

Claytonia virginica (Virginia) Spring Beauty

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic



In moist open woodlands and meadows of the Mid-Atlantic,* delicate flowers of this native spring ephemeral open to greet the sun, then close when clouds or night arrive. As trees leaf out and temperatures rise, its foliage fades away and will not reappear until the next year. The Virginia Native Plant Society honored Spring Beauty as Wildflower of the Year in 1990.

Corm	En Masse and Close-up of Flowers
Height: ½–1 foot	
Spread: ½–¾ foot	
Bloom Color: White with pink veins	
Characteristics	
Delicate, low-growing ephemeral perennial	
Grass-like leaves, some basal plus one opposite pair midway up erect or decumbent hairless stem	
Racemes of small, fragrant, star-like, white flowers with pink veins and anthers bloom late March–May	
Ovoid capsule enclosed by two persistent sepals	
Spreads easily by multiplying corms (bulb-like stem bases) and self-seeding	
Attributes	
Dormant in summer: foliage dies to the ground and does not reappear until the next spring	
No serious pests or diseases; deer rarely damage	
Edible corms taste similar to chestnuts but their tiny size makes the collection effort hardly worthwhile**	
Attracts pollinators; some small rodents eat corms	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements : Average, well-drained	<i>Hyacinthus</i> species - Hyacinth
Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade, Shade	<i>Ornithogalum nutans</i> - Nodding Star-of-Bethlehem
Water Requirements : Moist	<i>Ornithogalum umbellatum</i> - Star-of-Bethlehem
Plant corms 2–3” deep and 3-6” apart in fall	Ficaria verna - Lesser Celandine
Use in rock, wildflower, or woodland gardens with later spreading perennials, which will cover the void left when spring beauty’s foliage dies back; naturalize in lawns as one would spring crocuses	*It is native to DC and common throughout DE. It is present in MD except in the southern Eastern Shore and throughout PA. In VA, it is common throughout except in the far southwest and on the Eastern Shore.
Hardiness : USDA Zones 3a–8b	**Do not disturb spring beauty or other native plants in their natural habitat. Be sure to purchase nursery-propagated plants and not those that have been sourced from the wild.
<i>developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria</i>	

Images by Elaine Mills, Meadowlark Botanical Gardens and by Mary Free, Quarry Shade Garden