

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Look for it now in southwest Ohio!

Spring 2022



Photos by Dave Woehr: Wild Blue Phlox, Spring Beauty, Hepatica, Bloodroot.

Spring Ephemerals

By Dave Woehr, Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist

Most of us are happy to see winter come to an end. We look forward to signs of spring to lift our spirits. The appearance of spring ephemerals is a sure-fire indication that spring is on our doorstep. The term *ephemeral* is used to describe plants that have short life cycles, blooming and fading almost in the blink of an eye. Many of our woodland wildflowers fit this definition. Some emerge from the leaf litter and forest soil beginning in late March, while others wait until April or early May to appear. All of them need to bloom, get pollinated, and produce seeds before the tree canopy produces too much shade for them to conduct photosynthesis. When that happens, the ephemerals disappear for another year.

Hiking trails in our woodlands are often lined with spring ephemerals. Now would be a great time to venture out and see how many different kinds you can spot. Watch for Wild Blue Phlox, Spring Beauty, Hepatica, and Bloodroot. You will find others, too. Try to identify as many as you can and keep a list of what you find. Of course, wildflower habitats are not as prevalent as they once were, so please protect the flowers you find in our local parks and preserves. Don't step on them. No picking allowed. Just observing and photographing. That way they'll be back for us to enjoy again the following year.

[Hisey Park](#), located outside Waynesville at 5443 Middletown Rd., Corwin, OH 45068, is a wildflower hot spot! To learn more about the spring ephemerals you may see, visit the Ohio Division of Wildlife's [Spring Wildflowers of Ohio Field Guide](#) and check out their [weekly report](#) to see what is currently in bloom.