

Common Spring Ephemeral Wildflowers

Photos by Mike Davis except where noted.

Before the leaves of deciduous trees open fully in the forest, many different plants appear and bloom briefly close to the ground. Although some are rare and may be difficult to find, others are common in natural woodland.



▲ **Bloodroot, *sanguinaria*** Fond of woodlands, this early spring bloomer begins with leaves curled around the solitary stem, with one white flower per plant. Petals open in warm sunlight and will close when cold. The plant's name comes from dark red sap in the stems and roots, said to be poisonous. PHOTO BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT



▲ **Coltsfoot, *tussilago farfara*** Sometimes mistaken for dandelions, coltsfoot blooms earlier and before the leaves appear, growing in roadsides, poor soils and damp woodland. Small leaves along the stems distinguish it from dandelions. Flowers are edible.



▲ **Cut Leaf Toothwort, *dentaria laciniata*, renamed *cardamine concatenata*** The flowers are in four parts, and can be white to pinkish. Leaves are in three parts but can look like a five-part leaf, resembling a hand.



▲ **Marsh Marigold, *caltha palustris*** Grows in shallow swamps, ditches and wet woodland. Hollow stems take up a lot of water. Cut flowers in a vase may need water refilling every day.



▲ **Spring Beauty, *claytonia caroliniana*? or *claytonia virginiana*?** Only the width of the leaves distinguish the Latin names. Flowers are white to pink, striped, star-shaped clusters. One of the most common wildflowers in woodlands.



▲ **Trout Lily, Dogtooth Violet, *erythronium americanum*** Can carpet large areas of forest although most will be spotted leaves, with only a few flowers in bloom. It may take seven years for one plant to flower. Spreads by its roots.