were eaten, either raw or cooked. The plant was also used medicinally to heal ulcers and as a contraceptive. The plant is believed to be mildly emetic and antibiotic.



Wood Anemone (*Anemone quinquefolia*)

Other common names for this plant include Mayflower, Windflower, or Nightcaps. This plant has been used to relieve fevers, rheumatism and gout by rubbing the plants juices on the skin. It has also been used on the feet for corn removal. The plant is said to be extremely acrid if ingested, even small doses would produce a great disturbance in the stomach.



Toothwort (*Dentaria diphylla*)

The root of this plant can be eaten raw or cooked. It has a crisp texture and a pleasant pungent taste, similar to water cress or horseradish. It can be used as a relish. The peppery root has also been used as a folk remedy in the treatment of toothaches and chewed to treat colds. It has been an infusion drunk to treat gas and other stomach problems and been made into a poultice for headaches. A tea can be made from the root and gargled to treat sore throats and hoarseness. Combined with *Acorus calamus* root, it has been used in the treatment of heart diseases.



Downy Yellow Violet (*Viola pubescens*)

The habitats of this plant include moist to mesic deciduous woodlands, woodland borders, and thickets. This plant is characterized by downy yellow flowers with tiny purple veins. Native Americans used an infusion made from yellow violet to treat coughs, colds, and dysentery; a poultice of leaves for headaches; and soaked corn seeds in an infusion of the roots prior to planting to ward off insects.



Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)

Also called spotted geranium, this whole plant, but especially the root, is antiseptic, highly astringent, diuretic, styptic and tonic. An infusion of the whole plant, or of the roots alone, is used in the treatment of diarrhea, dysentery, irritable bowel syndrome, cholera, kidney complaints, bleeding and a wide range of other ailments. It is often used in combination with other herbs. Externally, it can be applied to purulent wounds, hemorrhoids, thrush, and inflammations of the mouth. This plant is rich in tannin with the root containing 10- 20%.



Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*)

The root of this flower can be eaten raw or cooked; it has a pleasant nutty flavor. It is rich in starch and the root is rich in vitamins A and C. This plant has a radish-like flavor when it is raw. When it is cooked, it tastes like a cross between a potato and a chestnut. It can be added to salads or used as greens.