

April 2014 Plant of the Month



Cardamine bulbosa (Schreb.) BSP, Spring Cress

The April *Plant of the Month* is the common Spring Cress, also known as bulbous bittercress. As the brutal winter of 2013/2014 winds to an eventual end, it is the early spring wildflowers that bring some visual relief. The Spring Cress is just such a plant.

Cardamine bulbosa is the perennial mustard that occurs in mass colonies on floodplains, spring seeps and rich wetlands of Northern New Jersey and the richer wetlands of the Inner Coastal Plain. Appearing in April from a small bulbs, the plants have single stems supporting alternate wedge edged leaves. The large, bright white, four petal flowers appears on tall panicles. Together these create white speckled scenes wherever light permits. As is the life cycle for most mustard species, the plants appear early, form their characteristic silique fruits that dry and spread the small oval seeds for next year's display.