

2014 March *Guess that Plant*



Dog Tooth Violet, Yellow Trout Lily
Erythronium americanum Ker Gawl.

The March *Guess That Plant* was the yellow trout lily or dog tooth violet, *Erythronium americanum*. This native upland forest lily is found throughout Northern New Jersey as well as under rich broadleaf upland forests south along the Delaware River Valley on the Inner Coastal Plain. It is also found in the rich upland forest of the Delaware Bay Shore. Trout lily is a spring ephemeral plant. As an early spring ephemeral, it is often found mixed with other herbs such as *Viola*, *Claytonia* and *Anemone* species. Each is common under the various oak, beech, birch and tulip forest canopies that occupy the Northern counties and the Inner Coastal Plain forests.

Trout lily leaves appears early, as soon as the soil warms. Normal years would see the purple mottled leaves appearing in late March. Single stemmed, yellow bell shape flowers are produced in late April and early May. The leaves persist into summer enlarging and supporting the fertile capsule.

Native Americans used the leaves and bulbs for a few medicinal uses. Moerman's [Native American Ethnobotany](#) (1999, Timber Press) cites the Cherokee use to sooth wounds that "would not heal". Iroquois used the roots as a contraceptive as well as a dermatological aid.