



Founded in 1997.
Logo art of Tall Goldenrod,
Solidago altissima,
by Nat Cleavitt, 2006.

Solidago

Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society

Volume 22, No. 2



June 2021

WILD GARDENING

Thalictrum dioicum (Early Meadow Rue)

by Rosemarie Parker



EARLY MEADOW RUE is a subtle plant. The delicate foliage is just green. The flowers are not very noticeable, although the long stamens on the male plants are interesting at close range. Other *Thalictrum* and *Aquilegia* species have similar foliage, while also having showy flowers. But — and this is a big but — Early Meadow Rue grows in dry, rocky shade. It grows in clay, if well drained, such as on a slope. It provides an airy contrast to heavier-leaved plants like *Asarum canadense* (Wild Ginger) or *Geranium*. And it is fairly compact, growing 12-18 inches tall, maybe higher in good conditions. It is a moderate self-sower, and the males can spread by stolons. It grows for me, so I love it.

BELOW: When it first emerges in spring, *Thalictrum dioicum* looks like a misplaced asparagus, but it quickly changes to a purple broccoli. (Photo taken April 10, 2021.)

RIGHT: Within a day or two the stem elongates and leaves begin to unfurl. (A different individual, photo taken April 8, 2021.)



Photos
by the
author

Thalictrum dioicum is native throughout central and eastern North America, and is found on wooded slopes and ravines or ledges, often near outcroppings of limestone rock. It hangs on ridges along trails in many of our local natural areas. So look for it giving a lacy green accent, starting in April.

The genus name comes from the Greek word *thaliktron*, which was a name used by Dioscorides to describe a plant with divided leaves (but apparently *which* plant is unclear). The specific epithet refers to the fact that the plants are *dioecious* (male and female flowers are on separate plants). And finally, the English name indicates correctly that this is an early bloomer.

Cultivation: Collect seed while still green, as soon as it falls easily into your hand with a light brushing. Sow immediately or keep moist at room temperature until fall, and then cold/moist stratify. It germinates easily the first year, and can be planted out the first season. Early Meadow Rue can grow in good garden soil, but for a more natural effect, plant it in regular to poor soil on a slope or atop a rock wall. It has a few caterpillars that enjoy it, but you would not plant this as a “pollinator plant.”

References

Missouri Botanical Garden: <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=r210>

New York Flora Atlas: <http://newyork.plantatlas.usf.edu/Plant.aspx?id=6284>

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center: https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=THDI

Illinois Wildflowers (nice photos): https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/woodland/plants/early_mdrue.htm



LEFT: And finally the shape and flower buds are identifiable.
(Photo taken April 14, 2021.)

BELOW: Male blooms (Photo taken April 19, 2021.)
[But check out good ones on the internet!]



This Steering Committee was elected by FLNPS members in May 2021.

THE FINGER LAKES NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY STEERING COMMITTEE

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Krissy Boys: Native Plant Gardener

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David Werier: Newsletter Editor Emeritus



Please Contribute to *Solidago*

WE WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS THAT FEATURE WILD PLANTS OF THE FINGER LAKES REGION OF NEW YORK AND NEARBY. We include cryptogams (bryophytes, lichens, fungi, and algae) as "flora," and recognize that green plants provide habitats and substrates for these and many animals, especially insects. We are interested in zoological associations as long as plants are an integral part of the story.

We can use a wide spectrum of material in a variety of writing styles. Our regular columns include **LOCAL FLORA** (plant lists or details of species from specific sites), **OUTINGS** (reports of FLNPS-sponsored excursions), and **PLANT PROFILES** (on specific local plants). We also occasionally publish **APPRECIATIONS** (memorials to local botanists and naturalists), **REVIEWS** (of books, talks, meetings, workshops, and nurseries), **LETTERS** (commentaries and letters to the editor), **ESSAYS** (on botanical themes), **VERSE** (haiku, limericks, sonnets, and poems of less formal structure), **ART** (botanical illustrations, plant designs, pencil sketches, decorations), and **PHOTOGRAPHS** (stand-alone images, photo essays, and full-page composite plates, or originals that can be scanned and returned). We also can always use **FILLERS** (very short notes, small images, cartoons) for the last few inches of a column.

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Newsletter of the
 Finger Lakes Native Plant Society

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Published quarterly at Ithaca, New York, USA.

FLNPS (founded in 1997) is dedicated to the promotion of our native flora.

We sponsor talks, walks, and other activities related to conservation of native plants and their habitats. *Solidago* is published as a colorful online version, and a B&W paper version that is mailed. The online format is posted 3 months after publication. Please see www.flnps.org for details of membership, past *Solidago* issues, and updates about our programs.



One-flowered Broomrape (*Aphyllon uniflorum*) blooms in late May and early June. It may be a parasite on goldenrods (*Solidago* spp.). These were found in the ecotone between an old field and old-growth forest in Tompkins County, N.Y., on 31 May 1997.

CONTENTS

WILD GARDENING

Thalictrum dioicum (Early Meadow Rue)
 (Rosemarie Parker) • 1-2

COLUMNS, NOTES, & MISCELLANY

Front Matter & Contents • 3
 Name That Plant Contest (David Werier) • 4
 Plant Trivia/Answers (Norm Trigoboff) • 4/5
 Notes & Calendar • 4
 Thank You! (Robert Dirig) • 5

REVIEW

Ithaca Native Landscape Symposium, 2021: Selected Learnings (Rosemarie Parker) • 5

LEARNING ABOUT WILDFLOWERS

Lost in the Umbrella Jungle (Robert Dirig) • 6-7

POET'S CORNER

Marsh Cinquefoil (Kenneth Hull) • 8

*Please send *Solidago*
 contributions & correspondence
 to Robert Dirig, Editor, at
editorofsolidago@gmail.com

Deadline for the September 2021
 issue is August 15th!

NAME THAT PLANT CONTEST

The photo from last issue's [*Solidago* 22(1), March 2021, p. 5] contest was of **Blue Bead Lily** (*Clintonia borealis*). Generally a more northern plant but still rather frequent in central New York, especially in cool northern hardwood forests and hummocks in swamps. Bob Dirig wrote, "I'm happy to see a spring flower for your puzzle! I love Blue Bead Lily (*Clintonia borealis*). The flowers are elegant, and the foliage and pure blue berries are wonderful. I also like the association they inhabit." Thanks to all those who entered the contest and congratulations to contest winners: **Audrey Bowe, Bob Dirig, Susanne Lorbeer, Ashley Miller, Rosemarie Parker, Nancy Reynolds, and Robert Wesley.**

THIS ISSUE'S MYSTERY PLANT IS SHOWN BELOW.



Note where the leaf stalk (petiole) attaches to the leaf blade. Hints and suggestions are often provided to contest participants who try. Common and/or scientific names are acceptable, and more than one guess is allowed. Please submit your answers to **David Werier** at

Nakita @lightlink.com

All images were taken by David Werier in New York. The background image and closeup of the leaf were taken on 31 August 2020 in Tompkins County, and the image of the fruits was taken on 18 September 2020 in Erie County.



Plant Trivia

by Norm Trigoboff

1. Which is the best wood for a slingshot? Oak — Hickory — Maple — Walnut — Sumac
2. Which is the best wood for a pea shooter? Oak — Hickory — Maple — Walnut — Sumac
3. In terms of tons produced, what is the largest crop in the world? Clue: It's a kind of grass.
4. In terms of value per acre, what is the most valuable crop in the world? Clue: It's a kind of "grass."
5. The photo shows a tiny insect that followed me home on a piece of aquatic moss. Which is its head end?



6. Which Ithaca roadside tree (native to downstate New York) may have fruit and twigs with star-shaped cross sections?
 7. A. Does Ithaca have more roadside oaks or maples?
 - B. How about White Pine, Kentucky Coffee Tree, or Norway Spruce?
8. Where is the most authoritative place to get the answer to the last question (besides here)?
9. Are there more people or city-managed trees in Ithaca?
10. What is the most popular city tree in the world?

See answers on page 5.

Notes & Calendar

FLNPS is approaching our **summer break** from June through August. **Talks** will resume in September, but we do not yet know if they will be virtual or in-person programs. At this time, a **Moss Walk** is scheduled for **Saturday, June 5th**, at 10:30 a.m., led by **Norm Trigoboff** at Ringwood Ponds (meet at parking area on Ringwood Road). **Registration is required**, with COVID-related safety protocols in place. Please see our **website** (flnps.org/activities), **listserv**, and **facebook page** for details, and updates about other programs and our autumn schedule.

Plant Trivia Answers

by Norm Trigoboff

1. Maple's opposite branches make for a symmetrical slingshot.
2. Sumac has large, soft, easy to remove pith. (Lawyer's note: The Trivia Corporation does not encourage or condone playing with slingshots or pea shooters.)
3. Sugar cane.
4. *Cannabis* growers can earn about \$50 million per square kilometer. (The Trivia Corporation does not encourage or condone growing *Cannabis*.)
5. This net-spinning caddisfly larva hangs on for dear life with the hooked needle-like structure at its tail end. At the broad end, you can just barely see an eye and mouth parts. Give yourself an extra point if you asked what an animal question was doing here.
6. Sweetgum fruits are spiky and the twigs sometimes have corky wings that give the twig a star-shaped cross section.
7. **A.** The score: 1010 oaks to 1500 maples. Alas, mostly Norway Maples.
B. The score: 149 Norway Spruce; 150 Kentucky Coffee Tree; 151 White Pine. Give yourself an extra point if you guessed they were about the same.
8. The "Ithaca Blooms" website gives the numbers for "city managed trees," but it has bugs. If you search for *Pinus*, it includes *Carpinus*. It gives different results for horse chestnut and Horsechestnut. You could also track down the City Forester.
9. The score is 31,800 people to 13,000+ trees. This may seem pretty safe, but they have more arms than we do, so at the first sign of an uprising, I'm outta here.
10. London Plane Tree. Again, courtesy of Ithaca Blooms. I presume they mean popular vote vs. electoral college.



THANK YOU!

We are grateful to everyone who contributed to this issue. Audrey Bowe and Rosemarie Parker posted our newsletters; Whitney Carleton mailed them; and all of the Steering Committee members (p. 3) performed other important functions, and dealt with the business details of our organization. Their collaboration makes producing issues of *Solidago* a continuing joy.

For this issue, we thank **writers** Kenneth Hull, Rosemarie Parker, Norm Trigoboff, David Werier, & Robert Dirig; and **photographers** Rosemarie Parker (pp. 1-2), Norm Trigoboff (p. 4), David Werier (4), Robert Dirig (pp. 3 & 6-7), & Ken Hull (p. 8). **Layout & design** by the Editor, **proofreading** by Rosemarie Parker & Matthew Dirig, and **printing** by Gnomon Copy.

Best Wishes to FLNPS members (and all others in our reading audience) for safety, and joyous outdoor revels with the summer flora! — Robert Dirig



REVIEW

Ithaca Native Landscape Symposium, 2021: Selected Learnings

by Rosemarie Parker

The *Ithaca Native Landscape Symposium 2021* was virtual, and I only attended on the first day. Still, as in every other year, there were some interesting bits of information that were new to me. Here are the points that struck me the most. (Aside from the depressing news that Ithaca Downtown will continue to in-fill and grow ever upward.)

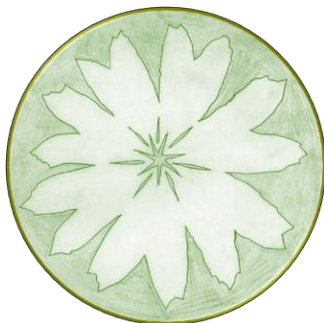
DAVID WOLFE passed along the bad news that warmer climates benefit both deer and Poison Ivy. Poison Ivy loves high CO₂. Herbicides are less efficient. Our region looks like it will get about the same amount of rainfall in summer, but with higher temperatures and more intense rain events, we will have longer droughts.

LYDIA BRINKLEY talked about the *Upper Susquehanna Coalition's* projects for riparian buffers. They will clear invasives and plant natives in New York and Pennsylvania within the Susquehanna watershed, working with government, non-profit groups, or landowners. Riparian buffers offer "the best monetary return for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment reduction." They focus on planting shrubs and trees, because woodies have lots of nutrient uptake from the ground and surface water – much better than grasses. They will do berm removal to connect streams back to floodplains.

MARISSA ANGELL, an Associate at *Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc.*, talked about another immense and wonderfully funded project they did which utilized mainly native plants. This one was in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and if you are ever there, really do go to "The Gathering Place." It is a wonderful, inventive park, playground, and meeting location on the river. <https://www.gatheringplace.org/horticulture>. (Google images mostly show the amazing play areas, but it is much more.)

ANDY ZEPP talked about the *Finger Lakes Land Trust's* interest in "replumbing the Finger Lakes." The idea is to get phosphorus into the land, not the lake. So they want to restore vernal pools and wetlands and streamside buffers. He mentioned that the use of tiling in farm fields does reduce sediment (good), but it speeds the water into ditches which feed into the lake. The sponge effect of the land is reduced. The northern portion of Cayuga Lake has lots of agricultural fields, and in the last decades, removal of hedgerows and planting of drainage swales has increased the nutrient and sediment loads to the lake.



LEARNING ABOUT
WILDFLOWERS

Lost in the Umbrella Jungle

by Robert Dirig



MAYAPPLES (*Podophyllum peltatum*) will always be "Umbrellas" to me. This odd and lovely wildflower was one of the first I ever learned, at the tender age of five. My initial acquaintance involved a mild adventure.

While we were visiting Grandma Mabelle on Halsey Hill in the southern Catskills, on a sunny afternoon in early June 1955, my mother Marjorie, brother Roddy, sister Bette, and I joined her on an expedition to see "The Umbrellas" — a mysterious plant that grew on top of the ridge near the Quarry, a few hundred feet from their old homestead house. Mabelle exuberantly led us on the outing, from the yard through the Lower Orchard to the woods, where we followed an old jeep trail up to a small bluestone outcrop, which someone, maybe Grandpa Ellis, had worked for stone on the hillside, years before. From there the trail curved right and continued upslope to the ridge top. After a short climb, which was slow



going for Marjorie (who was managing infant Bette) and Roddy (who was guided by Mabelle), we approached the place where the special plants grew. Our grandmother's enthusiastic description, and the anticipation of seeing this botanical oddity, had heightened our level of excitement as we climbed. When we found them, the plants proved to be as wonderful as we had imagined! Roddy and I each picked a leaf, and posed under it, looking up at the sky, enjoying the novelty of its umbrella-like structure, with the central stem making a convenient handle. After sufficiently marveling over them, we started back to the house. Mabelle followed an old dirt road down the ridge, so we



could more easily return to the house along Halsey Lane. I was old enough to walk by myself, and they expected me to follow. I may have dawdled, or lingered over the unusual plants.... *Suddenly I was alone*, and didn't know where they had gone. Being pre-occupied with the two younger children, who needed more care, they did not miss me until it was too late.

MARJORIE HAD RECENTLY TOLD ME that if I ever was lost, and found a road, I should follow it, and it would eventually come out somewhere; or to go home and



wait, and someone would find me there. I was standing on a road, so I followed both suggestions, retracing our route down the hillside until I came to the Orchard, where I could see the house. I knew no one was home, but went up the bluestone steps, opened the back door, and entered the kitchen. I was nervous about a couple of hornets (Mabelle and Marjorie called them “hotfoots,” using the antique vernacular of the region) that were buzzing and slowly crawling around the window, so I went out into the back yard. Ellis had propped a ladder against the north wall of the house. I sat on the bottom rung, and was softly crying. In a short while, they found me, and Marjorie pounced with a relieved cry and joyous exclamations, hugging me until it hurt, holding on for dear life to her “lost” child, now miraculously restored to her. I was still holding my wilting “Umbrella.”

Today I understand her panic and fear: Had I wandered off alone, it might have been very difficult to find me in the trackless acreage of continuous ridges and forest for many miles in all directions. I could have fallen off a cliff, been bitten by a Timber Rattlesnake, or perished from starvation in the rough labyrinth of boulders and trees in nearly full leaf. But her thoughtful teaching had averted such an outcome.

IN LATER YEARS, on quick passes through the area, I casually watched for the colony of May-apple plants near the Quarry, but could never find them again. Nearly ready to regard them as a casualty of recent quarry expansion, I made a focused effort, on April 20, 2012, carefully exploring the ridge — and *there they were*, with new olive-green leaves glowing in backlit afternoon sun, the umbrellas only partly opened, and the flower buds starting to swell! Returning in mid-May, I delighted in the waxy white perianth, pale yellow centers, and faint fragrance of the gorgeous large flowers, hiding beneath the broad leaves. They had thrived over 57 years, as Mayapples are wont to do, now numbering hundreds of plants, spreading in a 30-foot-diameter circle! I earnestly hope that further quarrying will not dispossess them of their magical haven on the Hill.



This story was written in 2012. The Quarry has recently been closed and capped. Early photos of foliage are from Halsey Hill on 20 April 2012. Images of flowers are from the Finger Lakes Region on 8 June 2012. Designs are from a Mayapple leaf and flowers.

*Story and images
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Marsh Cinquefoil

by Kenneth Hull

On the boardwalk in the bog I spotted
several maroon-colored flowers.

Leaves of the plants held liquid drops on the tips,
most unlike patterns I'd ever seen before.

I was told by a friend it was due to guttation.

Flowers had several shades of reddish purple
with lighter maroon sepals graying toward the tips.

A beautiful collage of colors and shapes.

Bees of all sorts bore down on them

Caring less if other insects were there first,

But none moved to make room for them –

A community of nectar-loving pollinators!

I thought – maroon flowers are unusual.

How many native wildflowers could I name

With the same or similar flower color?

Better yet, how many can you?

