

August 2019 Plant of the Month



Campanula rotundifolia L., Bluebell Bellflower; Hairbell

August 2019's **Plant of the Month** is *Campanula rotundifolia*, New Jersey's beautiful representative of the Harebell family, Campanulaceae. This family includes the Venus Looking Glass and the many lobelia species. The bluebell bellflower is native to the Northern New Jersey Counties (USDA Plants Database, 2019), and is most abundant in counties along the Delaware River Valley (M. Hough, 1983).

The genus *Campanula* is not well represented in New Jersey. Our **Plant of the Month** is but one of three species reported in our State. The two other plants are the marsh bellflower, *Campanula aparinoides*, and the European bellflower, *Campanula rapunculoides*. I have seen all three species in New Jersey, but only the two natives have I seen as wild plants. I photographed the Bluebell bellflower (above) this spring while on a mission to the Phillipsburg Cliffs. These are a steep natural cut along the Delaware River where many rare species have been recorded over the years. The marsh bellflower is more widespread, and has been seen in the Lower Delaware River tributaries. The genus includes more than 500 species and is best represented in Europe from the Mediterranean to the Caucasus (Wikipedia, 2019).

Native Americans tribes recognized the bellflower's medicinal uses, such as an analgesic, an anti-rheumatic balm, and as a pulmonary aid (Moerman, 1998). Bellflowers are summer flowers, and are best observed from June through August.