**Plants in the Park**

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park

Maryland and Washington, DC



*Photo by NPS*

The National Park Service  
US Department of Interior

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| **Welcome to Your National Historical Park** *Explore a diverse range of flowers, shrubs, and trees that call the C&O Canal home with this guide! As you bike, hike, and enjoy the towpath, make sure to take the time to “smell the flowers” and reflect on your beautiful natural surroundings.*  **Plan your visit** – Keep this guide handy during your next outdoor adventure. Check out the C&O Canal [Plan Your Visit website](https://www.nps.gov/choh/planyourvisit/index.htm) for important information prior to visiting the park. See the References and Resources section for more information and details about the nature you see.  **Contents** – This guide includes a sample of the various species of trees and wildflowers found in Maryland and DC. Although this is not a comprehensive field guide, it provides information on a variety of plants you may see in the park. The sections are organized by various locations along the C&O Canal with reference sections.  **Acknowledgements and Special Thanks** – Content and images in this guide was adapted from the [C&O Canal Association](https://candocanal.org/) Wildflower Guide. Picture credits are noted in captions. Public domain images were retrieved from [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page) under the Creative Commons license. |  | **Engage your senses** – Look up, down, and all around you. Focus on a flower, tree, or plant you have never seen. What colors do you see? Observe the different parts of the plant. What are the size and shape differences among the various flowers and trees? What makes these plants unique?  **Viewing nature** – Make sure to refer to the Blooming Period table to see which flowers might be in season throughout the park.  **Leave No Trace** – Pack in, pack out! The C&O Canal is a trash free park. Trash should be packed up and taken out of the park. Learn more about [Leave No Trace](https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/) and how to [recreate responsibly](https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/recreate-responsibly.htm) in your National Park.  **Protect Your Park** – Take a picture, not a plant! Please do not take pick any flowers, plants, leaves, or take home any part of nature from the Park. With your help, we can preserve your C&O Canal for generations to come. |
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**Cumberland to Spring Gap (Mile 184.5 to 173.4)**

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| **Bloodroot**  Scientific name: *Sanguinaria canadensis*  Can grow to 10 inches, root has a reddish sap  Found near mileposts 184-180  Photo of Bloodroot provided by the C&O Canal Association taken by Marj Richman.  *Figure 1 – Photo of Bloodroot provided by the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Marj Richman.* | **Periwinkle**  Scientific name: *Vinca minor*  Mat-forming plant, can grow to 8 inches  Found near milepost 178  Photo of Periwinkle provided by the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Pat Hopson.  *Figure 2 -- Photo of Periwinkle provided by the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Pat Hopson.* | **Gill-over-the-ground**  Scientific name: *Glechoma hederacea*  Many wild bees collect pollinate this plant  Found near mileposts 175 – 173  Photo of Gill-over-the-ground provided by the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Jim Heins.  *Figure 3 -- Photo of Gill-over-the-ground provided by the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Jim Heins.* |
| **Dogtooth Violet or Trout Lily**  Scientific name: *Erythronium americanum*  Can grow to 10 inches (25 centimeters)  Found near milepost 175  Photo of Dogtooh Violet courtesy of the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Marion Robertson.  *Figure 4 -- Photo of Dogtooth Violet courtesy of the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Marion Robertson.* | **Cutleaf Toothwort**  Scientific name: *Dentaria laciniate*  Attracts butterflies and eaten by mice  Found near milepost 175  Photo of Cutleaf Toothwort courtesy of the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Jim Heins.  *Figure 5 -- Photo of Cutleaf Toothwort courtesy of the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Jim Heins.* |  |

# **Town Creek to Stickpile (Mile 162.1 – 149.4)**

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| **Common Mullein**  Scientific name: *Verbascum Thapsus*  Hairy biennial plant that can grow over 6 feet  Found near milepost 161  Photo of Common Mullein courtesy of the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Chris Cerniglia.  Figure 6 -- Photo of Common Mullein courtesy of the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Chris Cerniglia. | **Coltsfoot**  Scientific name: *Tussilago farfara*  Found near Cumberland end of Paw Paw tunnel; looks like common Dandelion  Photo of Coltsfoot courtesy of the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Betsy Williamson.  Figure 7 -- Photo of Coltsfoot courtesy of the C&O Canal Association. Photo taken by Betsy Williamson. | **Virginia Bluebells**  Scientific name: *Mertensia virginica*  Trumpet shape perennial; grows 1-2' tall  Found near milepost 149.4, 132  Photo of Virginia Bluebells courtesy of Jim Heins from the C&O Canal Association.  Figure 8 -- Photo of Virginia Bluebells courtesy of Jim Heins from the C&O Canal Association. |

# **Stickpile to Cacapon Junction (Mile 149.4 – 133.6)**

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| **Birdfoot Violet**  Scientific name: *Viola pedata*  Leaves are bird foot shaped  Found near milepost 150.2  Photo of purple flower, Birdfoot Violet, courtesy of Marion Robertson of the C&O Canal Association.  Figure 9 -- Photo courtesy of Marion Robertson of the C&O Canal Association. | **Toadshade**  Scientific name: *Trillium sessile*  Perennial; Foul smelling flower  Found near milepost 147  Public domain photo of Toadshade plants in a bunch.  Figure 10 -- Public domain photo of Toadshade plants in a bunch. | **Wild Columbine**  Scientific name: *Aquilegia canadensis*  Fern-like plant with red and yellow flowers  Found near milepost 146.5  Photo of Wild Columbine courtesy of Jim Heins of the C&O Canal Association.  Figure 11 -- Photo courtesy of Jim Heins of the C&O Canal Association. |
| **Jefferson Twinleaf**  Scientific name: *Jeffersonia diphylla*  Smooth leaves and white flowers  Found near milepost 145  Public domain photo of the Jefferson Twinleaf.  Figure 12 -- Public domain photo of the Jefferson Twinleaf. | **Dutchman’s Breeches**  Scientific name: *Dicentra cucullaria*  Cluster of small pink and white bublets  Found near milepost 141  Photo of Dutchman's Breeches courtesy of Frank Wodarczyk from the C&O Canal Association.  Figure 13 -- Photo of Dutchman's Breeches courtesy of Frank Wodarczyk from the C&O Canal Association. | **Squirrel corn**  Scientific name: *Dicentra canadensis*  Small yellow clustered bublets  Found near milepost 141  Photo of Squirrel corn courtesy of Frank Wodarczyk from the C&O Canal Association.  Figure 14 -- Photo of Squirrel corn courtesy of Frank Wodarczyk from the C&O Canal Association. |

# **Cacapon Junction to Hancock (Mile 133.6 to 124.1)**

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| **Spring Beauty**  Scientific name: *Claytonia virginica*  Low plant with loose clusters of pink or white flowers; Found near milepost 129  Public domain image of the plant Spring Beauty. A pink and white flower surrounded by leaves and branches.  Figure 15 -- Public domain photo of the Virginia Spring Beauty. | **Blue Phlox**  Scientific name: *Phlox divaricata*  Five lilac blue petals; Can form large colonies over time; Found near milepost 127  Cluster of blue and purple flowers known as Blue Phlox.  Figure 16 -- Public domain image. Cluster of Blue Phlox flowers. | **Redbud**  Scientific name: *Cercis canadensis*  Tree with a short trunk and pink flowers; Found near milepost 126  Pink flowers in tight clusters along the stems and branches.  Figure 17 -- Public domain image of Redbud flowers. |
| **Common Blue Violet**  Scientific name: *Viola sororia*  Short-stemmed herbaceous plant with purple flower; Found near milepost 118  Hairless common blue violets with purple flowers.  Figure 18 -- Public domain image of Common Blue Violet. | **Downy Yellow Violet**  Scientific name: *Viola pubescens*  Found in woodlands meadows; Round yellow flower; Found near milepost 118  Close up view of the Downy Yellow Violet yellow flower with leaves in background.  Figure 19 -- Public domain image of Downy Yellow Violet. | **Skunk Cabbage**  Scientific name: *Symplocarpus foetidus*  Low growing plant that exudes odor that attracts insects; Found near milepost 11Braised flower petals that range from red to brown with green leaves.  Figure 20 -- Public domain photo of Skunk Cabbage. |

# **McCoy’s Ferry to Williamsport (Mile 110.4 – 99.7)**

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| **Wild Ginger**  Scientific name: *Asarum candense*  Flowers are hairy and have tapered tips; Found near milepost 106  Tan to purple flower with tapered tips and bases in a cup shape.  *Figure 21 -- Public domain image of Wild Ginger flower.* | **Canadian White Violet**  Scientific name: *Viola canadensis*  White blooms with yellow centers  Found near milepost 106  White flowers with yellow centers and ridged green leaves.  Figure 22 -- Public domain image of Canadian White Violet. | **Non-native Nodding Star-of-Bethlehem**  Scientific name: *Ornithogalum nutans*  Native to Europe; Gray to white drooping flowers; Found near milepost 106  Bulbous white flowers with strap-shaped leaves.  Figure 23 -- Public domain image of the non-native plant the Nodding Star-of-Bethlehem. |

# **Williamsport to Dam 4 (Mile 99.7 – 84.4)**

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| **Star Chickweed**  Scientific name: *Stellaria pubera*  White star-like shape blossom and ovate leaves; Found near milepost 99  White blossom with star-like shape surrounded by ovate green leaves.  Figure 24 -- Public domain image of Star Chickweed. | **Red Trillium**  Scientific name: *Trillium erectum*  Maroon petals; Odor attracts scavenging flies for pollination; Found near milepost 99  Maroon flower with three petals and dark center.  Figure 25 -- Public domain image of Red Trillium. | **Marsh Speedwell**  Scientific name: *Veronica scutellata*  Found near moist habitats; Purple-green or reddish leaves; Found near milepost 92  Small light blue flower with purple-green leaves.  Figure 26 – Image of Marsh Speedwell flowers courtesy of Rachel Stewart of the C&O Canal Association. |
| **Dwarf Larkspur**  Scientific name: *Delphinium tricorne*  Stringy thin stems with flowers of shades of blue; Found near milepost 90  Purple flowers branching off long stringy stems.  Figure 27 -- Public domain image of Dwarf Larkspur. | **Non-native Dame’s Rocket**  Scientific name: *Hesperis matronalis*  Fragrant purple-like flowers with hairy stems  Found near milepost 89  Purple flowers with four petals and long green leaves.  Figure 28 -- Public domain image of Dame's Rocket. |  |

**Antietam to Brunswick Campground (Mile 69.4 – 54.0)**

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| **Daisy Fleabane**  Scientific name: *Erigeron annuus*  Yellow centers with thin white petals  Found near milepost 59  Flowers with yellow centers and thin white petals.  Figure 29 -- Photo courtesy of Frank Wodarczyk of the C&O Canal Association. | **Dogwood**  Scientific name: *Cornus florida*  Small trees that grow wild along the towpath  Found near milepost 59  White flowers with four petals and green leaves.  Figure 30 -- Photo courtesy of Frank Wodarczyk of the C&O Canal Association. |

# **Brunswick to Indian Flats (Mile 54.0 – 42.4)**

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| **Celandine Poppy**  Scientific name: *Stylophorum diphyllum*  Deep yellow flowers that bloom in patches  Found near milepost 51  Herbaceous green plant with small yellow flowers.  Figure 31 -- Public domain image of Celandine Poppy. | **Mayapple**  Scientific name: *Podophyllum peltatum*  White flowers and mature into a green, yellow or red fleshy fruit; Near milepost 50  White flowers with umbrella-like leaves.  Figure 32 -- Public domain image of Mayapple. | **Common Paw**  Scientific name: *Asimina triloba*  Small tree with large green to yellow-brown fruit; Near milepost 48  Two large green Paw Paw fruits.  Figure 33 -- Public domain image of the Common Paw. |

# **Indian Flats to Sycamore Landing (Mile 42.4 – 27.2)**

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| **White Phlox**  Scientific name: *Phlox pilosa*  Lavender flower petals with long, narrow, pointed-tip leaves; Near milepost 42.4  Lavender flower petals with long, narrow, pointed-tip leaves.  Figure 34 -- Public domain image of the White Phlox. | **Grape Hyacinth**  Scientific name: *Muscari botryoides*  Purple flowers close together and almost completely round; Near milepost 33  Flowers are close together and almost completely round. Flowers are bright blue with white tips at the end.  Figure 35 -- Public domain image of the Grape Hyacinth. |  |

# **Sycamore Landing to Great Falls (Mile 27.2 – 14.3)**

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| **Non-native Japanese Honeysuckle**  Scientific name: *Lonicera japonica*  Twining vine with simple oval leaves; Flowers are yellow white; Near milepost 22A non-native vining plant with flowers are yellow white and double-tongued.  Figure 36 -- Public domain image of the Japanese Honeysuckle. | **Field Chickweed**  Scientific name: *Cerastium arvense*  Creeper plant that mats with an upright white flower; Near milepost 21  Upright flowers surrounded by a dense mat of lance-shaped green leaves.  Figure 37 -- Public domain image of the Field Chickweed. | **Jack-in-the-pulpit**  Scientific name: *Arisaema triphyllum*  Three leaves growing together at the top of one long stem; Near milepost 20  Irregular shaped flower with green yellow stripes.  Figure 38 -- Public domain image of the Jack-in-the-pulpit. |

# **Great Falls to Tidelock (Mile 14.3 – 0.0)**

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| **Spiderwort**  Scientific name: *Tradescantia virginiana*  Blue purple flowers with simple leaves and tubular stems; Near milepost 14  Plant with simple leaves, blue purple flowers, and tubular stems.  Figure 39 -- Public domain image of Virginia Spiderwort. | **Bluets**  Scientific name: *Houstonia caerulea*  Pale blue petals and yellow center; Grows well in grasses; Near milepost 11  Small light purple flowers in abundance.  Figure 40 -- Public domain image of Bluets. | **Princess Tree**  Scientific name: *Paulownia tomentosa*  Fragrant flowers and lobed leaves on the tall tree; Near Tidelock  Fragrant dark to light purple flowers and lobed leaves on the tall tree.  *Figure 41 -- Public domain image of the Princess Tree's flowers.* |
| **Bulbous Buttercup**  Scientific name: *Ranunculus bulbosus*  Three-lobed yellow flowers with long basal leaves; Near milepost 6  Small yellow flowers that have three-lobed basal leaves.  *Figure 42 -- Public domain image of the Bulbous Buttercup.* | **Virginia Waterleaf**  Scientific name: *Hydrophyllum virginianum*  Flowers are blue white and can be found in colonies in wooded areas; Near milepost 3  White flowers in bunches surrounded by ridged green leaves.  Figure 43 -- Public domain image of the Virginia Waterleaf. |  |

# **Blooming Periods**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Flower | Blooming Period |  | (Continued) Flower | Blooming Period |
| Bloodroot *Sanguinaria canadensis* | March – May |  | Star Chickweed *Stellaria pubera* | March – Mary |
| Periwinkle *Vinca minor* | March – June |  | Red Trillium *Trillium erectum* | April – June |
| Gill-over-the-ground *Glechoma hederacea* | April – July |  | Marsh Speedwell *Veronica scutellata* | May – Sept |
| Dogtooth Violet *Erythronium americanum* | April – June |  | Dwarf Larkspur *Delphinium tricorne* | April – May |
| Cutleaf Toothwort *Dentaria laciniate* | April – June |  | Dame’s Rocket (Non-native) *Hesperis matronalis* | May – July |
| Common Mullein *Verbascum thapsus* | June – September |  | Daisy Fleabane *Erigeron annuus* | May – Oct |
| Coltsfoot *Tussilago farfara* | March – June |  | Dogwood *Cornus florida* | April – May |
| Virginia Bluebells *Mertensia virginica* | March – May |  | Celandine Poppy *Stylophorum diphyllum* | March – May |
| Birdfoot Violet *Viola pedate* | April – June |  | Mayapple *Podophyllum peltatum* | April – June |
| Toadshade *Trillium sessile* | April – June |  | Common Paw *Asimina triloba* | April – May |
| Wild Columbine *Aquilegia candensis* | April – June |  | White Phlox *Phlow pilosa* | May – June |
| Jefferson Twinleaf *Jeffersonia diphylla* | April – May |  | Grape Hyacinth *Muscari botryoides* | April – May |
| Dutchman’s Breeches *Dicentra cucullaria* | April – May |  | Japanese Honeysuckle (Non-native) *Lonicera japonica* | April – July |
| Squirrel corn *Dicentra candensis* | April – May |  | Field Chickweed *Cerastium arvense* | April – July |
| Spring Beauty *Claytonia virginica* | March – May |  | Jack-in-the-pulpit *Arisaema triphyllum* | April – June |
| Blue Phlox *Phlox divaricata* | April – June |  | Spiderwort *Tradescantia virginiana* | April – July |
| Redbud *Cercis canadensis* | April – May |  | Bluets *Houstonia caerulea* | April – June |
| Common Blue Violet *Viola sororia* | March – June |  |  |  |
| Downy Yellow Violet *Viola pubescens* | April – June |  |  |  |
| Wild Ginger *Asarum candense* | April – May |  |  |  |
| Canadian White Violet *Viola canadensis* | April – July |  |  |  |
| Nodding Star-of-Bethlehem (Non-native) *Ornithogalum nutans* | April – May |  |  |  |

# **2015 Superintendent’s Compendium**

For a full copy of the C&O Canal National Historical Park 2015 Superintendent’s Compendium follow the link: <https://www.nps.gov/choh/learn/management/upload/CHOH-compendium-2016.pdf>

In **Section 2.1(c)(1)** of the 2015 Superintendent’s Compendium, it reads:

*Edible fruits, nuts, berries, and mushrooms may be gathered by hand for personal use or consumption. Commercial use is prohibited. Removal of fruits, nuts, berries, and mushrooms cannot disturb the remainder of the plant. Possession of plant fruits, nuts, berries, and mushrooms are limited to the following quantities:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Fruit/Nut/Berry*** | ***Daily per Person Limit*** |
| *Walnuts* | *1 Bushel* |
| *Hickory Nuts (sp.)* | *1 Bushel* |
| *Acorns (Oak sp.)* | *1 Bushel* |
| *Apples* | *1 Bushel* |
| *Cherries* | *½ Gallon* |
| *Blackberries* | *½ Gallon* |
| *Raspberries* | *½ Gallon* |
| *Dewberries* | *½ Gallon* |
| *Strawberries* | *½ Gallon* |
| *Huckleberry species* | *½ Gallon* |
| *Elderberries* | *½ Gallon* |
| *Wine berries* | *½ Gallon* |
| *Paw Paws* | *½ Gallon* |
| *Mushroom species* | *½ Gallon* |

# **References and Resources**

**Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park** | [**Wildflower Information Page**](https://www.nps.gov/choh/learn/nature/wildflowers.htm)

To view more pictures and learn more information about wildflowers at the C&O Canal, make sure to visit the Wildflower Information Page on the Park website.

**The C&O Canal Association** | [**Wildflower Guide**](https://candocanal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/flowers.pdf)

This guide uses information from the C&O Canal’s partner organization, the C&O Canal Association, resource document on wildflowers found along the Canal.

**NPSpecies** | [**Species List**](https://irma.nps.gov/NPSpecies/Reports/SpeciesList/Species%20Full%20List%20with%20Details/CHOH/11,12/false)

Interested in learning *even more* about the plants found at the C&O Canal National Historical Park?! Click here to view the full species list provided by the National Park Service’s Integrated Resource Management Applications ([IRMA](https://irma.nps.gov/Portal/)) Portal

**Wikimedia Commons** | [**Main page**](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)

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