ILLINOIS NATIVE SPRING EPHEMERALS

Spring ephemerals are perennial plants that actively grow through spring, flower briefly, and go dormant by mid-summer when their leaves die back and the plant virtually disappears. Common non-native ephemerals include tulips and daffodils. This brochure is a guide to Illinois native spring ephemerals, the conditions in which they grow best, and how home gardeners can use them in their own landscapes.

By using native plants in your landscape, you help support healthy ecosystems on land and water. Many are food sources for pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Native plants promote clean water and conservation by reducing the need for garden inputs. They rarely require fertilizer and pesticides when planted in conditions similar to their natural ecosystems. Further, native plants have extensive root systems that, once established, help them thrive without watering. For more information, visit the University of Illinois Extension Horticulture website: extension.illinois.edu/global/horticulture.

PUT YOUR NATIVE PLANT GARDEN ON THE MAP

You can be part of a network of native plantings by registering your Illinois native plant garden or rain garden. This helps build community and encourage native plant use.

WHERE TO FIND PLANTS AND MORE INFORMATION

Several of the species highlighted in this brochure can be seen at the Red Oak Rain Garden: RedOakRainGarden.org. The Illinois Native Plant Society webpage lists sources of native plants. Spring ephemerals are also found at online nurseries that will ship live or bare root plants to your home. For more information about plants, see the University of Illinois Extension Horticulture website.

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Some of these species freely self-seed if seed heads are left standing post bloom. If this is an issue, remove spent flowers and seed heads. Some plants may migrate from one location to another over time. If this is not desired, transplant them back to preferred locations.