

Spring Wildflowers

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Autumn is the best season to add spring-blooming plants to the garden. Crocuses, daffodils, and tulips might “look nice,” but these exotic vernal clichés do little to benefit local wildlife including pollinators. This Eco-Article is a pictorial essay featuring different Virginia native spring wildflowers that will send gardens ablaze with beauty and abuzz with cool insects! All photographs feature specimens growing in Fairfax County gardens. To maximize space, only the plants’ identities appear in the figure descriptions. Some online resources pertaining to topics including growth conditions for these and other native plants and landscaping strategies are at <http://www.grsykes.com/eco-links1/>.



Figure 1. (A) Common goldstar (*Hypoxis hirsuta*), (B) red columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), (C) Jacob's ladder or American Greek valerian (*Polemonium reptans*) in the background, and (D) woodland phlox (*Phlox divaricata*).

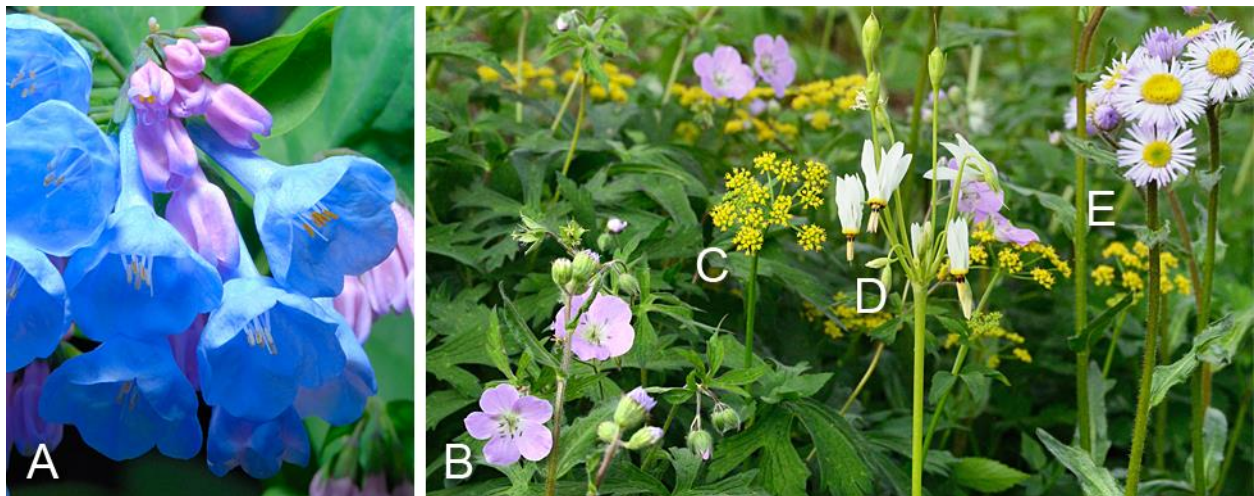


Figure 2. (A) Virginia bluebell (*Mertensia virginica*), (B) wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), (C) golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*), (D) shooting star (*Dodecatheon meadia*), and (E) robin's plantain (*Erigeron pulchellus*).



Figure 3. (A) Dwarf blue star (*Amsonia tabernaemontana*), (B) Dutchman's britches or breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), (C) spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), and (D) blue flag iris (*Iris versicolor*).



Figure 4. (A) Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), (B) fringed or wild bleeding heart (*Dicentra eximia*), and (C) heartleaf foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*); Jacob's ladder in the distance.



Figure 5. (A) Twinleaf (*Jeffersonia diphylla*), (B) golden ragwort (*Packera aurea*, previously *Senecio aureus*), and (C) pussytoes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*).

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