

M. R. Hyker's Latest Adventure



05-11-08 - G. Richard Thompson WMA, VA (Trail info to follow.): MRSHyker and I got this hike done just before the heavy rains moved in. We had some sprinkles and high wind and about 45 minutes of bright sun right at the end of the hike. The entire circuit was about 9 miles. The trails were nice but the wildflowers are unbelievable. If you are into wildflowers this is a "must do hike" in early May. The climb to the ridge was pretty gradual, helped by stopping to look at all of the flowers on the way up. Once on top the terrain is flat or rolling with only one other steep, but short climb. During the peak Trillium Viewing Season expect a lot of company, especially along a one mile stretch of the AT that is close to a ridge top parking area. On either side of that segment we were all alone.

There were literally millions of Trillium (Janet described them as fields of trillium in the forest and that's a pretty apt description.), thousands of Showy Orchis and a family showed us where to find some very impressive Yellow Lady Slippers in their prime. We even saw a rare double flower on one plant. They are only in one small area on the ridge. These were the most exotic plants. The trillium turn to a deep fuchsia color as they age.

There were also Rue Anemone, May Apple and Wild Geranium - too many to count, several varieties of violets, a lot of Sweet Cicely, Star Chickweed, Fleabane, Dogwood, Blood Root (Out of bloom now but the leaves are quite obvious.), a couple varieties of mustard, Golden Ragwort, Wood Betony or Lousewort, Golden Alexander and way to much of that invasive garlic mustard. Don't know what blooms there in the summer but I thought I saw some Wild (Smooth) Hydrangea leaves and we found a lot of False Solomon's Seal that should be blooming in a couple of weeks.