

Get to know Bluestem's spring ephemerals!



Bluestem

These short-lived and showy flowering plants emerge in early spring and last just a few weeks. Here's how to identify them.



Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)

Pronounced: san-gwin-AR-ee-uh ka-na-DEN-sis

Habitat: Nutrient-rich woods in our forested areas. Leaves: 6", 5- to 9-lobed, blunt "teeth". Flowers: 1.5-2", bright white, 8 to 12 petals. Fruits: Green pods with brown seeds, dispersed by ants. Nature note: Sap used for dye, body paint and insect repellent.

Caution: Roots highly poisonous.



Eastern Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*)

Pronounced: klay-TOH-nee-uh vir-JIN-ih-kuh

Habitat: Partially shaded, moist woodlands and sometimes our meadows; grows in clumps. Flowers: Pale pink or white stars with dark pink stripes; clustered on 4-6" stems; open on sunny days, closed at night and cloudy days. Leaves: 6", 5- to 9-lobed, blunt "teeth". Flowers: up to 1", white with pink, 4 or 5 petals. Fruits: Oval capsules, <1". Nature note: Also called Fairy Spud.



Little Brown Jug (*Asarum arifolium*)

Pronunciation: ah-SAR-um ay-rih-FO-lee-um

Habitat: Evergreen in dry, dappled shade to partial shade woodlands throughout the preserve. Flowers: Single, bell-shaped, brown/copper or red/burgundy, form under leaves at base of stem. Leaves: Heart-shaped, deep blue-green, silvery patterning.

Fruits: Round, fleshy green or brown/copper capsules. Nature note: Also called Arrowhead or Heartleaf Wild Ginger

Caution: Do not consume any part of this plant.



Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)

Pronunciation: poh-doh-FY-lum pel-TAY-tum

Habitat: Open, deeply shaded woodlands, fields and creekbanks throughout the preserve; grows in colonies. Flowers: 2-3" wide, 6 light green sepals, 6 to 9 waxy, white petals; showy, under leaves. Leaves: 1-2, smooth, pale green, 12" long and wide, 6 to 9 palmate lobes, cleft tips. Fruits: 1.5-2" green, berry-like oval fruits; golden when ripe. Nature note: A favorite of box turtles. Also called Devil's or Hog Apple, Raccoon Berry, Duck's Foot, Umbrella Leaf and Wild Lemon.



Trout Lily (*Erythronium americanum*)

Pronounced: er-ih-THROH-nee-um a-mer-ih-KAY-num

Habitat: Moist bottomlands and slope forests segments of our woodland trails; can grow in colonies. Leaves: Smooth, glossy and opposite; <6" long; mottled brown/copper, green or purple/lavender depending on season, may camouflage from browsing; 1 or more at base of stem. Flowers: Showy yellow or lavender in spring. Fruits: Rounded capsule separates into 3 parts to release seeds. Nature note: Also called Yellow Adder's Tongue and Yellow Dog-Tooth Violet.



Wood Anemone (*Anemone quinquefolia*)

Pronounced: uh-nem-on-OY-deez kwinq-uh-FOH-lee-uh

Habitat: Shady areas of deciduous trees throughout the preserve. They will attract bees to a native pollinator garden. Flowers: Single showy white, pink, purple/lavender or red/burgundy with 5 to 7 white, petal-like sepals. Leaves: Alternate or whorled, green or lavender/purple, compound. Fruits: small round ball of oval seeds. Nature note: Also called windflower.

Caution: Causes contact dermatitis; all parts mildly toxic in large quantities.

Illustrations by Rebekah Foster