

April 2010

Plant Parade Trout Lily

Trout lilies are known by many different names including adder's tongue, rattlesnake violet, dog-toothed violet, fawn lily, and its scientific name *Erythronium americanum*. More often than not, it is the leaves rather than the flowers that alert observers to the trout lily's presence. Most plants produce a single green and purple mottled leaf. If the plant is going to flower, there will be two leaves so it can produce enough energy to support a flower and seeds.

Although reproduction by seed does occur, the most common form of reproduction is vegetative. Trout lilies spend only a portion of their lives supporting above-ground vegetation. For the remainder of the year, the plant's energy is stored in a *corm* or underground stem. This corm



will send out a *dropper* which will produce another corm at its end. The dropper will eventually wither and the new corm will produce its own leaf. Over time, a large colony of trout lilies can form in this way. Some colonies have been estimated to be over 100 years old.

Look carefully for these leaves and flowers at the end of this month and in early May. The flowers last only a short time and the leaves will be gone by summer. You can find them in the Beech Maple Woods between the Sugarhouse and Nature Study Building and in other deciduous woods here at Chippewa Nature Center.

Wonderful Wildflowers

Early spring wildflowers take advantage of the sun pouring through the canopy of deciduous trees. These plants grow leaves, flower, and produce seeds in a matter of weeks. When the trees leaf out the flowers lose access to sunlight and go dormant until next spring.



Although their leaves and flowers cannot be seen in summer, many of these plants play important roles throughout the year including soil stabilization.



As you look for these flowers, please remember to take only pictures and leave them where you find them. If you would like to add some to your garden visit www.mnppa.org or CNC's Native Plant Sale in May.

Visit the Temporary Visitor Center for program information.

This inSTALLation is available online at www.chippewanaturecenter.org under the Naturalist Section.