Horticulture Report April 2022

Ephemerals

These little surprises start blooming in early April and are gone by early June. Often they are found in wooded areas under leaf litter. Sadly, if a growth area is destroyed it doesn’t come back. Many other flower seeds are carried and spread by birds, but ephemerals are different. Their seeds are covered in a material rich in fats. The seeds are carried by ants to their nests, so spread is very local. Be sure that you only purchase nursery propagated plants and do not harvest in the wild.

Today, I am showing you my first three in bloom:

Mertensia virginica (Bluebells)

Sanguinaria Canadensis (Double Blood Root) a gift from F.M. Mooberry

Anemone ranunculoides (Yellow Wood Anemone) a gift from Dr. Richard Lighty

Daffodils - from genus Narcissus. Over 40 species including paper whites. Native of Europe. They need full sun, so bloom in March & April before tree cover. The bulbs are easy to divide and replant.

There is a reason you see them everywhere. They contain Lycorine in the bulb and also to a lesser degree in the plant. This substance causes nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Therefore, squirrels, rabbits and deer avoid them!

Wash your hands well after handling.

Don’t mix in arrangements with other flowers in a vase. Lycorine shortens the life of other flowers.

You can insert a pipe cleaner into the head to prevent drooping when cut.