

# On the Lookout for Spring Ephemerals (uh·feh·mr·uhlz)

By Kristyna Culp, UCEMGVA Class of 2019

Now is the time to search your woods and natural areas for Spring Ephemerals. Wikipedia defines Spring Ephemerals as perennial plants that emerge quickly in the spring and die back to their underground parts after a short growth and reproduction phase. Most grow in the forest and forest edges and pop through the soil surface before trees begin to leaf out. Mid-March is usually a good time to start looking for them in our area and I have photos from 2020 showing Solomon Seal and Bellwort already in bloom by March 19. But this year (2021) things are moving a little more slowly. I joined a class with the JC Raulston Arboretum on 3/16/21 led by Bryce Lane and he says our native plants are greeting us a little late this year because of our very wet winter. Wet soil warms up more slowly and these little guys are waiting for a little warmth.

I found several growing naturally on my property in western Union County (very close to the SC border). [Bellwort](#) (*Uvularia perfoliata*), [Solomon's Seal](#) (*Polygonatum spp.?*), [Jack-in-the-pulpit](#) (*Arisaema triphyllum*) and [Spring-beauty](#) (*Claytonia virginica*). FYI the Jack-in-the-pulpit flowers will show a bit later in the season and they are fairly large.



[Bellwort](#)  
(*Uvularia perfoliata*)



[Solomon's Seal](#)  
(*Polygonatum spp.*)



[Jack-in-the-pulpit](#)  
(*Arisaema triphyllum*)



[Spring-beauty](#)  
(*Claytonia virginica*)

I've also planted [Mayapple](#) (*Podophyllum peltatum*), [Bloodroot](#) (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) and [Trillium](#) (species unknown) in the woods with decent success. And I'm going to keep trying to grow [Virginia Bluebells](#) (*Mertensia virginica*) until I make that happen for keeps.



[Mayapple](#)  
(*Podophyllum peltatum*)



[Bloodroot](#)  
(*Sanguinaria canadensis*)  
Patty Felder [CC BY 4.0](#)



[Trillium](#)  
(species unknown)

Most everyone has seen [Bluets](#) (*Houstonia caerulea*) in their lawn. Notice how they seem to be there one minute and gone the next? I saw some last week in the Marvin Efrid Park Cottage Garden. Look for the dry creek bed and you'll see them. For a while anyway. The park is located at 8909 New Town Road, Marvin 28173.



[Bluets](#) (*Houstonia caerulea*)  
Phillip Bouchard  
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The Woodland Garden at the Union County Agriculture Center (3230 Presson Road Monroe, NC) contains [Virginia Bluebells](#) (*Mertensia virginica*), [Solomon's Seal](#) (*Polygonatum spp.*), [Rue Anemone](#) (*Thalictrum thalictroides*), [Common Wild Ginger](#) (*Asarum canadense*).

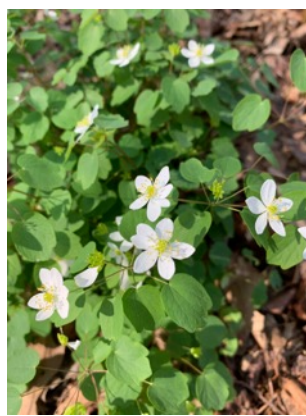
The photos of the Woodland Garden were taken 3/26/20 so progress may be a little delayed this year but visit often for the best views.



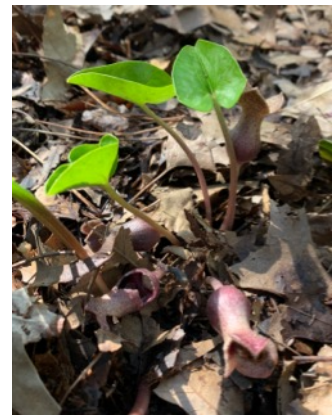
[Virginia Bluebells](#)  
(*Mertensia virginica*)



[Solomon's Seal](#)  
(*Polygonatum spp.*)



[Rue Anemone](#)  
(*Thalictrum thalictroides*)



[Common Wild Ginger](#)  
(*Asarum canadense*)

So, do a little Forest Bathing, yes that's a thing, and look a little close to the ground for some Spring Ephemerals. They won't last long.

All photos are mine unless otherwise noted.