



Wildflower Appreciation Day 2007 Plant Descriptions

Dutchman's breeches (native): herbaceous (non-woody) plant. White and yellow pantaloony-shaped flowers arise from lacy green foliage. The earliest known record of this plant from Six Mile Creek is dated April 1870, collected by David Starr Jordan, then a Cornell student, and later the founder of Stanford University.

Garlic mustard (invasive): herbaceous (non-woody) plant. This is probably the most common invasive in the natural area—you shouldn't have any trouble finding it. It is hard to control because few animals eat it, it produces lots of seed, and it washes in to low-lying areas with silt during high water. One long-time observer says it first entered Six-Mile in the late 1970s. Much of the space formerly occupied by native wildflowers is now saturated with garlic mustard.

Honeysuckle (invasive): shrub. Birds eat the seeds and spread them around. Flowers may be white, yellow, or pink, and can be sweetly fragrant.

Japanese barberry (invasive): This shrub was often planted as an ornamental. Japanese barberry can form dense stands that displace native plants and change animal habitat. Its seeds have a high germination rate and are spread far and wide by animals that eat the fruit. Look for the thorns and the remains of last season's bright red fruits.

Mayapple (native): herbaceous (non-woody) plant. Mayapple vegetation contains a toxin used to treat skin cancer. The fruit is sweet and the seeds are dispersed by the animals, such as squirrels, that eat it.

Norway maple (invasive): tree. Probably the most common invasive tree in Six Mile. The leaves resemble those of native sugar maples, but Norway maple leaves have shiny backs, whereas sugar maples do not. Studies have shown that Norway maple outcompetes sugar maple, raising concern that it may replace the native species over time.

Periwinkle (invasive): nonclimbing vine. This species apparently doesn't spread by seed in our locality, but once planted, it just keeps spreading, a little every year. Easiest to see by the parking lot, but there are several colonies in Six Mile.

Spring beauty (native): herbaceous (non-woody) plant. One of the earliest to bloom at Six Mile, this species is already at the end of its flowering period. Look for delicate white blooms with bright pink stripes.

Squirrel corn (native): The leaves of this plant look so much like those of Dutchman's breeches it can be hard to tell them apart. The white flowers are distinctive; instead of breeches these flowers more closely resemble a familiar garden perennial and close relative, the bleeding heart.

Toothwort (native): herbaceous (non-woody) plant. Flowers of plants in the mustard family have four petals. The white four-petaled flowers of toothwort are similar in appearance to the flowers of garlic mustard, a close relative. Toothwort is the favored food of some native butterflies, which may be fooled into laying their eggs on the leaves of garlic mustard instead. There are two species of toothwort in Six Mile Creek, the cut-leaved toothwort and the two-leaved toothwort.

Trillium (native): herbaceous (non-woody) plant. The floor of some forests is a solid carpet of trilliums, one of our most beautiful wildflowers (and the "official" flower of the Friends of Six Mile Creek!). Trilliums are not as numerous as they were in the past, in part due to browsing by deer. There are two species in the natural area: large-flowered, or white trillium and red trillium, also known as wake robin.

Trout lily (native): herbaceous (non-woody) plant. One of the first woodland wildflowers to bloom each spring: a single yellow, bell-shaped flower dangles from its stem, arising from a pair of green and brown mottled leaves. Some say the mottled color of the leaves resembles that of a trout, also abundant in the spring!