



CORNELL  
BOTANIC  
GARDENS

Wildflower Explorations Tour



You have arrived at The Mundy Wildflower Garden at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY.



Plants grow quickly in the spring! Walk down the path in late April and May. What do you see?

The path into the wildflower garden follows alongside Fall Creek. You may know Fall Creek better as the creek that creates the giant waterfall we know as Ithaca Falls!





The creek overflows into the garden every 10 years or so. The garden is a flood plain for the creek.



The flood waters carry mud, leaves, and branches dropping them in the wildflower garden. Is this good for the garden?



Yes, the flooding is good as it increases the soil fertility and makes the garden a rich habitat for wildflowers. The water drains away quickly so the plants are fine.







This woodland garden features plants that were growing in this area before the Europeans arrived. Plants from other countries are removed from the garden.



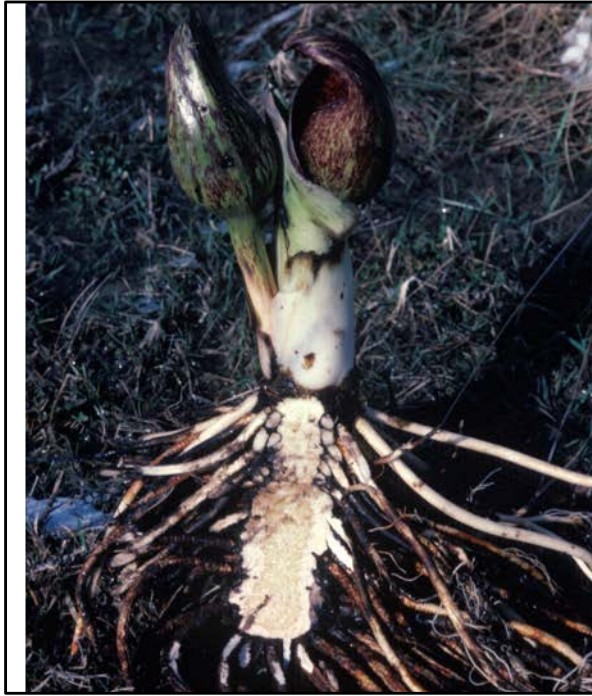




Stop at the "Garden Highlights" kiosk and look at the bloom board to learn the names of plants in bloom.

Who studied this flower? It is the first plant to flower in the garden.  
It is Skunk Cabbage.





The picture on the left shows the underground parts of the Skunk Cabbage. This plant can use the food it stores underground to make heat that melts the snow around it.

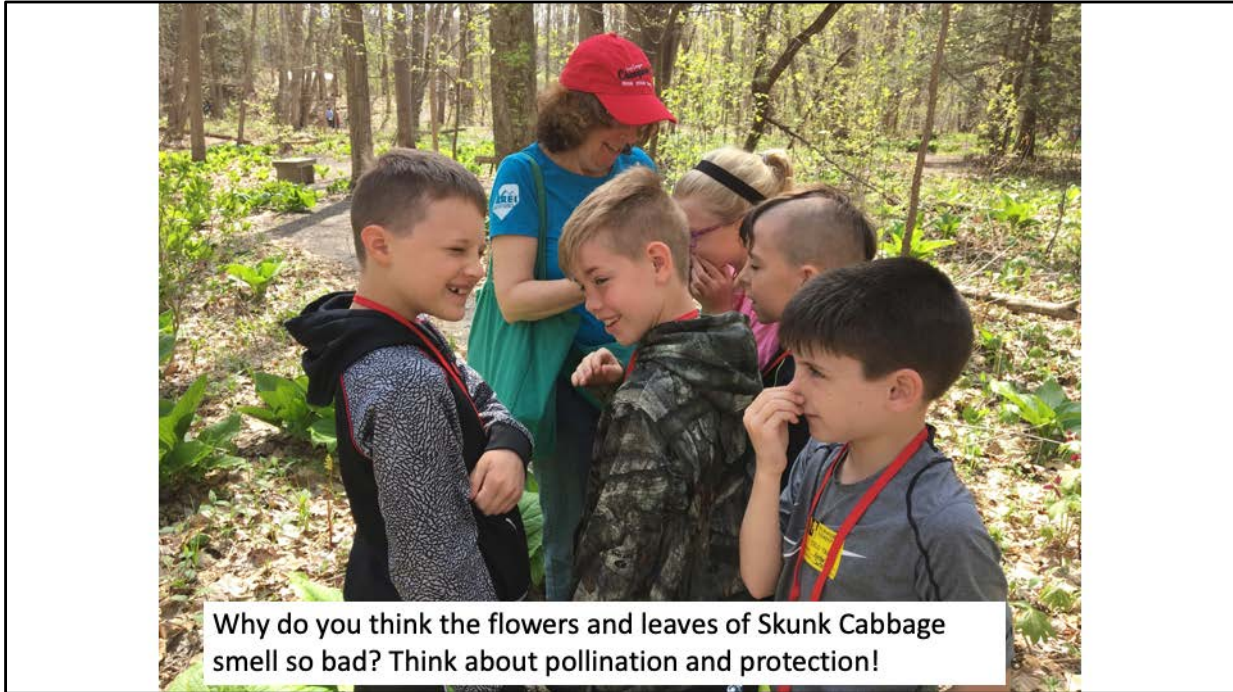




Look inside the interesting flowers of Skunk Cabbage. Check out the enlarged version on the right. What part of the flower is the insect walking around?



The insect is a gnat and it is walking around the stamens—the male parts that produce pollen.



Why do you think the flowers and leaves of Skunk Cabbage smell so bad? Think about pollination and protection!

The leaves smell bad for protection to deter animals and insects that might eat the leaves. The unpleasant smell in the flower is attracting pollinators like flies and beetles that think something is rotting.



The next native plant to flower is Hepatica. Who studied Sharp-Lobed Hepatica and wants to share about this flower?



What colors  
are Hepatica  
flowers?



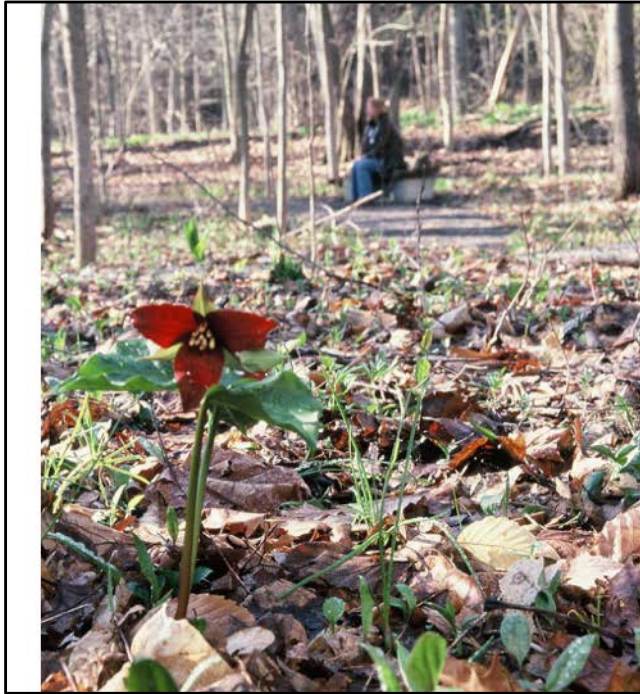
Hepatica flowers can be shades of white, pink, blue and purple.

The leaves of Hepatica are present all winter.

What would be the advantage of having evergreen leaves?



Evergreen leaves enables the plant to make food (photosynthesize) during any warm days in winter and spring.



Who would like to report on Red Trillium, our first trillium to bloom?





Look at this Red Trillium plant and what plant parts do you see that are in threes?



Trilliums have 3 whorled leaves, 3 green sepals, 3 petals and the top of the pistil is 3-lobed. It has 6 stamens (3 x 2).

Why do Red  
Trillium smell so  
bad?

Think about what  
insects it might  
attract.



The unpleasant smell attracts flies and beetles to pollinate the flower.



Who is knowledgeable about Bloodroot? What do you want to share?





Bloodroot has a single lobed-leaf that wraps around the flower. The leaf protects the flower when it first begins to grow.



Can you see the yellow male parts of the flower?

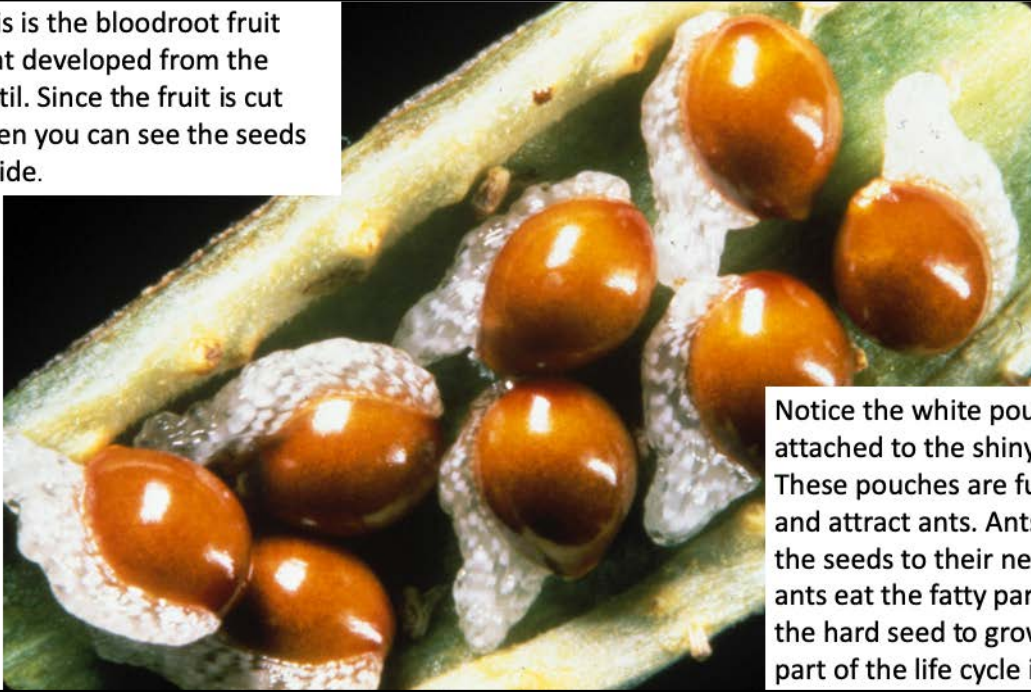
Can you see the green part in the center.

What part of the flower is the green center?



The green center is the female part of the flower called the pistil which develops into a fruit.

This is the bloodroot fruit that developed from the pistil. Since the fruit is cut open you can see the seeds inside.



Notice the white pouches attached to the shiny seed. These pouches are full of fat and attract ants. Ants carry the seeds to their nests. The ants eat the fatty part leaving the hard seed to grow. What part of the life cycle is this?

This stage of the life cycle would be called seed dispersal.



Who studied this petite plant called Dutchman's Breeches?





Check out the pollinators on the unique flowers of Dutchman's Breeches.

Who studied this small delicate plant that only grows a few inches tall?

It is Spring Beauty.



Look closely at Spring Beauty flowers. Can you see the stamens—the male part that contains the pollen?  
What color is the pollen?



The pollen in this plant is pink!

This plant is  
Trout Lily.  
Who studied  
Trout Lily and  
would like to  
share?





This plant has to have two leaves  
before it flowers.  
Why do you think it is called Trout Lily?



This plant is in the Lily Family and the specking on the leaves reminded people of the coloring on a fish called trout.

Check out this  
pollinator on  
Trout Lily.

What flower  
parts do you  
see?



This beetle is hanging on to the green pistil and orange stamens. The petals and sepals are yellow and hard to tell apart.

Who studied our  
native Wild  
Ginger plant and  
can share what  
they learned  
with us?



You have to really look close to the ground to find the flowers of Wild Ginger. Why would a plant have their flowers at ground level?



Wild Ginger flowers are on the ground to attract pollinators that live in the leaf litter like ground beetles, ants, and other insects.



The underground rhizomes of Wild Ginger smell like the ginger that we buy at the store.



Although this Wild Ginger has similar taste and smells of the commercial Ginger they are not related to each other.



Many of our woodland flowers, including Wild Ginger have seeds that are dispersed by ants. Can you see the fatty pouches that ants love to eat? Ants drag the whole seed back to their nests, eat the fatty part leaving the seed to grow in their fertile garbage pits.

Who recognizes this plant as the one they studied? It is Marsh Marigold growing in this wet area.



Look at the center of the Marsh Marigold flower. What do you see?



Marsh Marigold has many yellow stamens that surround many green pistils. Each flower will have many fruits (one from each pistil) developing in the center.



Who studied this  
showy flower  
named Virginia  
Bluebells?





Look closely at the spot where the bluebell flower is attached to plant.



Some bees tongues are too short to reach the nectar at the base of the bluebell flower. So they chew a hole in the base of the flower so their short tongues can now reach the nectar. We call these thieves “Robber Bees” since they don’t help move the pollen but still get the nectar rewards.

Anyone  
recognize this  
white flower?

Who can share  
facts about  
White Trillium?







Trilliums have 3 whorled leaves, 3 green sepals, 3 petals and the top of the pistil is 3-lobed. It has 6 stamens (3 X 2).

Some people mistakenly think we have a Pink Trillium but we don't. The petals of White Trillium turn pink as the flower gets older.



This plant is  
Golden Alexanders.  
Who studied this  
plant?



Look closely at the Golden Alexanders' blossoms. What you are looking at is hundreds of little flowers each with 5 curled petals.



\*



This pink flower in the front of the picture is Wild Geranium. Who can tell us about this flower?





Count the petals on Wild Geranium. Often the number of sepals and petals are the same. Can you guess how many sepals it has?

This plant has 5 green sepals.

This is a picture of the fruit of Wild Geranium. The seeds are at the bottom of the fruit. It has a cool slingshot method of dispersing its seeds.





Who learned about the strange Jack-in-the-Pulpit flower?

\*





The female flowers are on the right. The spiky green pistils develop into red fruits. The male flowers on left wither away after producing the pollen.

Anyone recognize this  
flower as the one  
they studied?

It is Mayapple.





You often find large patches of Mayapples as they spread rapidly by their underground rhizomes in addition to spreading by seed.







Mayapples flower in May and have a fruit that reminded people of apples.





This tall arching plant is Solomon's Seal. Who is ready to share about this plant?





What would an advantage of having your flowers face downward?

This position prevents rain from diluting the nectar. It also makes it difficult for many crawling insects to get to the nectar. Yet bees, that pollinate the flower, have no difficulty landing on the hanging blossoms and gathering nectar and pollen.



Thank you for visiting virtually and we hope you can visit the real Mundy Wildflower Garden sometime soon.





Or visit a natural area near where you live to look for our native wildflowers and share what you learned with others!





THANK YOU