

## Friends of the Wild Flower Garden



### Native spring wild flowers for a shady area.

A tree shaded area is not an impediment to a native spring wild flower garden. Let's consider an assortment of spring flowering Minnesota natives that will please without much annual exertion.

Proposed is a sequence of blooms from late April until early June, a time when spring rainfall provides adequate moisture. Once the tree canopy leafs out these plants are protected from the hot drying sun. Only two of these will die back after spring growth, leaving the ground bare, the remainder will stay green till fall, providing foliage and even colorful fruit or a late season re-blooming period. Most will provide you as a bonus an increase in population - to either enjoy as is or to transplant to another space.

**None require special soil** - just a top soil that has medium or moderate richness and good drainage. If the subsoil is clay - no matter. The shade must not be dense as in a deep forest but more dappled sunlight, a term I use here to mean an area that has sun in the spring before the tree canopy leafs out, and after leaf out the light as ground level is bright but without constant direct sunlight. The watering recommendations I give apply if you wish to maintain foliage all season when there is an extended hot dry period in summer.

**Now to get started:** Starting native wild flowers from seed requires close attention to germination requirements, some of which are tricky and may take two seasons. Buying bare root young plants from a native nursery is the best way, after that they reward you with more plants from self seeding and clump enlargement.

Here is a quick look at each of the recommended species - not an exclusive list, but reliably rewarding. Use the link to our web pages for more detailed information, plus more photos. The list

follows the sequence of bloom time, from early to latest. Most are shorter plants, allowing something taller as a background.

Cutleaf Toothwort. (*Cardamine concatenata*). Late April - early May; stems usually about 8 inches high, white flowers, dies back by mid summer. Clumps enlarge and self-seeds.

Virginia Bluebells. (*Mertensia virginica*). Early May, usually about 12 inches high, blue flowers, dies back by mid-summer. Clumps enlarge and self-seeds.

Wild Ginger. (*Asarum canadense*). May, purplish flower hidden by the leaves which are a beautiful light green forming a nice ground cover, stems about 8 inches high. Water in hot summer extended dry periods. Clumps enlarge, self-seeds and transplants easily.



Cutleaf Toothwort



Virginia Bluebells



Wild Ginger

Wood Poppy. (*Stylophorum diphyllum*). Late April through May, bushy clump to 18 inches high, large yellow flowers. Water in hot summer extended dry periods. Clumps enlarge, self-seeds and transplants easily. Can re-bloom in fall if frost is not early.

Golden Seal. (*Hydrastis canadensis*). May flowers, yellow-green - only one per stem followed by a red fruit. Stems 6 to 18 inches high. Water in hot summer extended dry periods. Clumps enlarge, self-seeds. This was an important medicinal plant before the introduction of synthetic drugs.

Jacob's Ladder, (*Polemonium reptans*). May flowers, blue-violet. Water in hot summer extended dry periods. Self-seeds and transplants easily.



Wood Poppy



Golden Seal



Jacob's Ladder

Jack-in-the-pulpit. (*Arisaema triphyllum*). May to early summer flowering, then forming a brilliant red berry cluster, stems from 1 to 3 feet high,. Self-seeds.

Wild Geranium. (*Geranium maculatum*). Mid-May into June, stems 12 to 20 inches high, rose-purple flowers, most interesting seed pods. Water in hot summer extended dry periods. Clumps enlarge and transplants easily.

Great Solomon's seal. (*Polygonatum biflorum* var. *commutatum* or *Polygonatum biflorum* var. *biflorum*). Late-May to June flowers, greenish-yellow, forming dark blue berries. Stems to 4 to 6 feet, but arching and 2 to 3 feet high. Clumps enlarge, self-seeds, transplantable.



Jack-in-the-pulpit



Wild Geranium



Solomon's Seal

False Solomon's seal, (*Maianthemum racemosum*). Mid-May to June flowers, white, stems to 30 inches long, but arching. Late summer and fall clusters of red berries. Self-seeds, transplantable.



A group of False Solomon's Seal

For a gardener who wishes a larger selection - here are another ten. Details can be looked up on our website Common Name List.

Baneberry, Virginia Spring Beauty, Dutchman's Breeches, Foamflower, Bellwort, Blue Cohosh, Bugbane (Black Cohosh), Trilliums, Blue Violet, Downy Yellow Violet.

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