

## Plants in the Park

Although the park lands were put aside to protect historic Civil War battlefields, they also protect many valuable habitats. Several units have walking trails that take you through grasslands, forests and near streams.



**Glendale Cardinal Flower:** can grow up to 4 feet high. Found mostly in damp areas, this brilliantly colored wildflower is pollinated mostly by hummingbirds.

As you walk through the different ecosystems, take notice of the different kinds of plants. Please do not pick any of the plant life you observe. It may be the home of an animal or its next meal. We want other visitors to enjoy the plant life as well. To better identify plants

in the park, use the tips from this brochure and any other nature guides you might have.



**Golden Club\*:** The yellow tip actually contains many tiny flowers that can be seen from April to June in shallow, standing water.

## Exotics & Invasives

An exotic plant is one that did not evolve in an area and has no natural enemies. It may become invasive if it has the ability to grow and reproduce quickly.

Invasive, exotic plants often take over natural habitats and push out native plants. This can take away important food or habitat from animals. Over time this results in loss of diversity, making natural communities unstable. Many of the plants that are now considered invasive came from home gardens. Plants were brought from Europe and Asia for ornamental use in homes and yards and quickly escaped to the wild. Japanese



**Queen Anne's Lace (Wild Carrot):** originally from Europe, now commonly found in open fields or on roadsides. Its carrot-like root can be harvested for food when it's young.

honeysuckle, English ivy and Bamboo are just a few examples from this area.



**Japanese honeysuckle:** woody vine introduced from Asia. Climbs quickly and can overwhelm other trees and plants in the area. Found throughout the park.

# Nature in Richmond National Battlefield Park



**Venus' Looking-glass:** a member of the Bluebell family, found in dry, open areas from May to August. Its name comes from its shiny seeds, which resemble tiny mirrors.

This brochure is one of a series featuring wildlife in historic Richmond National Battlefield Park. Look for other brochures about the trees, reptiles & amphibians, insects & spiders, birds, and mammals.

Images from front:

**Jack-in-the-pulpit:** flowers from April to June in damp woods. The "Jack" part of the plant contains many tiny flowers. In late summer and early fall clusters of red

**Vermilion Waxycap:** This brilliantly colored mushroom can be found mid-summer to late fall, scattered or grouped in the forest.

**Moss** like this can be found on rocks or logs in the forest and on banks of streams.

**Royal Fern:** found in wetlands and is becoming more scarce with an increase in agriculture. It gets its name from being one of the largest ferns you will find. In some mythologies, this fern is rumored to have magical powers.

**Wild Lupine\*:** got its name from a misconception that it "wolves down" nutrients from the soil. In reality, it makes the soil more fertile. Look for this flower from April to July in dry woods and open fields at Cold Harbor.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Richmond National Battlefield



## Plants & Fungi

Richmond National  
Battlefield Park  
Richmond, Virginia

\* Picture courtesy of the Division of Cultural Heritage

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# Plants



Wood Anemone: also known as "wind flowers" because they sway gracefully in the wind. "Anemone" comes from the ancient Greek word for "wind".

Herbaceous plants are the basis for all life on Earth; without them, we

wouldn't have air to breathe or food to eat. Plants filter the air and water as well as create oxygen. The green color is caused by chlorophyll, a pigment that helps the plant absorb sunlight. The absorbed sunlight along with water



Common Blue Violet: this wildflower is native to the eastern half of the US and is commonly found in yards.

and carbon dioxide are used during photosynthesis to make a sugar for nourishment. All of the groups discussed except for mosses are vascular plants and can transport water and nutrients from their roots to their leaves

and stems. Around the park, you will find plants featured in this brochure and many others.



Black-eyed Susan: a member of the sunflower family, can be found in open areas of the forest and in the battlefields when in bloom from June to October.

## Wildflowers

Wildflowers are plants that can reproduce in the wild without human cultivation. This is a very large group



Pink Lady's Slipper: An Orchid that can be found growing near pine and oak trees. This and other wildflowers should not be picked.

of plants that all have easily visible flowers. Most need to be pollinated by insects or birds, and some of the pairings are extremely specialized.

## Grasses, Sedges & Rushes

Grasses, sedges and rushes have deep roots that keep soil from eroding and create essential habitat for small mammals and some birds. Members of this group have narrow leaves and small, often unnoticeable, flowers that are pollinated by wind. Their seeds are dispersed by wind as well. Grasses have round, hollow stems with noticeable "nodes" or joints. Sedges have solid, triangular, joint-less stems and grow in wetter, cooler areas than grasses. Rushes have round, solid or hollow stems; their fruit stays on the plant all season.



Broomsedge (left) and Little Bluestem (right): two grasses, both of which can be seen mid-to late summer through fall in the open battlefields of the park.

## Ferns & Fern Allies

Plants from this group have been around since before the dinosaurs. True ferns have large, complex leaves, called fronds, while the fern allies have small, simple leaves. Both groups reproduce by spores. They are usually found in damp environments.



Christmas fern: grows in well-drained soil. Can be easily recognized by the boot-shaped leaves.

Round-branch Ground-pine: A fern ally found in groups on the forest floor. This plant is easily disturbed and is becoming less common in the area.

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## Mosses

Mosses are small plants that grow in damp environments. This is because they are non-vascular. They do not have flowers, and their stems and leaves are very different from other plants. Look for them in the forests near streams or in wet areas.

# Fungi

Fungi play an essential role in the food web as decomposers and food for animals. They use string-like filaments called "hyphae" to absorb nutrients from decaying material. There are



Sickener: This mushroom gets its name from the vomiting it causes if eaten. Its brightly colored cap warns humans of its inedibility.



Sulfur Shelf: This brightly colored shelf fungus can be found on live or decaying trees and can grow up to a foot in diameter.

many different types of fungi; not just mushrooms. Unlike what you find in the grocery store, fungi in the wild can be poisonous and you should not eat them.



Turkeytail: This fungus can be found clustered on wounded or dead trees in the forest. It gets its name from its obvious likeness to a turkey's tail.

## Lichens

Lichens are a symbiosis or a pair of organisms that help each other and are found everywhere, even on the backs of living animals! They are a fungus plus another organism capable of photosynthesis. The fungus part of the organism "runs" the system, while the photosynthesizer gives the organism energy. Lichens are the first organism to colonize rocks and disturbed areas and can help the soil become more nutritious for other plants. The color of lichen depends on the type of nutrients and amount of water in the soil but usually ranges from white to green.



Look for lichens like this on rocks, trees and other hard surfaces in the forests of the park.