

ILLINOIS NATIVE SPRING EPHEMERALS

Spring ephemerals are perennial plants that actively grow through spring, flower briefly, and go dormant by mid-summer when their leaves die back and the plant virtually disappears. Common non-native ephemerals include tulips and daffodils. This brochure is a guide to Illinois native spring ephemerals, the conditions in which they grow best, and how home gardeners can use them in their own landscapes.

By using native plants in your landscape, you help support healthy ecosystems on land and water. Many are food sources for pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Native plants promote clean water and conservation by reducing the need for garden inputs. They rarely require fertilizer and pesticides when planted in conditions similar to their natural ecosystems. Further, native plants have extensive root systems that, once established, help them thrive without watering. For more information, visit the University of Illinois Extension Horticulture website: extension.illinois.edu/global/horticulture.

COMPANION PLANTINGS

Due to the fleeting period of interest spring ephemerals provide, they need to be intermixed with other plant species in the garden to provide summer, fall and winter interest. Below are selections of Illinois native plants to use for specific site conditions. Non-aggressive, non-native species such as hostas can be used, as well. For more information and sample garden designs, view the brochure series at iseagrant.org/resources/publications-products/.

Wet Woodland

Part to full shade, poorly drained soil

Ephemerals: Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Harbinger-of-Spring, White Trout Lily, Virginia Bluebells, Celandine Poppy, Large-Flowered Trillium, Large-Flowered Bellwort

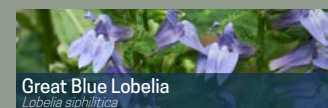
Companion Species:



Wild Ginger
Asarum canadense



Wild Geranium
Geranium maculatum



Great Blue Lobelia
Lobelia siphilitica



Rosy Sedge
Carex rosea



Cinnamon Fern
Osmunda cinnamomea

Mesic Woodland

Part to full shade, moderately drained soil

Ephemerals: Rue Anemone, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Spring Beauty, Cutleaf Toothwort, Dutchman's Breeches, Harbinger-of-Spring, White Trout Lily, Yellow Trout Lily, Virginia Bluebells, Mayapple, Bloodroot, Celandine Poppy, Prairie Trillium

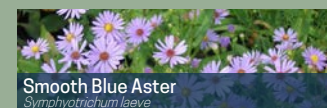
Companion Species:



Jacob's Ladder
Polemonium reptans



Goatsbeard
Arisaema dioicis



Smooth Blue Aster
Symphyotrichum laeve



Pennsylvania Sedge
Carex pensylvanica



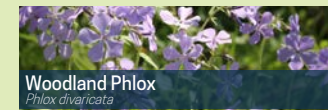
Christmas Fern
Polystichum acrostichoides

Dry Woodland

Part to full shade, well drained soil

Ephemerals: Rue Anemone, Virginia Spring Beauty, Snow Trillium, Prairie Trillium

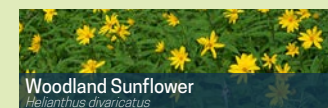
Companion Species:



Woodland Phlox
Phlox divaricata



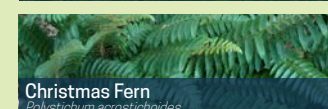
False Solomon's Seal
Maianthemum racemosum



Woodland Sunflower
Helianthus divaricatus



Pennsylvania Sedge
Carex pensylvanica



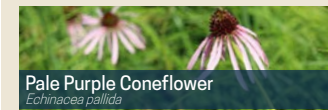
Christmas Fern
Polystichum acrostichoides

Mesic Prairie

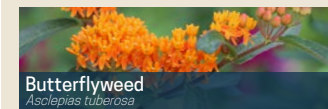
Part to full sun, moderately drained soil

Ephemerals: Wild Hyacinth, Shooting Star

Companion Species:



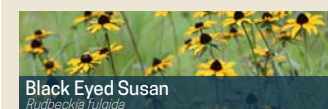
Pale Purple Coneflower
Echinacea pallida



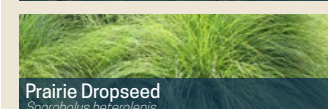
Butterflyweed
Asclepias tuberosa



Nodding Onion
Allium cernuum



Black Eyed Susan
Rudbeckia fulgida



Prairie Dropseed
Sporobolus heterolepis

WHERE TO FIND PLANTS AND MORE INFORMATION

Several of the species highlighted in this brochure can be seen at the Red Oak Rain Garden: RedOakRainGarden.org. The Illinois Native Plant Society webpage lists sources of native plants. Spring ephemerals are also found at online nurseries that will ship live or bare root plants to your home. For more information about plants, see the University of Illinois Extension Horticulture website.

PUT YOUR NATIVE PLANT GARDEN ON THE MAP

You can be part of a network of native plantings by registering your Illinois native plant garden or rain garden. This helps build community and encourage native plant use.

Add your native plant garden to the map: go.illinois.edu/GardenMap

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Produced by C. Eliana Brown, University of Illinois Extension.

Researched and designed by Layne Knoche with contributions from Kate Gardiner, University of Illinois Extension.

Edited by Irene Miles and Kara Salazar, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, Erin Garrett and Chris Enroth, University of Illinois Extension

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NATIVE SPRING EPHEMERALS

A GUIDE TO ILLINOIS NATIVE EPHEMERALS FOR THE HOME GARDEN

INSPIRED BY THE RED OAK RAIN GARDEN

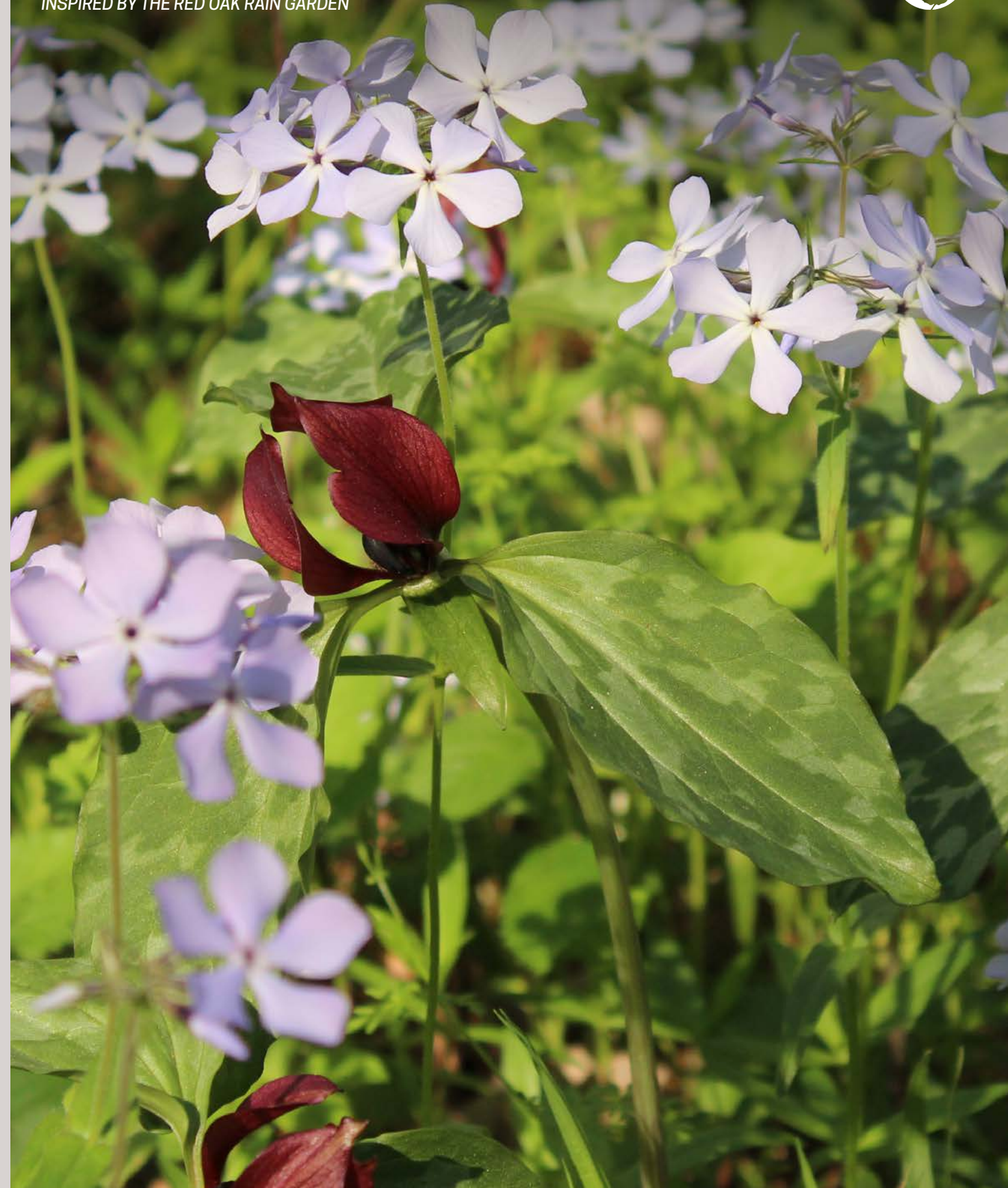


Photo by Layne Knoche

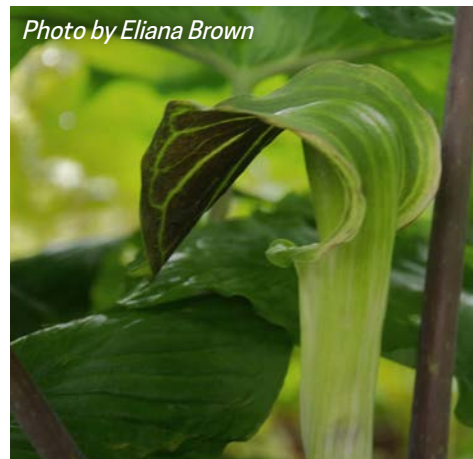


Rue Anemone
Anemone thalictroides

☀️ ● 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 4-8" tall

🐝

Photo by Eliana Brown




Jack-in-the-Pulpit
Arisaema triphyllum

☀️ ● 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 12-24" tall

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Photo by Layne Knoche




Wild Hyacinth
Camassia scilloides

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Photo by Layne Knoche



Virginia Spring Beauty
Claytonia virginica

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Photo by Layne Knoche



Cutleaf Toothwort
Dentaria laciniata

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Photo by Layne Knoche



Dutchman's Breeches
Dicentra cucullaria

☀️ ● 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 4-8" tall

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Photo by Layne Knoche



Shooting Star
Dodecatheon meadia

☀️ ☀️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 12-18" tall

🐝

Photo by Ryan Pankau



Harbinger-of-Spring
Erygia bulbosa

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🐝

Photo by Layne Knoche



White Trout Lily
Erythronium albidum

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🐝 🦋

Photo by Susan Gabay-Laughnan



Yellow Trout Lily
Erythronium americanum

☀️ ● 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 3-6" tall

🐝

Photo by Layne Knoche



Virginia Bluebells
Mertensia virginica

☀️ ● 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 12-30" tall

🐝 🦋 🐦

Photo by Eliana Brown



Mayapple
Podophyllum peltatum

☀️ ● 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 12-18" tall

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Photo by Susan Gabay-Laughnan




Bloodroot
Sanguinaria canadensis

☀️ ● 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 3-12" tall

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Photo by Susan Gabay-Laughnan




Celandine Poppy
Stylophorum diphyllum

☀️ ● 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 12-18" tall

🐝

Photo by Della Perrone




Large-Flowered Trillium
Trillium grandiflorum

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🐝

Photo by Della Perrone



Snow Trillium
Trillium nivale

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🐝 🐦

Photo by Layne Knoche




Prairie Trillium
Trillium recurvatum

☀️ ● 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 6-15" tall

🐝

Photo by Eliana Brown



Large-Flowered Bellwort
Uvularia grandiflora

☀️ ● 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 12-24" tall

🐝

Some of these species freely self-seed if seed heads are left standing post bloom. If this is an issue, remove spent flowers and seed heads. Some plants may migrate from one location to another over time. If this is not desired, transplant them back to preferred locations.

LEGEND

- ☀️ SUN
- ☀️ PART SUN
- SHADE
- 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ DRY SOIL
- 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ MESIC SOIL
- 🌧️ 🌧️ 🌧️ WET SOIL
- 🐝 ATTRACTS BEES
- 🦋 ATTRACTS BUTTERFLIES
- 🐦 ATTRACTS HUMMINGBIRDS
- 🐦 ATTRACTS BIRDS

SOURCES

ILLINOIS WILDFLOWERS - illinoiswildflowers.info
GARDENER EXPERIENCE