

March 2023 Plant of the Month



Hieracium venosum L., Rattlesnake Weed or Poor Robin's Plantain

March's *Plant of the Month* is a native perennial composite that is one of the first of its family to flower in New Jersey's woodlands. Rattlesnake weed, *Hieracium venosum*, flowers in spring, as the oaks and deciduous trees are expanding their buds into leaves. Stone (1910, pg 722) cites a dry woodland as its habitat, and it is common, found statewide according to Mary Hough (1983).

Our Plant of the Month is a member of the Asteraceae or Compositae, the Daisy or Composite family. This is a very large collection of plants, and New Jersey supports genera many within this group. The genus *Hieracium* is also well represented in New Jersey, yet most of the species we see and call hawkweeds are non-native transplants from Northern Europe. *Hieracium venosum* is a native and a common associate of the cespitose early spring sedges such as *Carex albicans* v. *emmonsii*, *Carex nigromarginata*, and the dry woodland grass *Danthomia spicata*. These plants often grow together on road edges, paths and woodland clearings.

Hawkweeds in general have been used by Native Americans for medicine , and rattlesnake weed root specifically has been used by eastern tribes as a gastrointestinal aid by making infusions.