



North Dakota's

Spring Wild Flowers

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NORTH DAKOTA
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SERIALS DEPT.
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The first flowers are eagerly awaited after the long winter. Pasque flower, commonly called "crocus" because of the shape of the flower, is one of our most showy as well as the earliest flower. Many acres of it were lost when the prairie was plowed but it remains on some hills too steep or stony to plow. It is really an anemone, related to the white Canada anemone, which begins to bloom on the coulees at the end of May.

Many other flowers are found on the prairie in May and early June. The prairie buttercup has rather large yellow flowers for a small plant. Two kinds of Puccoon, one with pale yellow flowers and one orange, are common. Torch flower (named for the feathery seed head) is a most interesting plant. The first flowers appear almost with the pasque flowers, hugging close to the ground. Later they reach up, perhaps a foot. The flowers hang down, usually three to a stem, and are bright red on the outside.

Several kinds of milk-vetch grow on the prairie. An early one bears the "ground plum" which has various other names. One that grows on exposed hill tops in the western part of the state is Tufted milk-vetch. The leaves make a dense, silvery cushion and the abundant flowers, which are nearly white, are half an inch long.

Of the violets, Nuttall's is the only one on the drier prairie, but it has handsome, golden flowers

with delicate purple lines. Blue violets are found mostly in moist prairie coulees or in woods. One yellow-flowered kind with leafy stems grows in the woods in the eastern part of the state, and the tall one with large heart-shaped leaves, pink and white flowers, is found in woods or brush throughout.

Bloodroot is the earliest flower in the Red River woods. Its patches of white flowers are very showy. Columbine, with its graceful, conical petals, is widely distributed in wooded places. It is easily grown and does well with just a little shade. Blossoming at the same time (early June) is Waterleaf in the eastern woods. The leaves are mottled, the flowers pale lavender. It succeeds too well, coming freely from seed and spreading to all sorts of corners.

Several members of the lily family occur in the woods. The most common is False Solomon's Seal, growing a foot or so high, bearing short leaves and a few small flowers at the top of the stem. It can be found in almost any wooded coulee and often some distance from the trees. The true Solomon's Seal blossoms later. It is a larger plant and the vase-shaped flowers dangle along the curving stem. The Large Bellwort is very early, very showy, but quite restricted to the east. Our only species of trillium is not abundant. It has three large leaves at the top of the stem and the single flower hanging down below them.



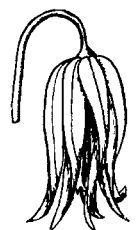
Torch flower



Solomon's seal



False Solomon's seal



Bellwort

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Two members of the pink family are common. Prairie chickweed often makes showy dense patches on the prairie. The white flowers have five petals, each split to make it look like 10. Broadleaved Sandwort is a more fragile plant found in dry woods and brush. Its white flowers have rounded petals.

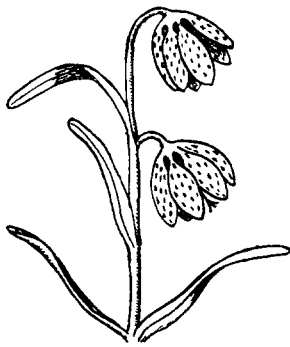
The western prairie has distinctive spring flowers. Moss Phlox has a fine cushiony growth and many white flowers. False Lupine or Golden Pea is an upright, branching plant found especially on clay soils, usually on hillsides. The golden yellow flowers are large and very showy. The seed pods are flat and bent nearly into a circle.

Wild forget-me-not is often called bluebell and is related to the eastern Virginia bluebell but not to our prairie bluebell. It is a small plant, often only 6 inches high, but the hanging blue flowers are very pretty.

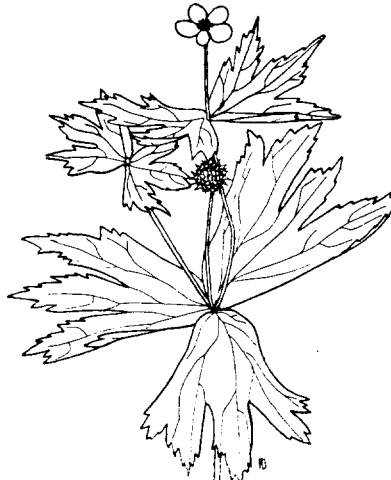
Two species of beardtongue are among the late spring flowers. The plants are short with rather glossy leaves and an upright cluster of deep blue flowers. Along with Tufted milk-vetch on steep hillsides or barren buttes grows a plant named Butte Candle. In early spring it is a stocky, very rough-haired plant with a dense cluster of small white flowers.

Leopard lily is an odd and not very common plant of the western hillsides. The flowers are greenish in color with some purple spots. The stem is about a foot high with a few short, narrow leaves.

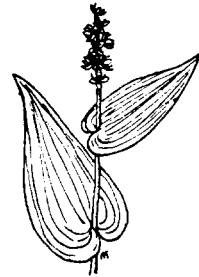
Bladderpod is a native mustard, a low, spreading plant with perfectly round, quarter-inch pods. The golden yellow flowers are rather showy in the short dry grass. One of the cinquefoils also has bright yellow flowers in the same locations. In early spring it shows a tuft of folded, silvery leaves.



Leopard lily



Canada anemone



False Lily-of-the-valley



Nuttall's
Violet



Tufted milk-vetch