

Tales From Along the Trail...

The May-Apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*) with Naturalist Cathy Ricks



Nature's Parasol

During the first four or more years, the may-apple produces a single, rounded umbrella shaped leaf and is too young to flower. May-apples spread through rhizomes forming dense clone colonies that may be 45-100 years old.

Early Sign of Spring's "Spring"

Nestled in the fork is the single may-apple flower bud between 2 folded umbrella leaves in this mature plant. New growth pushing through the leaf litter (and often through a leaf) is a favorite early sign of spring.



Hide and Seek

Getting a look at the white, waxy flower takes a little work from the human viewer as you need to look beneath the canopy of the two "umbrellas." The white slantline moth has perfect camouflage there and may be roosting on the flowers during the daylight hours.

Tree Frog Lounge Chair

A "gray" treefrog uses his "chamelofrog" ability to change colors to his surroundings on a may-apple leaf (showing signs of leafmining insects). Leave the fruit, flowers, and leaves to the native critters to use, all parts can be poisonous to humans and pets.



photos by Tracey Johnson