

Washington Valley Park Native Plants

WASHINGTON VALLEY PARK NATIVE PLANTS

Newmans Lane
Bridgewater, NJ

This brochure has been created by the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Somerset County for your education and enjoyment! It includes plants in the order in which they were identified while walking on the **RED** trail.

Native plants are, in a word, local. They are plants that have been growing in a particular habitat and region, typically for thousands of years or longer so they are well adapted to the climate, light, and soil conditions that characterize their ecosystem. In New Jersey, we consider all the plants that grew here prior to European colonization to be native. They evolved slowly over time with relatively little interference from humans and were an important part of Native American life. These plants were present prior to the introduction of non-native plants from other continents.

While hiking in the park, take the time to appreciate the many native ferns and wildflowers along the way!

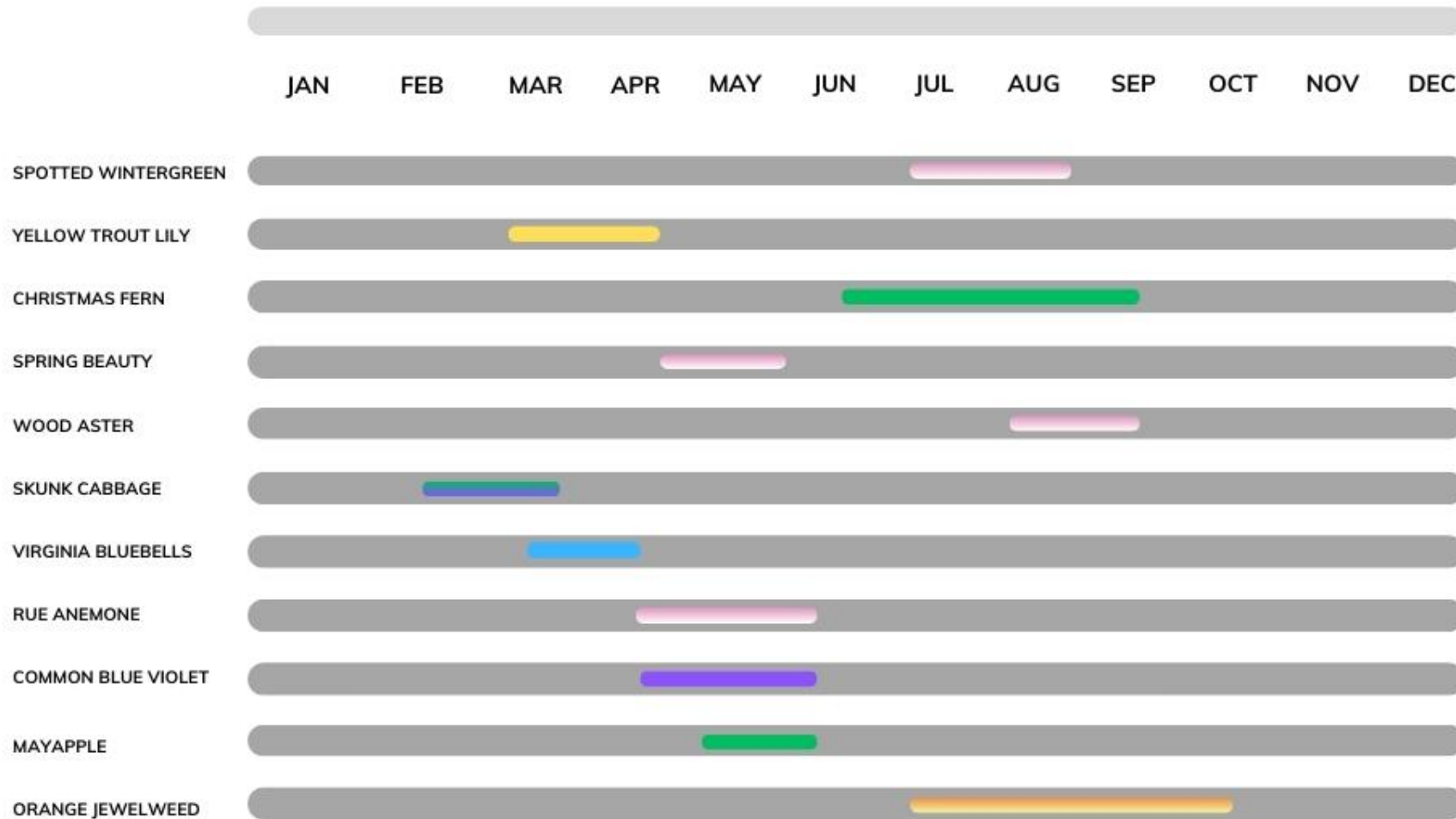


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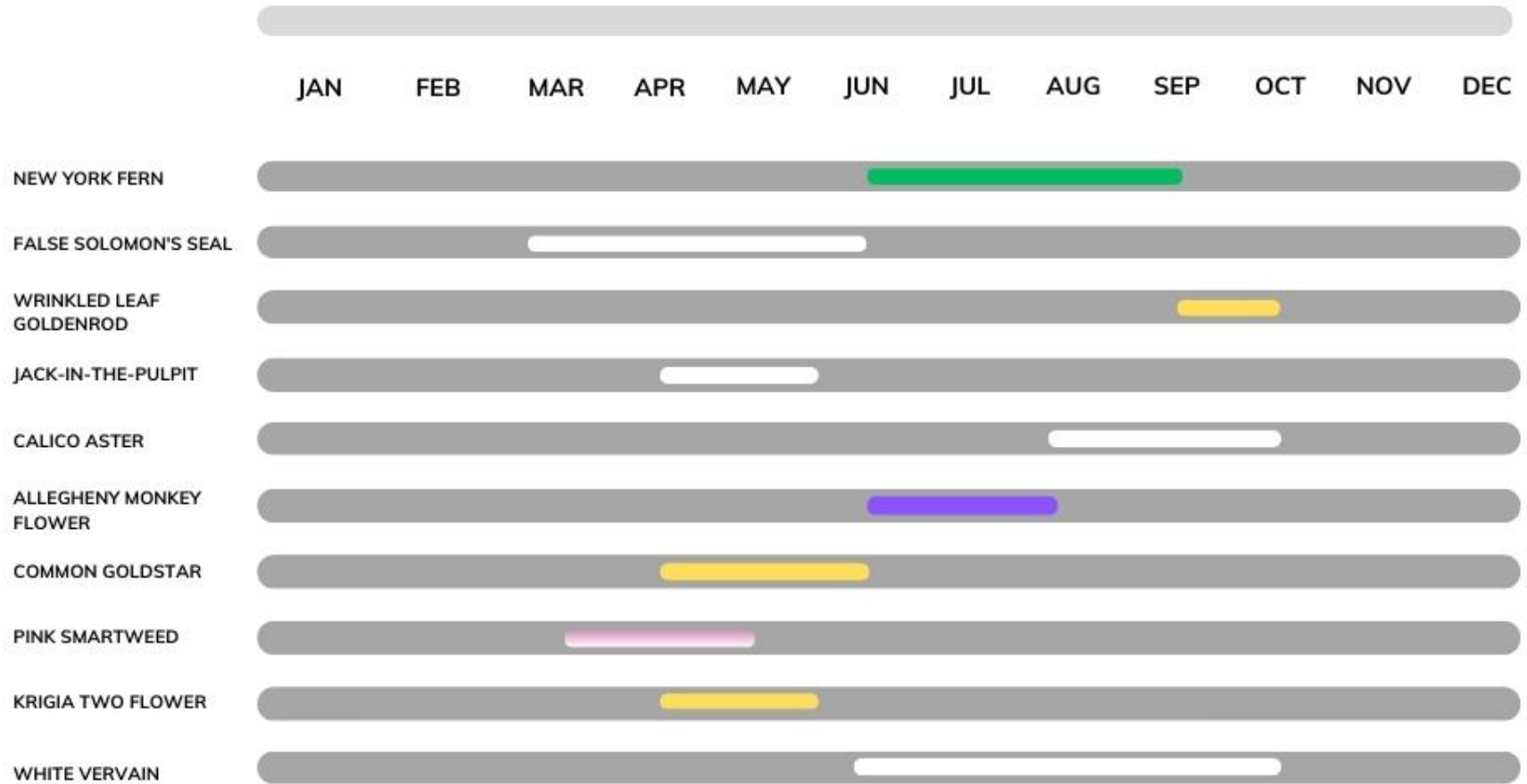
BLOOM TIME AND COLOR



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Spotted Wintergreen
Chimaphila maculata



Fun Facts: Shade loving conspicuous plant in both winter and summer because of its white and green mottled leaves. Indigenous peoples used the leaf for tea to treat rheumatism and stomach problems, and crushed leaves as a poultice for sores and wounds. Hence, an alternate name: Shin Leaf.

Yellow Trout Lily
Erythronium americanum



Fun Facts: The common name "trout lily" refers to the appearance of its leaves which are said to resemble the coloring of the brook trout. Indigenous peoples used crushed leaves as a poultice for swelling and wounds, and the leaves for tea to treat fevers and stomach ulcers. Ingesting large amounts of raw leaves can induce vomiting.

Christmas Fern
Polystichum acrostichoides



Fun Facts: One of the most ubiquitous ferns in eastern North America, the common name derives from the fronds which are often green at Christmas. They provide winter cover for songbirds who also use parts in nest construction. These evergreens help combat soil erosion when growing in masses on slopes.

Spring Beauty
Claytonia virginiana



Fun Facts: Spring Beauty's pink (or sometimes white with pink veins) flowers are "photonastic," as they open during the day and close at night (and on cloudy days). Its accompanying foliage is grass-like, and will die back and essentially disappear once the flower is done blooming and goes into dormancy.

Wood Aster
Eurybia divaricata



Fun Facts: The Wood Aster attracts butterflies and other pollinating insects. It's said that the center of the flowers change from yellow to red as their pollen is depleted. Keep a watchful eye on the bees and see for yourself that they use this visual cue to target the yellow-centered flowers.

Skunk Cabbage
Symplocarpus foetidus



Fun Facts: Because of its unique thermogenic property, Skunk Cabbage is one of the first flowers to emerge in the spring. As it is usually found in swamps and muddy locations, the ability to break through ice and snow is a necessity, and it does this by producing temperatures of up to 70 degrees! Skunk cabbage's prodigious foul scent helps to attract early-season pollinators.

Virginia Bluebell
Mertensia virginica



Fun Facts: Flowers are pollinated by bumblebees and other long-tongued bees but are visited as well as by several types of butterflies, skippers and hummingbird moths, flower flies (syrphids), bee flies and hummingbirds. Native Americans used the Virginia Bluebells to treat tuberculosis and whooping cough. The roots were used as an antidote for poisons.

Photo from commons.wikimedia.org

Rue Anemone
Thalictrum thalictroides



Fun Facts: A delicate woodland perennial rising to 9 inches characterized by a lacy whorl of 3-parted, dark-green leaves on the top of its stalk with reddish-brown stems bearing pink or white blossoms. Poisonous when fresh and eaten in large quantities. Symptoms include inflammation and blistering upon contact with fresh sap and irritation of the mouth, vomiting and diarrhea following ingestion

Common Blue Violet
Viola sororia



Fun Facts: State Flower of New Jersey. Important food source for emerging bees. The lower petals have a small white hair-like "beard" that guide bees towards the nectar. Host plant for many Fritillary butterfly caterpillars. Violet leaves are high in vitamins A and C and can be used in salads or cooked as greens.

Mayapple
Podophyllum peltatum



Fun Facts: Mayapple is unique in that it has only 2 large, umbrella-like leaves and 1 flower. Its flower looks like an apple blossom and, in the North where it blooms in May, Native Americans used it to make a remedy to treat warts. Box turtles are believed to be the main distributor of Mayapple seeds.

Orange Jewelweed
Impatiens capensis



Fun Facts: Tall, leafy plant with succulent translucent stems and golden-orange flowers hanging down from the stem splotched with reddish-brown. The stem juice is said to relieve the itching from Poison Ivy. It is often found growing near Poison Ivy.

Photo from commons.wikimedia.org

Little Leaf Buttercup
Ranunculus abortivus



Fun Facts: The plant gets its common name, "littleleaf buttercup," from its small, lobed leaves. A member of the buttercup family which boasts over 2,000 species of flowering plants. In traditional medicine. It has been used to treat a variety of ailments, including fever, rheumatism, and skin conditions. Native Americans used the plant to treat snakebite poison.

Common Yarrow
Achillea millefolium



Fun Facts: Used for medicinal purposes by Native Americans to break a fever, soothe a rash, or treat hemorrhaging or stomach aches. The genus was named for the Greek Trojan War hero, Achilles, who was said to use this plant to treat his wounded soldiers. Ironically, it is also known to be poisonous to humans and may cause contact dermatitis.

Woman's Tobacco Aster or Field Pussytoes
Antennaria plantaginifolia



Fun Facts: The flowers are called pussy toes because of the resemblance the tight flower clusters to the toes of a cat's paw. Pussy toes do produce a small fruit from April to June. The fruit resembles small brown nutlets with white resinous dots, to which small tufts of white hair are attached.

Early Saxifrage
Saxifraga virginiensis



Fun Facts: Early Saxifrage is a native wildflower that is found in dry woods and rocky fields. It can be found growing as a solitary plant, or in clumps on rocky hillsides, cliffs, stream banks, and wooded slopes. Its leaves grow only at the base of the plant (basal leaves). Unlike some plants, each petal of the showy flower is separate, not fused together.

Sessileleaf Bellwort
Uvularia sessilifo



Fun Facts: The 10-15 in. stalks of this perennial are usually two-branched and bear oval, lily-like leaves. Delicate, cream-colored flowers may be single or paired and hang bell-like on short stems. At one time these plants were thought to be good for treating throat diseases because the drooping flowers resembled the uvula.

Wood Anemone
Anemone quinquefolia



Fun Facts: A spring ephemeral which often forms sizable stands on woodland borders and disappears after blooming. It is a low, delicate plant with a whorl of 3 stalked, deeply cut leaves and a solitary, stalked white flower. The graceful movement of the flower stalks in the wind led to its other common name, Wind Flower.

Dutchman's Breeches
Dicentra cucullaria



Fun Facts: This early spring bloomer (March/April) goes dormant by early summer. Because of its early bloom time, it is an important nectar source for bees and other pollinators as they are waking up from their winter slumber, and deer tend to avoid it because it can be toxic if eaten.

Eastern Hay Scented Fern
Dennstaedtia punctilobula



Fun Facts: By late summer the stalks smell like freshly mown hay, especially if they are cut or crushed. These ferns tend to grow in dense clusters which can provide cover for both insects and small animals. The fronds are so fine that they are often used in cut flower arrangements. They turn a beautiful golden in the autumn.

Canada Mayflower
Maianthemum canadense



Fun Facts: Clusters of small white frothy flowers bloom in late spring, May in particular. Later in the summer the white flowers give rise to small red berries that provide food for some birds (grouse, jays) and small mammals (chipmunks, mice). It thrives on the partially shaded forest floor under both dry and wet conditions and tolerates a variety of soil types. It is also known as False Lily-of-the-Valley.

Sensitive Fern
Onoclea sensibilis



Fun Facts: The name “sensitive fern” comes from the fact that its fronds are very sensitive to frost and it will quickly turn brown and die when exposed to cold temperatures, returning the following spring. The roots of sensitive ferns have been found to host a species of nitrogen-fixing bacteria that helps the plant to grow in nutrient-poor soils.

Virginia Creeper
Parthenocissus quinquefolia



Fun Facts: It is fast growing and can reach heights of 50 feet. Its leaves are arranged in groups of five leaflets, which is why it is also known as “five-leaved ivy”. Virginia creeper is often confused with poison ivy because of the similar leaf shape, but Virginia Creeper’s are arranged in groups of five leaflets (hence called “five-leaved ivy”), while poison ivy is arranged in groups of three leaflets.

New York Fern
Thelypteris noveboracensis



Fun Facts: New York fern is a soft, deciduous, yellow-green fern which stands 1-2 ft. high. The frond has a maximum width of 4 in., tapering gradually to both top and bottom. Provides shelter for toads. It makes a good companion for spring ephemerals, covering the gaps they leave in the woodland garden.

False Solomon's Seal
Maianthemum racemosum



Fun Facts: The leaves of False Solomon's Seal and Solomon Seal are very similar. False Solomon's Seal has white flowers at the end of its stem, while Solomon's seal has flowers all along the stem. You can also look at the color of their berries. False Solomon's seal has red berries, while Solomon's seals' berries are dark blue-purple in color.

Wrinkle Leaf Goldenrod
Solidago rugosa



Fun Facts: Wrinkle Leaf Goldenrod can be identified by the wrinkled appearance of its narrow-toothed leaves. The veins of the leaf make it appear wrinkled. Tall rough hairy stems are also an identifying characteristic of this yellow flowered fall blooming plant. This plant grows 2.5-3 feet tall. Photo from commons.wikimedia.org

Jack-in-the-Pulpit
Arisaema triphyllum



Fun Facts: Jack in the Pulpit is hermaphroditic, producing only male flowers when young and forming both male and female flowers as they age. The combination of green, white and purple striped flowers bloom in April and May, and mature female flowers will produce a conspicuous cluster of bright red berries by late-summer. It grows 1-2 feet tall.

Calico Aster
Symphotrichum lateriflorum



Fun Facts: The common name refers to the fact that the flower heads are at first yellow and later turn purplish-red, so that flowers on one plant and even a single head may include both colors at the same time. Nectar source for native bees and beneficial insects and host plant for caterpillars of the Pearl Crescent butterfly.

Photo from commons.wikimedia.org

Allegheny Monkey Flower
Mimulus ringens



Fun Facts: Small lavender flower resembling the face of a monkey, hence its name. Blooms throughout summer. Consistent nectar source for bees and host plant for caterpillars of the Common Buckeye butterfly. Good for ponds, stream edges, rain gardens.

Common Goldstar
Hypoxis hirsuta



Fun Facts: Various species of bees, flies, and beetles feed on its pollen and small rodents feed on the underground corms. Native Americans used the plant to make a tea that was used to treat heart conditions and the corm was used to treat ulcers. According to *The Cherokee Herbal: Native Plant Medicine from the Four Directions*, it can be used to treat depression and to enhance mood.

Photo from commons.wikimedia.org

Pink Smartweed
Polygonum pensylvanicum



Fun Facts: The leaves and stems of this plant can be eaten raw or cooked. It can also be made into a tea and used to stop bleeding from hemorrhoids, menstrual bleeding, other uterine bleeding and to treat diarrhea.

Photo from commons.wikimedia.org

Krigia Two Flower
Krigia biflora



Fun Facts: Although similar to the common dandelion this plant differs by its relatively tall stature, long naked flower stalks, the bract-like claspings leaves at the base of the flowering stalks and having two flower heads per stalk.

Photo from commons.wikimedia.org

White Vervain
Verbena urticifolia



Fun Facts: White vervain is sometimes called "white ironweed" because of its tall, iron-like stems. The flowers of white vervain are pollinated by a variety of insects, including bees, butterflies, and moths. Native Americans believed that the plant had spiritual and magical properties.

Photo from commons.wikimedia.org

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Rutgers Master Gardeners Program:

Rutgers Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who assist Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) Cooperative Extension in its mission to deliver horticulture programs and information to the general public. Anyone with an interest in gardening and a commitment to volunteer service can become a Rutgers Master Gardener. No previous education or training in horticulture is required.

For more information about the program in Somerset County, contact:

Rutgers Master Gardeners

Phone: 908-526-6293

Website: somerset.njaes.rutgers.edu/garden

For more information about native plants, please visit:

- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center: www.wildflower.org
- Jersey-Friendly Yards: www.jerseyyards.org
- Missouri Botanical Gardens: www.missouribotanicalgarden.org
- Native Plant Society of New Jersey: www.npsnj.org