

Favorite Wildflowers in Midland County

Discoveries along the Pere Marquette Rail Trail
and in Midland County Parks

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Obtaining Wildflowers

- Many of these are available from the Native Plant Sale at Chippewa Nature Center at the end of May
- Others can be found in various nurseries. (Telly's in Rochester Hills has a good selection). Many local nurseries carry some of these along with the non native perennials.
- Make sure you don't dig them from the wild and that any that you purchase are either rescued by a certified wildflower rescue group (like Cranbrook Gardens) or are responsibly propagated (like the CNC selection from Wild Type Nursery in Mason)
- Many American wild flowers have been taken by botanist and propagators and hybridized into our popular perennials today (like Coneflowers, Black Eyed Susans and Blazing Stars)

Early Spring Flowers--April and May

When the leaves are still off the trees, these shade loving plants produce lovely gem like blooms often in the leaf litter from the fall.

- They bloom while there is sun in early Spring and many disappear once the shade comes to the forest
- They are called Spring Ephemerals
- Many of these flowers form colonies because they spread by rhizomes, tubers or bulbs

Hepatica (LiverLeaf): Pink, Blue or White flowers above mottled Foliage

- Earliest bloomer
- Moist Woods
- Easy to grow in gardens

Bloodroot: beautiful white single or double flower above a whorled cape of a leaf

- Blooms until fertilized then drops flowers
- Can be grown in gardens
- Needs protection from Rabbits

Spring Beauty: small pink and white striped flowers on a grassy foliage

- Can be grown in gardens
- Spreads readily from tubers
- Actually has edible tubers

Dutchman's Breeches:

Small White Bleeding Heart blooms above ferny foliage

- Has many cheery blooms for a couple of weeks
- Grows easily in gardens

Trout Lily: Yellow or White bells above a trout like leaf

Blooms only when it produces 2 leaves

- Harder to grow in gardens, needs rocky soil to prevent bulbs from moving too deep
- Colonizes when happy

Other early spring bloomers for the garden

- Merry Bells or Wild Oats—yellow bells on stalks of wilted looking leaves
- Wild Ginger—small brown flower under the heart shaped leaves
- Marsh Marigold—large yellow flowers above waxy heart shaped leaves
- Wild Strawberry—mat forming strawberry leaves loved by wildlife
- Meadow Rue—large ferny plant with chandelier type flowers
- Violets—yellow and white are not as colonizing as common blue, many charming species

Late Spring Flowers– May and June

More of these flowers enjoy part to full sun most of the season

- Some enjoy a month of bloom
- Many have small clusters of flowers and so are not as popular for gardens
- Some are spectacular and can be ephemeral, with leaves disappearing or melding into the surrounding plants as summer pushes in

Blue Flag Iris: Lovely iris found in ditches around the county

- Great garden plant if you have a sunny damp location
- Colonizes when happy

Michigan Lily

- Great garden plant if you have a sunny location
- Protect from Deer and Rabbits
- Can produce 15 to 20 flowers on a 6 foot stalk once it is established

Wood or Celandine Poppy. Wonderful yellow poppy like flowers on large plant

- Seeds prolifically, but easy to relocate
- Foliage is nice for about a month and then disappears

Virginia Bluebells beautiful blue bells on a large plant

- Seeds prolifically, but easy to relocate
- Foliage is nice for about a month and then disappears
- Looks great planted with Wood Poppy

Wild Geranium: Pink flowers above palmate leaves

- Spreads by rhizomes and seeds prolifically
- Pairs well with Wood Poppy and Bluebells or Canada Anemone
- Lots of cultivars in pinks, blues and whites

Wood and Rue Anemone, Thimbleweed and Canada Anemone

- Spreads by underground stems
- Wood and Rue anemone bloom in early to late Spring and are quite dainty
- Canada Anemone and Thimbleweed bloom most of summer and are larger

Other late spring/early summer bloomers

- Common buttercup and crowfoot. Yellow flowers on tall stems
- Tall or Purple Meadow Rue: taller and more robust flowering than Early Meadow Rue
- Wild Columbine: the Granny's bonnet with red and yellow flowers
- Lady Slipper Orchids: Yellow can be propagated, others require delicate balance of mycorrhizae to survive
- Trillium—White and large flowered blooms first then the Yellow and Red
- Wild Lupine and Indian Paintbrush—gorgeous together in a sunny location

Summer Flowers—June - August

These are the popular flowers for sunny gardens that have been cultivated and popularized

- Larger flowers with sturdy foliage and many have long bloom times
- Lots of cultivars available in nurseries
- Very showy on roadsides and in wild parks

Black-eyed Susan: familiar yellow daisy like flower with dark center

- Many cultivars available
- Brown-eyed Susan looks like it but has earlier bloom and not as prolific

Blue Vervain: slender blue spikes on tall plant

- Nice accent plant
- Seeds persist into fall and winter

Swamp Milkweed: beautiful pink flower cluster on tall plants in moist areas

- Makes a nice specimen in the garden
- Beloved by Monarch Butterflies

Obedient Plant: Pink or white tubular flowers on tall stems

- Really spreads easily
- Loved by bees

Purple Coneflower: beautiful pink to purple daisy-like flower

- Spreads easily
- Seeds persist into winter

Sunflowers: tall and impressive yellow flowers

- Need a meadow setting because of size

Other Summer Bloomers

- Cardinal flower: brilliant red tubular flowers loved by hummingbirds
- Blue Lobelia: Shadier cousin of Cardinal flower, true blue color
- Bedstraws: many varieties related to the European Sweet Woodruff
- Woolly Yarrow: White cluster of flowers on fuzzy stalk
- St John's Wort: Yellow flowers on a mounded bushy plant

Fall Flowers—August - October

As the sun sets earlier, some spectacular flowers put on a show.

- Many of the Summer flowering plants continue to flower into fall:
Coneflowers, Sunflowers, Milkweed
- This is the season of Asters and Goldenrod, Hot colors on tall plants that greet you on every roadside
- Late in the season there are beautiful gems like the Gentians

Goldenrod: Brilliant yellow flowers on a myriad of different plants

- Plume goldenrods like Early, Tall, and Canada are the best known
- There are shade lovers that don't spread as aggressively, like ZigZag and BlueStem

New England Aster

- This very tall, showy aster is the star of late Autumn
- Flowers can range from pink to deep purple

Tall White Aster: This parasol shaped flower cluster blooms on woodland edges earlier in the fall

- The white flowers really pop against the woods

Bottle and Fringed Gentians: Blue to purple or pink-- closed or barely open flower

- Late in the fall—gorgeous clusters of these flowers
- They bloom and then disappear

Joe Pye Weed: Tall pink flower cluster

- Grows in swampy and dry areas
- Many cultivars
- Related to Boneset which is shorter and white flowered cluster

Other Fall Blooms

- Calico Aster
- Smooth Blue Aster
- Jewel Weed: our native Impatiens
- Bellflowers: the bluebells of the sunny areas
- Ironweed: large bushy plant with striking deep purple flowers
- Thistles: Bull, Canada and Field
- Wild Lettuce
- Tall Coneflowers—Greyhead and Greenhead

References

To view pictures of any of these flowers, use the search feature of the website: <http://peremarquettewildflowers.com/>

Good References:

- What's doing the blooming? Oslund, Thunder Bay Press
- Newcomb's Wildflower Guide
- CNC guide from Native Plant Sale
- Local Wild Ones group, meets at CNC
- Lots of online references—listed on Great Lakes Gardeners website: <https://peremarquettewildflowers.com/links-maps/>