

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of a milkweed plant. It features large, broad, green leaves with prominent veins. Several clusters of flowers are visible; some are in full bloom, showing five petals with a mix of pink and white, and a dark center. Other clusters are still in bud form, appearing as rounded, reddish-pink structures. The lighting is natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

# The Unspoken Stories of The Ridges: A Field Guide

By: Julia Maynard

# Contents

Introduction	2
The Plant Stories	3 - 47
Photo Credits	48 -49
Bibliography	50 - 52

Dear Reader,

Stories are how we pass information from one generation to the next and, through these pages, you will find stories from the variety of plants found here at The Ridges. As you learn the names and "faces" of each plant, these stories will help you remember and gift you the opportunity to share your own stories. As these stories pass from one generation to the next, we also pass along the appreciation and stewardship of our beautiful natural areas.

From one story teller to the next, enjoy!

## Bearberry

*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*



These plants dried leaves can be used as a substitute for tobacco. The common name of this plant is Kinnikinnick which is an Algonquin name for tobacco substitutes which include Bearberry.

Black- Eyed Susan  
*Rudbeckia hirta*



A study, conducted in Romania, showed that this plant extract might possess anticancer properties because it prevents cell growth.

Bloodroot  
*Sanguinaria canadensis*



The sap of this plant is blood red which led to this apropos name. Bloodroot has also historically been used to dye fabrics red and to create paints.



Blue Vervain  
*Verbena hastata*



This plant has had many uses over its recorded history. Celtic Druids used it during their ceremonies, and Roman ambassadors carried it as a symbol of peace and goodwill. In the 17th century, English peasants used this plant to ward off the devil, protect against illness, and bring good luck.

Boneset  
*Eupatorium perfoliatum*



Boneset was used widely in colonial America to reduce fevers and was even used during the Civil War by the Confederate army in a tea form to combat the effects of Malaria.



Bouncing Bet  
*Saponaria officinalis*



This plant is another with many different uses over its varied history. The crushed leaves and stems of this plant produce saponin which can assist in dissolving fats, oils, and grease, so this substance was used as an alternative to lye soap leading to the other common name of Soapwort.

Bouncing Bet was also used to thicken wool in clothing manufacturing. In addition to these uses, the Pennsylvania Dutch used this plant to put foam on top of their beer and the stems were used to clean beer bottles.

Buckbean  
*Menyanthes trifoliata*



Buckbean leaves have been used in place of hops in brewing operations and can also be used to make Buckbean mead.

Butter- and- Eggs  
*Linaria vulgaris*



When mixed with milk, Butter-and-Eggs has been historically used as a fly poison.

Canadian Milk Vetch  
*Astragalus canadensis*



This plant's name comes from the early settler's belief that feeding this plant to their cattle would increase their milk production.

Columbine  
*Aquilegia canadensis*



Columbine was used historically as a "love potion" by indigenous Omaha and Ponca men. The plant seeds were rubbed on the palm before grasping the hands of the person being persuaded.



Common Flax  
*Linum usitatissimum*



Common Flax is the raw material used to make linen fabric. Linen fabric production and construction can be dated back at least 10,000 years due to its discovery in Egyptian tombs and is still a prevalent fabric used today.



Common Milkweed  
*Asclepias syriaca*



Arguably one of the most historically useful plants found here, Common Milkweed made its impact in the United States during World War II. It was found that Milkweed is extremely buoyant and was collected as part of the Homefront war effort to be used in life preservers and as lining in airmen's uniforms.

Milkweed can also be used to create sewing thread, fishing line, and as a filler for mattresses and pillows.

Common Mullein  
*Verbascum thapsus*



Common Mullein is another plant with many varied uses. The leaves of this plant were used by Native Americans and colonists to insulate footwear and were also used as a type of blush for Quaker women. The stalks of Mullein have been used as hiking and walking sticks. The tops of this plant have been used as makeshift torches over the centuries and even the flowers of Mullein were used by Roman women to dye their hair blonde.

Common Tansy  
*Tanacetum vulgare*



Common Tansy has been used as an insect repellent as far back as the Middle Ages. Common Tansy also gained popularity at funerals as it was placed in coffins before embalming became regular practice due to its strong smell.

Daisy Fleabane  
*Erigeron strigosus*



Folklore tells that if a pregnant person plants Daisy Fleabane, it will determine the gender of their baby by the tint of the plants flower. Daisy Fleabane can be tinted light pink, light blue, purple, yellow, or white when it blooms.

Death Camas  
*Zigadenus elegans*



Death Camas was used as a barrier for cattle by early farmers to form a makeshift early electric fence type of barrier. The cattle would eat this plant, and it would cause them to become sick re-enforcing the border so that they wouldn't cross it again.



Fireweed  
*Epilobium angustifolium*



Fireweed is as durable as its name suggests. This was one of the first plants to re-emerge after the eruption of Mount St. Helens and was also one of the few plants to appear after London was bombed during World War II (Fireweed is known as Bomb Weed in England). Fireweed has also been used in weaving and as a padding material.



Goat's Beard  
*Tragopogon*



In France, Goat's Beard is still used to determine when the lunch hour begins based on the closing of its flowers which usually happens as the sun comes over head around noon.

Goldthread  
*Coptis trifolia*



Goldthread is commonly called Canker Root and is still used today to soothe teething babies.

Grass of Parnassus  
*Parnassia glauca*



This plants name comes from ancient Greece where cattle were grazed on Mount Parnassus upon these grasses.

Grecian Foxglove  
*Digitalis lanata*



Grecian Foxglove is used today to treat congestive heart failure and regulate heartbeat (digitalis glycosides). However, there is evidence that this plant and plants with similar properties were used for the same purpose dating back to Roman times.

Harebell  
*Campanula rotundifolia*



Harebell was used to dye the iconic blue in the tartans of the MacDonald Clan in Scotland as this flower is also prevalent in Scotland too. This particular tartan pattern is dated back to 1819.



Heal-All or Self-Heal  
*Prunella vulgaris*



This plant earned its name for being a supposed "cure" for a large variety of ailments including sore throats and other respiratory ailments.



Herb Robert  
*Geranium robertianum*



Another name for this plant is Stinking Bob. This name conveys its most common purpose as an insect repellent if you're in a pinch.

Jack- in- the- Pulpit  
*Arisaema triphyllum*



Starch from this plants root was once used for starching shirt collars but this practice was discontinued due to the irritation that it caused.

Jewelweed  
*Impatiens capensis*



Jewelweed leaves can be used to counteract the effects of Poison Ivy's itch because the sap of Jewelweed counteracts the resin found on Poison Ivy.

Joe Pye Weed  
*Eupatoeium maculatum*



Some stories say that this plant was used to cure typhoid fever and that the man who discovered and used this plant was given the English name "Joe Pye". However, there are many different versions of this story and explanations of the plant's name.

Labrador Tea  
*Rhododendron groenlandicum*



The leaves of this plant were used to create a popular drink during the American Revolution and this drink was even enjoyed by the famous environmentalist, Henry Thoreau.



Lance-Leaved Coreopsis  
*Coreopsis lanceolata*



Lance-Leaved Coreopsis was used by early settlers to repel fleas and bedbugs in mattresses. This plant was also used to produce a vibrant yellow dye used to color fabrics.



Marsh Marigold  
*Caltha palustris*



The flower buds of Marsh Marigolds can be pickled and were once considered a delicacy. The blossoms of this plant have been used to make wine and as a source of yellow dye. The alternative name for this plant is Cowslip due to this plant thriving in areas too wet to cultivate but still suitable enough to graze cattle on.

Maximilian's Sunflower  
*Helianthus maximilianii*



The stalk of this plant has been used to make fiber for paper making and has also been blended with silk to create cloth in China.

Periwinkle  
*Vinca minor*



This plant is also known as Cemetery Plant because it was used in the 19th century to out compete other plants within cemeteries'.

Purple Avens  
*Geum riyale*



Purple Avens is also known as "Chocolate Root" due to a drink made by early settlers with this plant that vaguely resembled hot chocolate. However, it tasted more similar to cloves than chocolate.

Purple Pitcher Plant  
*Sarracenia purpurea*



This plant was used by the Micmac First Nations Peoples to cure smallpox in the late 1800s and was reportedly successful. Today, this plant is still being studied for its uses in helping to treat small pox topically.



Pussy-Toes  
*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*



This plant has been used traditionally in the Appalachian region to make shampoo. Pussy-Toes flower heads have also been used as a moth repellent after dried.

Round-Leaved Sundew  
*Droseraceae rotundifolia*



The leaves of this plant can curdle milk and had been used in Sweden to make historical cheese varieties.

Scouring-Rush  
*Equisetum hyemale*



The stems of these rushes can be used as files to sand and shape the reeds for woodwind instruments like clarinets. The files made from this plant are called Reed Rush Files.

Showy Lady's Slipper  
*Cypripedium reginae*



Showy Lady's Slippers have a faint scent of  
vanilla and are also the state flower of  
Minnesota.

Shrubby Cinquefoil  
*Potentilla fruticosa*



The leaves of this plant are used as a substitute for tea leaves in the high elevations of the Himalayas where other vegetation is in short supply.



Stinging Nettle  
*Urtica dioica* ssp. *Gracilis*



Cloth and highly durable netting can be made from the fibers found within the stalk of this plant.

Sweet-Scented Bedstraw  
*Galium triflorum*



This plant was used by early settlers as a mattress filler due to its Velcro-like properties and flexible stems when dried. In legend, this plant has also been said to have been what lined the manger where Jesus was born.

Trailing Arbutus  
*Epigaea repens*



Trailing Arbutus was commonly used for May baskets and has become endangered in many states due to over collecting.

Wild Sarsaparilla  
*Aralia nudicaulis*



Wild Sarsaparilla can be used as an ingredient in making root beer, but it is not used in the once popular sarsaparilla drink which is a common misconception.

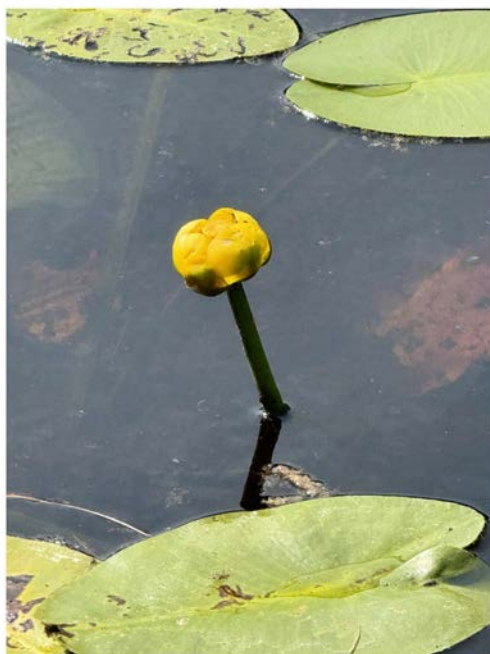
Wintergreen  
*Gaultheria procumbens*



Wintergreen use to be used as a commercial source of wintergreen flavoring to flavor candies, medicine, chewing gum, and teas. Today, this plant is mainly used as a remedy for muscle pain in the form of Wintergreen oil.



Yellow Pond Lily  
*Nuphar variegata*



Indigenous peoples would dry and roast the starchy rhizomes of this plant, that are found just below the water near the base of the stem, to create a popcorn of sorts.

## Photo Credits

- Page 1: Bearberry, Tony Kiszonas
- Page 2: Black-Eyed Susan, Julia Maynard
- Page 3: Bloodroot, Charles Ray Newsom
- Page 4: Blue Vervain, Tony Kiszonas
- Page 5: Boneset, Tony Kiszonas
- Page 6: Bouncing Bet, Wyatt Isakson
- Page 7: Buckbean, Tony Kiszonas
- Page 8: Butter-and-Eggs, Tony Kiszonas
- Page 9: Canadian Milk Vetch, Alan Cressler
- Page 10: Colombine, Julia Maynard
- Page 11: Common Flax, Peter M. Dziuk
- Page 12: Common Milkweed, Julia Maynard
- Page 13: Common Mullein, Julia Maynard
- Page 14: Common Tansy, Julia Maynard
- Page 15: Daisy Fleabane, Tony Kiszonas
- Page 16: Death Camas, Tony Kiszonas
- Page 17: Fireweed, Wyatt Isakson
- Page 18: Goat's Beard, Tony Kiszonas
- Page 19: Goldthread, Tony Kiszonas
- Page 20: Grass of Parnassus, Julia Maynard
- Page 21: Grecian Foxglove, Peter M. Dziuk
- Page 22: Harebell, Julia Maynard
- Page 23: Heal-All or Self-Heal, Tony Kiszonas

Page 24:	Herb Robert, Tony Kiszonas
Page 25:	Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Julia Maynard
Page 26:	Jewelweed, Julia Maynard
Page 27:	Joe Pye Weed, Julia Maynard
Page 28:	Labrador Tea, Julia Maynard
Page 29:	Lance-Leaved Coreopsis, Tony Kiszonas
Page 30:	Marsh Marigold, Julia Maynard
Page 31:	Maximillian's Sunflower, Sandy Smith
Page 32:	Periwinkle, Tony Kiszonas
Page 33:	Purple Avens, Julia Maynard
Page 34:	Purple Pitcher Plant, Julia Maynard
Page 35:	Pussy-Toes, Tony Kiszonas
Page 36:	Round-Leaved Sundew, Tony Kiszonas
Page 37:	Scouring Rush, Lee Page
Page 38:	Showy Lady's Slipper, Julia Maynard
Page 39:	Shrubby Cinquefoil, Tony Kiszonas
Page 40:	Stinging Nettle, Tony Kiszonas
Page 41:	Sweet-Scented Bedstraw, K. Chayka
Page 42:	Trailing Arbutus, Tony Kiszonas
Page 43:	Wild Sarsaparilla, Tony Kiszonas
Page 44:	Wintergreen, Tony Kiszonas
Page 45:	Yellow Pond Lily, Tony Kiszonas

## Bibliography

- Adirondacks Forever Wild . "Buckbean ᵀ Bogbeanᵀ Menyanthes Trifoliata." Wildadirondacks.org, 2017, wildadirondacks.org/adirondack-wildflowers-buckbean-menyantes-trifoliata.html. Accessed 13 Aug. 2025.
- Anderson, M. Kat . Plant Guide BOG LABRADOR TEA *Ledum Groenlandicum* Oeder Plant Symbol= LEGR. Feb. 2012.
- Arndt, William, et al. "In Vitro Characterization of a Nineteenth-Century Therapy for Smallpox." *PloS One*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2012, p. e32610, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3302891/, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0032610.
- Burlec, Ana Flavia, et al. "Preliminary Phytochemical and Biological Evaluation of *Rudbeckia Hirta* Flowers." *Plants*, vol. 12, no. 15, 1 Jan. 2023, p. 2871, www.mdpi.com/2223-7747/12/15/2871, https://doi.org/10.3390/plants12152871. Accessed 31 Aug. 2023.
- Burton, Frances M., and Aurelia M. Stampp. Door County's Wildflowers a Field Guide for the Curious. Stonehill Publishing, 2005.
- Kahler, Kathryn A. "Back in the Day ᵀ WHEN PICKING MILKWEED WAS a PATRIOTIC PURSUIT ᵀ Wisconsin DNR." Wisconsin.gov, 2019, dnr.wisconsin.gov/wnrmag/2019/Fall/back.
- Karriker, Kent. "Jewelweed." Wwww.fs.usda.gov, www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/impatiens\_capensis.shtml.

- Kelleher, Katy. "Periwinkle, the Color of Poison, Modernism, and Dusk." *The Paris Review*, 19 Aug. 2020, [www.theparisreview.org/blog/2020/08/19/periwinkle-the-color-of-poison-modernism-and-dusk/](http://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2020/08/19/periwinkle-the-color-of-poison-modernism-and-dusk/).
- Kunwar, Ripu M, et al. *Ethnobotany of the Himalayas*. Springer Nature, 29 July 2021.
- LeCain, Ron. "MSU Extension | Montana State University." *Msuextension.org*, 2023, [apps.msuextension.org/montguide/guide.html?sku=MT199911AG](https://apps.msuextension.org/montguide/guide.html?sku=MT199911AG). Accessed 13 Aug. 2025.
- Liebich, Katrina, and Lisa Hupp. "Fireweed | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service." *FWS.gov*, 21 Dec. 2021, [www.fws.gov/story/fireweed](https://www.fws.gov/story/fireweed).
- Lukes, Roy. *Once around the Sun a Door County Journal*. Pine Street Press, 1976.
- Matthews, Robin F. "Drosera Rotundifolia." *Usda.gov*, 2018, [www.fs.usda.gov/database/feis/plants/forb/drrot/all.html#43](https://www.fs.usda.gov/database/feis/plants/forb/drrot/all.html#43).
- McArthur, J. "When the Fireweed Flowers." *Imperial War Museums*, 2015, [www.iwm.org.uk/blog/research/2015/06/when-the-fireweed-flowers](https://www.iwm.org.uk/blog/research/2015/06/when-the-fireweed-flowers). Accessed 13 Aug. 2025.
- McGhan, Patricia J. Ruta. "Harebell." *Www.fs.usda.gov*, [www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/campanula\\_rotundifolia.shtml](https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/campanula_rotundifolia.shtml).
- Missouri Department of Conservation. "Columbine." *Missouri Department of Conservation*, 2025, [mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/columbine](https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/columbine). Accessed 13 Aug. 2025.



- Ryder, Derek. "Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley." Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley, 2019, [www.biosphereinstitute.org/september-cow-parsnip](http://www.biosphereinstitute.org/september-cow-parsnip). Accessed 13 Aug. 2025.
- Schofield, Janice J, and Janice Schofield Eaton. *Discovering Wild Plants*. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books, 1989.
- Scotland, N. R. of. (1970, January 1). Tartan Details - MacDonald . Tartan details - the Scottish Register of Tartans. <https://www.tartanregister.gov.uk/tartanDetails?ref=2334>
- Stevens, Michelle. ANNUAL SUNFLOWER *Helianthus Annuus* L. Plant Symbol= HEAN3. 2001.
- The University of Texas at Austin. "Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center - the University of Texas at Austin." Wildflower.org, 2023, [www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=metr3](http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=metr3).
- U.S. Forest Service. "Northern Grass of Parnassus." Usda.gov, 2025, [www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/parnassia\\_palustris](http://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/parnassia_palustris)
- Visit WW2 Admin. "Milkweed Pods to the Rescue in WWII - World War II American Experience." World War II American Experience - Experience Stories of American Sacrifice, Unity, and Might in World War II History., 23 Nov. 2021, [visitww2.org/milkweed-pods-to-the-rescue-in-wwii/](http://visitww2.org/milkweed-pods-to-the-rescue-in-wwii/). Accessed 13 Aug. 2025.
- Whayne, Thomas F. "Clinical Use of Digitalis: A State of the Art Review." *American Journal of Cardiovascular Drugs*, vol. 18, no. 6, 31 July 2018, pp. 427—440, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40256-018-0292-1>.