DUTCHMAN’S BREECHES

*Dicentra cucullaria*

Dutchman’s Breeches is about 6 inches tall and looks a little like a short carrot plant. It is found in shaded road banks and woods around the area. The delicate white, nodding flowers with the little yellow spurs at the top gather at the end of a protruding stalk in April and May. The flowers do look like trousers out drying on a line, hence the name. The plant is ephemeral disappearing by early June.

Certain American Indian tribes used the plant as a love charm as well as for medicinal purposes. Early settlers also relied on it medicinally. For example, they used its leaves as a poultice for skin problems and tea made from its root as a diuretic.