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## ***Spring Is In The Air***

Skunk cabbage, dutchman's breeches, bloodroot, trout lily, small-flowered crowfoot...

When funky names like these fill the air, spring wildflower season is here!

I enjoy learning about these fun names and their associated botanical beauties. The names are so descriptive of certain attributes of each plant.

Skunk cabbage, for instance, smells much like a skunk or something rotten to help attract the small flies that come out in February and March to pollinate it.

Dutchman's breeches look like tiny white "breeches" or pants, hung up on a clothes line to dry.

Bloodroot describes the orange-red sap in the root, that when cut, oozes out looking like blood.

Trout lily describes both the flower and leaves. The flower head looks like a small lily. The leaves are modeled, looking like the colors found on a type of fish, the trout.

Small-flowered crowfoot also describes flower and leaves. The flower is less than one quarter of an inch. The leaves stick out from the same point on the stem, looking like a crow's foot.

Spring wildflower season typically lasts from late March through early May, before the summer blooms begin. This is an important time for these often very low-growing plants to be in bloom. As the weather warms, insects begin emerging and need food sources before the summer blooms appear.

Butterflies, such as the mourning cloak and eastern comma, overwinter as adults and can often be seen visiting the spring blooms. These butterflies are quickly followed by spring azure, many of the swallowtail species, pearl crescent, red admiral, question mark, American lady, and many more.

All of this activity and bright glimmers of color on the forest floor and flitting around in the air make spring walks through the woods a truly spectacular experience.

The Seneca Parks offer a variety of wooded trails in many locations across the county. The trails are open for self-guided walks, sunrise to sunset, or visitors may attend a guided hike. All programs and park locations are listed on the park website at [www.SenecaCountyParks.com](http://www.SenecaCountyParks.com).