



Characteristic evergreen leaves (clockwise from upper left) of liverleaf, wild ginger (heartleaf), spotted wintergreen and rattlesnake plantain. Photo of rattlesnake plantain by Dave Otto, others by Ken Moore.

FLORA
FROM PAGE 1

hybrid, and I'm not hazarding an identifica- tion until I see the rub- ber-textured, urn-shaped flowers hiding beneath the leaf litter in mid-March and April. It's pollinated by beetles and other insects moving about beneath the warm litter in the cold of early spring. You'll find the wild gingers scattered throughout the forest floor because they can tolerate drier soils. Most often, you find just a leaf or two for each plant. I'm always happy when I find more vigorous three-to-five leaved clumps. Once

in a while, you'll luck upon clumps that can have 10 or more leaves. The spotted winter- green sports its several white-veined, dark-green leaves along a short upright stem. Its cluster of two to five white, open bell-shaped flow- ers appear in late spring and into the early sum- mer, when most folks have stopped walking in the woods. It's always a surprise and a treat to find a cluster of several spotted wintergreens in flower in the deciduous or pine forests. The last of these four diminutive evergreens to flower is the rattlesnake

plantain. Look for a small, white-veined leafy rosette hugging the ground scat- tered throughout piney woods and deciduous forests. You'll have to be a summertime woods walk- er, however, to enjoy the spikes of little white orchid flowers (described in *Flora* last summer, volume II no. XXIII) reaching up four to eight inches from the center of that little rosette. Now is the best time to find all four, whether in the Adams Tract or any of our other natural areas. Take *The Citizen* along to help you spot them, and then go back to catch them in flower as the seasons progress.

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