

## Mayapples



Like little green umbrellas, the leaves of the Mayapple certainly grab the attention of any passersby. This tropical-looking wildflower resembles mini palm trees growing in the middle of the forest.

Standing just 12-18 inches tall, Mayapples may cover whole areas of the forest floor in late spring and early summer.

Emerging Mayapples are like small rocket ships bursting through the forest understory. The semi-pointed end helps it push through the leaf litter into the sunlight. Mayapples may have either one or two leaves. Those plants having a single leaf will not produce a flower this year, while those having two leaves will produce a single white flower at the fork in the stem. These pollinated flowers produce small green fruits.

Check out the Wildflower Walkway or the Sugarbush Trail to track down several stands of Mayapples. Be sure to take the time to peek under their leaves to look for the buds, flowers, and fruit of this unique plant.



## Mayapple Toxins

Despite its name, the “apple” doesn’t appear until August. The ripe fruit is the only part of the plant that is not toxic.



Mayapples contain a toxin called podophyllotoxin which protects the plant from any being eaten. However, the concentration of the toxin is lower in the ripe fruit, allowing some animals to eat small amounts of it. Box turtles, mammals and birds are then able to eat and spread the seeds to propagate more Mayapples.

**Stop by the Visitor Center Office for program information.**

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