

April 2016 Plant of the Month



Viola pedata L., Bird's-Foot Violet

Plant of the Month for April is our native upland Bird's-Foot Violet. This herbaceous perennial is found in most counties, with the exception of those bordering the Hudson River. Bird's-Foot Violet has received official Flora of New Jersey taxonomic treatment by in-house violet specialist, William Olson. His work is available on the web (www.njflora.org) under the *Flora of New Jersey, Families* tab. The species also has a completed atlas page that provides details not provided in this short treatment. The atlas page is also present on the web page, visible under *Completed Atlas Pages, Violets*.

Viola pedata is an upland plant. It prefers dry, acidic soils with dappled light. It is often seen today as a roadside wildflower in association with warm season grasses, wild ipacac, and upland forest sedges such as *Carex tomsa*, *Carex albicans* and *Carex pensylvanica*. Its two colored petals are quite distinct as is the orientation of the petals. *Viola pedata* leaves are unlike other cut leaf violets. Bird'-Foot Violet leaves are regularly lobbed. The lobes are often slightly toothed. The leaf surface has a shiny cuticle, which is a common feature of plants found in drought prone soils. Seeds are borne from capsules as the season changes to summer.

JRA, 4/2016