

Wildflower in Focus

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Trout-Lily (Fawn-Lily, Adder's-Tongue, Dogtooth Violet)

Erythronium americanum Ker Gawler.
Lily Family (*Liliaceae*)



Trout-lily is a common spring wildflower of floodplains, bottomlands and moist woodlands throughout Maryland. Its mottled leaves and nodding yellow flowers carpet the ground in concert with spring beauty, Virginia bluebells, wild ginger, Jack in the pulpit and other early flowering plants.

Flowers: Yellow, nodding, with six tepals (three petals and three petal-like sepals) that are reflexed when the blossom is mature. Flowers 3/4 - 1 1/2" long, borne singly on a 3 - 10" stalk.

Leaves: Two basal (or nearly basal) leaves are 2 1/2 - 8" long, green with brown mottling (pattern is "trout"-like), ovate, lanceolate, oblanceolate or elliptic, entire. Young, sterile plants send up a single leaf and these often grow in dense colonies.

Height: 3 - 10".

Range: Eastern U.S. and Canada.

Similar Species: Use the mottled leaves to separate this species from most other yellow-flowered members of the lily family. The white trout-lily (*E. albidum*), a Midwestern species which is rare in Maryland, grows in a few spots along the Potomac. A third *Erythronium* species, dimpled trout-lily (*E. umbilicatum*), which also has yellow flowers, has been found in western Maryland.

Blooming Time: March - May.

Locations: Rich moist woodlands throughout the state.

Wildflower in Focus text adapted from **An Illustrated Guide to Eastern Woodland Wildflowers and Trees: 350 Plants Observed at Sugarloaf Mountain, Maryland** (Choukas-Bradley and Brown, University of Virginia Press).