

Annual Arrival

Although most spring wildflowers are perennials, you may be surprised to learn they spend the majority of their time dormant, underneath the ground. The growing season of spring wildflowers occurs in a short timeframe, from the end of winter, when the ground begins to warm to early spring, when tree leaves grow back, shading the forest floor. During this time, wildflowers send out leaves to collect energy and flower blooms to reproduce.

A Supporting Role

One of the first signs that warmer weather is on the horizon, spring wildflowers are an important source of nectar and pollen for native pollinators such as insects, birds and other small animals. But when the temperature rises and the trees provide more shade, wildflower above-ground growth dies back; most plants disappear from view until the next spring.

For the Best Views

Because spring wildflowers have a short growing season, they are very vulnerable to disturbance. When searching Great Parks for these first gems of spring, please stay on trails to avoid compacting soil and damaging any plants. This will not only allow you to enjoy wildflowers year after year, but also give future generations the opportunity to marvel at the first of our yearly natural wonders.

Remember: Take only pictures, leave only footprints.

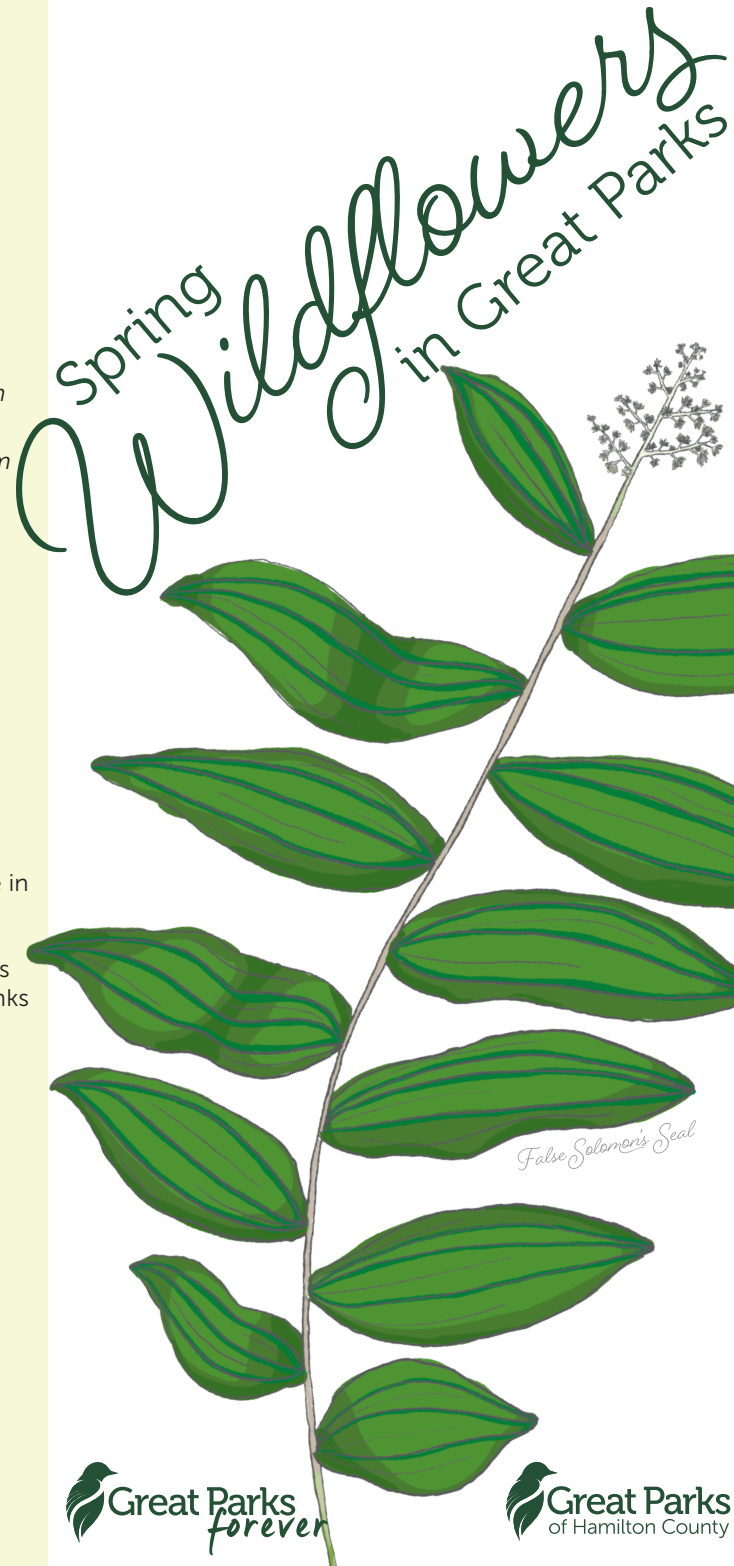


Can You Photograph These 15 Wildflowers?

Common Name	Scientific Name
<input type="checkbox"/> Jack-in-the-pulpit	<i>Arisaema triphyllum</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Cutleaf toothwort	<i>Cardamine concatenata</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple cress	<i>Cardamine douglassii</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-eyed Mary	<i>Collinsia verna</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Dwarf larkspur	<i>Delphinium tricorne</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow trout lily	<i>Erythronium americanum</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia waterleaf	<i>Hydrophyllum virginianum</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Wild leek or ramp	<i>Allium tricoccum</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> False Solomon's seal	<i>Maianthemum racemosum</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Virginia bluebells	<i>Mertensia virginica</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Wild blue phlox	<i>Phlox divaricata</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mayapple	<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Miami mist	<i>Phacelia purshii</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Bloodroot	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Common blue violet	<i>Viola sororia</i>

A Beautiful Legacy

Twenty years ago, William and Gina Garnett discovered a wooded hillside in Winton Woods with a rare blend of native wildflowers. This moment sparked an annual tradition to witness the first flowers of spring. Today, thanks to a generous gift from William in memory of Gina, this habitat is preserved for the next generation.



To find our next wildflower program, visit greatparks.org



HARBINGER OF SPRING

Erigeron bulbosa

IDENTIFYING FEATURES:

Small white flower petals with dark stamens (slender stalk that produces pollen); anthers (balls on the end of the stamen) start out red, but eventually turn black

DID YOU KNOW?

These flowers are also called "pepper and salt" flowers in reference to their black and white appearance.

If the name wasn't obvious, these flowers tend to be among the first bloomers of the season.



Spring Wildflowers

"Even the tiniest of flowers can have the toughest roots."
- Shannon Mullen

VIRGINIA SPRING BEAUTY

Claytonia virginica

IDENTIFYING FEATURES:

Five-petaled white flowers with pink stripes

DID YOU KNOW?

The pink stripes help guide insects to the nectar at the flower's center.

Look for open flowers on warm sunny days.



TOADSHADE

Trillium sessile

IDENTIFYING FEATURES:

Three maroon petals, three sepals (small leaves surrounding the flower) and three leaves on one stem

DID YOU KNOW?

Toadshades are pollinated by flies and beetles, which are attracted to the foul-smelling flower.

Search for toadshade in mid-to late spring.



DUTCHMAN'S BREECHES

Dicentra cucullaria

IDENTIFYING FEATURES:

White flowers that resemble pants (breeches) hanging on a clothesline stem

DID YOU KNOW?

When bumblebees pollinate these flowers, the bee's long tongue (proboscis) can reach the nectar deep inside the petals.

Though beautiful to look at, dutchman's breeches don't have any aroma.

