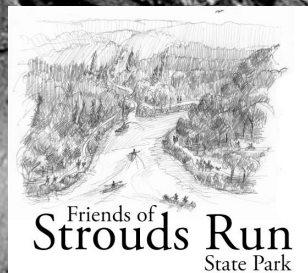


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Spring Wildflowers *of the* Strouds Run Area



A publication of the



*Strouds Run
Field Guide #2
First Corrected Edition*

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Coming publications in this series:

1. **Geology of the Strouds Run Area**: already published
2. **Spring Wildflowers of the Strouds Run Area**: now published!
3. **Invasive Exotic Plants of the Strouds Run Area**: coming late May, 2009
4. **Ferns and Lycopods of the Strouds Run Area**: coming late June, 2009
5. **Woody Plants of the Strouds Run Area**: coming late July, 2009
6. **Summer Wildflowers of the Strouds Run Area**: coming late August, 2009
7. **Birds of the Strouds Run Area**: date to be determined
8. **Reptiles and Amphibians of the Strouds Run Area**: date to be determined
9. **Mammals of the Strouds Run Area**: date to be determined
10. **Vascular Plant Checklist of the Strouds Run Area**: date to be determined

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Spring Wildflowers of the Strouds Run Area

Most wildflowers in the Strouds Run area are those typical of mesophytic (moderate moisture) eastern U.S. hardwood forest. This area largely lacks the flora more typical of very acid woods (such as the lady's slipper orchids) or of more alkaline woods.

Probably the best wildflower-viewing location in the entire Strouds Run area is Blue Ash Valley, along the Rockhouse Trail north of the Hampton Inn on East State Street in Athens. However, various specific wildflowers may have certain other areas where they are best seen. The **blue-eyed Mary**, *Collinsea verna*, is best seen in the Labath Run stream bottom near the state park campground. On the other hand, some of the flowers listed are rare in the park and hard to find, such as **columbine**, *Aquilegia canadensis*, and several of the orchids.

Some species are seemingly anywhere and everywhere you may look. Such wildflowers include the **cutleaf toothwort**, *Cardamine concatenata*, and some of the violets.

Not all species are listed in this publication, and they do not bloom all at the same time. Their blooming ranges from March through June. In a few cases, some summer wildflowers are referenced, as in the case of some orchids.

Orchids are listed first, followed by other monocots, then dicots arranged partially by habitat. Monocots are a group of flowering plants that mostly have petals and other flower parts in multiples of three, and usually have simple leaves (unlobed and undivided) with several parallel main veins.

Dicots more often have petals in multiples of four or five, and their leaves usually have only one main vein (the midrib) with divergent secondary veins. The dicots were once thought to be a naturally related group, but it is now known that it is a collection of different groups that are on equal ranking with monocots.

The spring wildflowers generally bloom in three great waves. The first wave, includes the purple cress, the toothworts, the trout lilies, and bloodroot, while the second wave includes the trilliums, jack-in-the-pulpit, showy orchis, bluebells and blue phlox. Spring beauty and rue anemone overlap both these waves. The third wave includes many of the woody species. The first wave is generally in early April, the second wave is late April to early May, and the third wave is May to June, but blooming times vary greatly from year to year.

Where plants grow is determined not only by the richness and moisture of the soil and the amount of shade, but also by the direction of exposure and the pH of the soil. Some species, such as **larkspur**, *Delphinium tricorne*, and **twinleaf**, *Jeffersonia diphylla*, prefer soils over limestone.

Many of these spring wildflowers are ominously threatened by the plant known as **garlic mustard**, *Alliaria petiolata*, an invasive exotic species. This plant positively crowds out all other herbaceous spring wildflowers wherever it is allowed to grow unchecked. The **Friends of Strouds Run State Park** is involved in efforts to eradicate this species in the Strouds Run area.

Please conserve our wildflowers! It is illegal to remove any plant from Strouds Run State Park, with the exception of gathering nuts, berries, seeds, or mushrooms for personal use within reason.

Orchids

There are some baker's dozen native orchids known from the Strouds Run area, although there are none of the lady-slippers. All the orchid species here are terrestrial, with two being parasitic. Three species are evergreen, and are more known for their foliage, which is conspicuous on the forest floor in the winter, than for their small flowers. The first is **putty-root**, *Aplectrum hyemale*, which grows in moist areas. It only produces one leaf per year, a distinctive elliptical leaf tapering at both ends, and pin-stripped with white and green. The leaf dies back by the time that it blooms in late spring. The second is **cranefly orchid**, *Tipularia discolor*, which also produces only one leaf per year. This leaf is dark green on the top, and dark purple on the underside, and is broadly ovate (egg-shaped) with a tapering tip. The third species forms a rosette of leaves on the ground, and may form small patches, spreading by short stolons. This is **rattlesnake plantain**, *Goodyera pubescens* (not illustrated). The evergreen leaves are variegated, with a dense network of whitish, reticulated veins amid green leaf tissue.

The most striking flower is to be found on **showy orchis**, *Galearis spectabilis*. The leaves are ovate, usually two to a plant at almost ground level. There are two species of **coralroot**, parasitic orchids, both in the genus *Corallorhiza* (not illustrated). One is *C. odontorhiza* and the other is *C. wisteriana*. These plants are seen only when in flower.

There are three **ladies-tresses**, in the genus *Spiranthes* (not illustrated). These all look similar, the species being *S. lacera*, *S. ovalis*, and *S. vernalis*. Only the last blooms in the spring, the others in summer.

Other orchids are **lily-leaved twayblade**, *Liparis liliifolia*; **yellow fringed orchid**, *Platanthera lacera*; **large whorled pogonia**, *Isotria verticillata*, and **adders-mouth**, *Malaxis unifolia*.

Trilliums

Four trillium species call Strouds Run home. The more striking of these is the **large-flowered** or **white-flowered trillium**, *T. grandiflorum*. It has large, upward-pointing white flowers on pronounced stalks. Another white trillium, much less common and with smaller white flowers is the **bent trillium**, *T. flexipes* (not illustrated). These flowers start out strongly bent under the leaves, and may stay there or rise above the leaves; they are occasionally rose-colored and have a "mushroom" smell. Even rarer is the **erect trillium**, *T. erectum* (not illustrated). This is very similar to *T. flexipes*, but is usually red, though sometimes white. The flower smells like wet dog. The other has dark purple upright flowers without stalks (and leaves without stalks), and is called **sessile trillium** or **toadshade**, *T. sessile*.



1. *Aplectrum hyemale*



2. *Tipularia discolor*



3. *Trillium grandiflorum*



4. *Galearis spectabilis*



5,6. *Trillium sessile* (both photos)

Other Monocots

Several of the monocots roughly resemble each other, with ascending, arching stems that have alternate, similarly-shaped leaves and creeping, fleshy rhizomes. These include **Solomons-seals**, *Polygonatum pubescens* and *P. biflorum*, **false Solomons-seal**, *Maianthemum racemosum* (formerly *Smilacina racemosa*), and **bellwort**, *Uvularia grandiflora*. They are easy to tell apart. The **false Solomons-seal**, blooming in May, is the only one with a terminal cluster of white blossoms, and the stem zigzags from leaf to leaf. The true **Solomons-seal** has a pair of small, white or greenish bell-shaped flowers beneath each leaf node in May. The **bellwort** has perfoliate leaves – that is, the stem seems to pass through the leaf rather than the leaf growing off the stem – and sometimes branching stems. It has attractive yellow pendant flowers at the end of each branch. It blooms in late April to May.

Trout-lilies are recognized by its mottled fleshy leaves, usually in moist places. Most plants do not have flowers in any given year, but the nodding flowers are very attractive, with spreading, out-curved petals. The **white trout lily** is *Erythronium albidum*, and the **yellow** is *E. americanum*. The white is more common in this area. They are both early bloomers.

Ramps is a type of wild leek, in the onion family, whose leaves appear very early and die down before the flowers appear in late June to early July. This plant, *Allium tricoccum*, is a popular wildcrafted food.

Spiderwort, *Tradescantia virginiana*, has a fibrous root system and upright stems with three-petaled purple flowers in leaf axils and near the top. It blooms April-May.

Jack-in-the-pulpit is an oddball, blooming in late April to May. This tuberous plant, *Arisaema triphyllum*, has one or two leaves each year, with three leaflets on each leaf. The minute flowers are on a central spike, called the spadix, surrounded by a large, showy bract (modified leaf), called the spathe. The pointed top of the spathe hangs over the spadix.

A related species is the **green dragon**, *Arisaema dracontium*. This even odder plant with more leaflets, blooming later, has an even odder flower, similar to **Jack** but narrower and more closed, with the spathe more wrapped around the spadix and a long, narrow, almost threadlike, tip. The spathe resembles a flame shooting from a dragon's mouth.

Inconspicuous **blue-eyed grass**, *Sisyrinchium angustifolium*, is often found in open, grassy areas. Although it is in the iris family, it looks very much like a grass until it blooms with its bright blue little flowers.



7. *Polygonatum species*



8. *Maianthemum racemosum*



9. *Erythronium americanum*



10. *Uvularia grandiflora*



11. *Arisaema triphyllum*



12. *Erythronium albidum*



13. *Allium tricoccum*



14. *Tradescantia virginiana*



15. *Sisyrinchium angustifolium*

Mustards

Mustards are important components of our spring flora, especially the genus *Cardamine*. One of the earliest flowers seen in the woods is **early cress** or **purple cress**, *Cardamine douglassii*. This is often called **limestone cress**, but it grows throughout our woods. The leaves vary from round to ovate, with or without teeth, and are often purple beneath, and may be a blue-green color. The **cutleaf toothwort**, *Cardamine concatenata* (formerly *Dentaria laciniata*), has similar flowers but very different, deeply cut and toothed leaves that resemble marijuana leaves. This plant is one of the most common wildflowers throughout our woods, growing in a wide variety of habitats. The **two-leaf toothwort**, *Cardamine diphylla*, prefers moist, sheltered places along streams where it forms small patches. It has a pair of leaves on the flower stock (with more leaves at the base), which three leaflets, a little like poison ivy.

Dames rocket, *Hesperis matronalis*, is not native but often puts on quite a show with striking one-to-three-foot-tall flowerheads in shades of white, pink and purple. It does not appear to be invasive in our area, unlike its cousin, **garlic mustard**, *Alliaria petiolata*. This plant, with loose spikes of small white flowers and rugose (conspicuously veiny) leaves, is a genuine public menace.

Rock Flowers

Five flowers particularly prefer to grow on or near rocks. The most common is probably the **stonecrop**, *Sedum ternatum*. Closely related to garden sedums, it has succulent leaves and star-shaped white blossoms. These blossoms are borne on three-branched stalks, with the flowers on the upper surfaces of the branches. It tolerates a wide variety of habitats as long as it's not covered by leaves in the winter, but often is seen forming carpets atop rocks.

Almost as common is the **native saxifrage**, *Saxifraga virginiana*. This plant prefers rocks, growing with a flat rosette of slightly succulent leaves. In April, it forms an upright stem that supports a cluster of pretty white flowers.

Alum-root or **heuchera**, *Heuchera americana* (not illustrated), is in the same genus as the coral-bells that grow in gardens, and the leaves greatly resemble it. It has a basal rosette of leaves held above the ground, with toothed edges, followed by small white flowers on a spike.

The hepaticas, *Hepatica americana*, grow in sheltered places on soil, and sometimes on rocks. They have distinctive three-lobed evergreen leaves, sometimes slightly variegated. The first has sharp-tipped leaves and the second has rounded-tip leaves. The flowers usually appear before the new leaves replace the overwintering leaves.

Columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis* (not illustrated), is known from two spots in the park, but is rare in this area. It should be carefully protected. It has yellow and pink flowers, sometimes with some orange, resembling the garden columbine in form but smaller. The flowers are highly distinctive, each petal having a long, upward-pointing spur, which contains nectar for its pollinator, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Columbine prefers limestone.

The **fire-pink**, *Silene virginica*, has bright red, five-petaled flowers, blooming in late April to May on steep slopes, often in dry, seemingly barren, spots, or atop rocks. The leaves and flowers are slightly sticky.



16. *Cardamine douglassii*



17. *Cardamine concatenata*



18. *Cardamine diphylla*



19. *Hesperis matronalis*



20. *Alliaria petiolata*



21. *Sedum ternatum*



25. *Saxafraga virginensis*



23. *Hepatica acutiloba*



24. *Silene virginica*

Valley Bottom Wildflowers

A common two-toned blue-and-white flower found in open bottomland areas is the **blue-eyed Mary**, *Collinsia verna* (see cover photo). Sometimes you'll see veritable fields of this flower near streams.

One of the more unusual spring wildflowers is **wild ginger**, *Asarum canadense*. This is also called **little brown jug**. This creeping plant, with stems having a pronounced ginger odor and taste, has two kidney-shaped leaves to each ground-level growing tip, and the flower can be seen between the two leaves. It's shaped, just like the name says, like a little brown jug. This plant favors moderate to deep shade and rich soils in narrow stream valleys, often growing on steep slopes.

One of the forest's most striking plants through the growing season is **blue cohosh**, *Caulophyllum giganteum* and *C thalictroides*. The very distinctive, blue-green canopies of compound leaves with oval leaflets pose strikingly in moist areas. The flowers are fairly attractive, but get visually lost because they have deep purple (occasionally yellow) petals at the same time that the emerging foliage is also deep purple. The yellow stamens do stand out, however. The large, blue, fleshy seeds are very unusual in not being enclosed in a fruit; they resemble blueberries.

Jacob's-ladder, *Polemonium reptans*, is also known as Greek valerian. Favoring deeply shaded, moist, rich areas, the ladder-like compound leaves are distinctive and close to the ground, with ascending clusters of purplish-blue flowers.

Two very similar spring wildflowers grow in moist, rich woods, with blue-green, ferny leaves. They both grow from small bulblets, and the leaves of the two species are almost identical. The bulblets of **Dutchman's-breeches**, *Dicentra cucullaria*, are white to pink, while the bulblets of **squirrel-corn**, *Dicentra canadensis*, are yellow to golden, which gives it its common name. Both have peculiar white, bilaterally-symmetric flowers. But the tops of the flowers of the **Dutchman's-breeches** are pointed, up and out, giving it its common name because of the resemblance to old-time pantaloons. **Squirrel corn** is very similar, but the tops of the flowers are curved in towards each other, looking very much like miniature white bleeding heart flowers (which is also a *Dicentra*). Both these bloom through most of April.

Several species of **violets**, the genus *Viola*, are sprinkled through our woods, with colors of white, yellow and blue. Some grow at ground level, while others have ascending stems. The **common blue violet**, *Viola sororia*, may appear anywhere, including in lawns. The similar blue **palmate violet**, *Viola palmata*, is found in open areas in the woods, and has a slightly darker green, thicker leaf than the common blue, with older leaves having lobes on the sides of the base. *Viola pubescens* is our **yellow violet**, with an ascending stem. It is found in a variety of habitats. The **Canada violet** (*Viola canadensis*), found in rich woods, has elegant white flowers with purple lines converging on the yellow center, and the underside of the petals often becomes purplish. The **cream violet** (*Viola striata*), with creamy white flowers, is common on stream terraces. Both of these have ascending stems. The white **sweet violet**, *Viola blanda*, is restricted to sheltered spots where the soil is somewhat acid and remains moist. Unlike the other two white violets, it only grows from a basal rosette.



27. *Asarum canadense*



28. *Caulophyllum thalictroides*



29. *Polemonium reptans*



30. *Dicentra cucullaria*



31. *Dicentra canadensis*



32. *Viola striata*



33. *Viola blanda*



34. *Viola canadensis*



35. *Viola palmata*



36. *Viola pubescens*

Other Woodland Flowers

The name of the **spotted pipsissewa**, *Chimaphila maculata*, seems inexplicable. The “maculata” also means spotted, but the plant is clearly striped, not spotted. It has frosty-silvery veins on dark green evergreen leaves. The flowers are white, waxy, and thick-textured. It is often found in fairly dry woods under oaks or pines.

The native **chickweed**, *Stellaria pubera*, has somewhat showy, starlike flowers. There is also a non-native **chickweed**, *Stellaria media* (not illustrated), with tiny flowers. Both of these can be found on stream terraces and in other moist sites. The non-native species is also common in lawns. The chickweeds appear to have ten petals, but looking carefully, you will see that there are only five, deeply-notched petals.

One of the most beautiful spring wildflowers is the small **rue anemone**, *Thalictrum thalictroides* (formerly *Anemonella thalictroides*), which is most common in oak woods. Often the flower is more visible than the small divided leaves on the slender stalk. The flower is white and many-petaled.

Probably the most common of spring wildflowers is the **spring beauty**, *Claytonia virginica*. This small plant usually has only two linear leaves, almost like grass, but several five-petaled flowers that range from white to pink, with striking lavender lines on the petals. The petals may be pointed or rounded. It often grows in lawns in town as well as out in the woods.

The single leaf of **bloodroot**, *Sanguinaria canadensis*, is roundish but with finger-like lobes on the front end. It grows larger through the season. The rhizome (underground stem) has a bright red sap. The flower is white and blooms in early spring before the leaf is expanded.

Mayapple, *Podophyllum peltatum* (not illustrated), is a distinctive plant that carpets the woods in spring. Each plant has one or two coarsely-toothed umbrella-shaped leaves forming a canopy about a foot above the ground. Plants with two leaves have a single white flower at the fork, nodding and broadly curved. This is a spring ephemeral, dying down by summer.

Related to **Mayapple** is the **twinleaf**, *Jeffersonia diphylla*, named in honor of Thomas Jefferson. It has distinctive two-part leaves shaped like butterflies, which appear after the flower. It prefers soils over limestone.

Blue phlox, *Phlox divaricata*, may appear almost anywhere. It has a cluster of blue flowers resembling garden phlox. The flower is disproportionately large compared to the rest of the plant.

Wild geranium or **cranesbill**, *Geranium maculatum*, is common and grows in a variety of moisture and shade conditions. It has deeply five-lobed leaves and lavender, saucer-shaped flowers. A related summer species in sunny, weedy areas is *Geranium carolinianum* with smaller, odd flowers with a central spike.

An uncommon and attractive wildflower is the **larkspur** (*Delphinium tricorne*). Its leaves resemble those of wild geranium but its flowers, on a vertical spike, are bilaterally symmetrical and deep purple. Like twinleaf, it is more frequently found around limestone.

One exotic plant seems to fit neatly into our ecology: **coltfoot**, *Tussilago farfara*. This plant in the aster family has blossoms that greatly resemble dandelions, but they are on stems that have only small, scale-like clasping leaves, usually growing out of waste (rubble, shale breakdown and the like). This plant will grow in barren sites where native plants can't seem to grow, and so far, it seems to be sticking to these areas. After the flowers/seed heads die down, large, roundish leaves with coarsely toothed edges and white-wooly undersides come out to form a groundcover.

Bluets, *Houstonia caerulea* (not illustrated), appear with their small, four-petaled, bright blue flowers in April-May. At first glance, they appear to have no leaves, but closer examination reveals the small leaves close to the ground.



37. *Chimaphila maculata*



38. *Stellaria pubera*



39. *Thalictrum thalictroides*



40. *Claytonia virginiana*

41. *Jeffersonia diphylla*



42. *Sanguinaria canadensis*



43. *Phlox divaricata*



44. *Geranium maculatum*



45. *Delphinium* flowers



46. *Tussilago farfara*

Woody Plants

When you see red over the tops of trees in early spring, you are seeing **red maple**, *Acer rubrum* (not illustrated), bloom. Individual flowers aren't showy, but they are many.

The first shrub to bloom (in March) is the **spicebush**, *Lindera benzoin* (not illustrated). The flowers are very small and yellow. It is closely followed by the flowers of **serviceberry**, *Amelanchier arborea* (not illustrated), which resemble white apple or cherry blossoms.

Similar blossoms are found on the native **crabapple**, *Malus coronaria* (pink flowers), and various **hawthorns**, genus *Crataegus* (white flowers), both often found on dry ridgetops, although hawthorns may be found in any disturbed area. Most **hawthorns** have thorns, and crabapples often do as well. **Blackberries**, **raspberries** and **roses** also have similar white flowers. **Black raspberry**, *R. occidentalis*, has leaves that are whitened below and a frosted purple stem, while the **blackberries**, *Rubus pensilvanicus* and *R. allegheniensis*, have fluted or angled stems. These have white flowers.

We have four dogwoods, three blooming in spring. There is the familiar **flowering dogwood**, *Cornus florida*, with its four large white petal-like bracts, and the **gray dogwood**, *C. racemosa*, the **silky dogwood**, *C. amomum* (summer blooming), and the **pagodatree**, *C. alternifolia*. The blooms of the last three are different from the first, with many small white flowers in a more or less flat-topped cluster. The gray is only known from the ridge east of the lake, while the last two are frequent around the lake. The alternate leaves of the **pagoda dogwood** distinguish it.

Two trees in the pea family, Fabaceae, have showy blossoms. The **redbud**, *Cercis canadensis*, has many small purple-pink flowers clustering along stems before the leaves expand, blooming close to or at the same time as flowering dogwood. The **black locust**, *Robinia pseudo-acacia*, has sweetly fragrant white flowers in dense clusters, and nasty paired thorns on the branches, blooming in May.

The **yellow buckeye**, *Aesculus flava*, has spires of pale yellow flowers and opposite palmately-compound leaves. The **pawpaw**, *Asimina triloba*, a small tree, has unique hanging flowers with dark waxy maroon petals in threes and an unpleasant smell.

The **wild hydrangea**, *Hydrangea arborescens*, has clusters of small white flowers similar to the three dogwoods, above, but often with a few showy, larger four-petaled sterile flowers, usually around the edges of the clusters. This shrub likes to grow on rocks and steep slopes.

Then there are three native viburnums (not illustrated) blooming April-May: the **blackhaw**, *Viburnum prunifolium*, **maple-leaved viburnum**, *V. acerifolium*, and the rarer **arrowwood**, *V. dentatum*. Their flowers are also similar to the dogwoods and hydrangea. The **blackhaw** has small opposite leaves, and the **arrowwood** has larger, shiny leaves with scalloped edges.

A plant in the same genus as blueberry known as **deerberry**, *Vaccinium stamineum*, grows somewhat taller than lowbush blueberry, has small white bell-like flowers, while the related **mountain-laurel**, *Kalmia latifolia*, has white to deep pink flowers with uniquely united petals. The **deerberry** has very small simple leaves, while the **mountain-laurel** has thick, leathery, shiny leaves. These bloom usually in early May.



47. *Malus coronaria*



48. *Rubus pensilvanicus*



49. *Cornus florida*



50. Typical *Cornus* flowers



51. *Cercis canadensis*



52. *Aesculus flava*



53. *Asimina triloba*



54. *Hydrangea arborescens*



55. *Vaccinium stamineum*



57. *Kalmia latifolia*

Strouds Run State Park and Surrounding Area

Athens County, Ohio

- A. Tucker Run Preserve (AC)
- B. Riddle State Nature Preserve (CA)
- C. Sells Park (CA)
- D. Strouds Ridge Preserve (CA)
- E. Blair Preserve (AC)
- F. Strouds Ridge Preserve (CA)
- G. Baker Easement (AC)
- H. Wayne National Forest

AC = Athens Conservancy; CA = City of Athens

