

EXTRA! WILDFLOWERS ON THE GUNFLINT TRAIL

“Growing” on a Colorful Gunflint Trail Adventure

From towering trees to the teeniest wildflower, you’ll find plants everywhere on the Gunflint Trail. Many people visit the Gunflint Trail because they feel calmer and happier when they’re surrounded by trees, wildflowers, ferns, and other plants.

All winter long, people look forward to the arrival of wildflowers along the Gunflint Trail. Those first, delicate blooms mean the end of snow and cold and the arrival of warmth and sunshine. Some of the first wildflowers to appear in the spring are violets and strawberry blossoms. Throughout the summer, we watch for other favorite flowers, such as columbine, bluebead lily, moccasin flowers, and fireweed. In the fall, asters, goldenrod, and pearly everlasting bloom alongside the trees’ changing leaves. In the winter, you might spy the red berries of the wintergreen plant.

Wildflowers are fun to look for because they’re stationary. You don’t have to worry about spooking them or having them fly off when you find them. See how many flowers you can spot on your next walk in the woods.



Bunchberry



Moccasin Flower

A Wildflower Safari

Most people like looking at wildflowers because they’re pretty, but because some wildflowers only grow in very specific environments and may not bloom every year, looking for wildflowers is a bit like going on a treasure hunt. If you want to see a specific type of wildflower, you need to know what time of year it blooms and what growing conditions it prefers.

You could go on a “wildflower safari” on the Gunflint Trail each week and see completely different flowers on each trip.

If you and your family want to hunt up some wildflowers, take a hike on any Gunflint Trail hiking trail, paying attention to the foliage along the path. Many wildflowers bloom very close to the ground and you need a good eye to spot them.

Where to Find Wildflowers Along the Gunflint Trail

The Wildflower Sanctuary

Located approximately four miles up the Gunflint Trail from Grand Marais, just before the Devil Track River bridge and Hedstrom Lumber Mill, this acre preserve shows off many of the Gunflint Trail’s native wildflowers. Look for the wildflower sanctuary sign on the left-hand side of the road, just after the intersection with County Road 60.

Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center

This museum, located 55 miles up the Gunflint Trail from Grand Marais at 28 Moose Pond Drive, has a number of short hiking trails, including a designated wildflower walk. People especially enjoy the property’s moccasin flowers (a type of orchid) that bloom for about two weeks anytime from May through June. (You can see a photo of the moccasin flower on this page.)

AT HOME ACTIVITY

Make Your Own Hummingbird Bird Feeder and Hummingbird Nectar

To produce more plants, plants require pollination. Creatures like bees, butterflies, bats, and hummingbirds all pollinate plants. We can help plants thrive by helping their pollinators to thrive. Try this easy “upcycling” project at home with an adult helper to build your own hummingbird feeder.

Supplies:

Clean, empty 20-ounce pop bottle with screw-on lid
Large nail
Hammer
Paper towel or napkin
Hot glue gun and gluesticks for gun
A large jar lid, like from applesauce or spaghetti sauce jars
Medium gauge wire
Wire cutters
Paint, stickers, or other decorations

1. Remove pop bottle label, if not already done.
2. Take the pop bottle lid and using the nail and hammer, poke 4-6 holes in the center of the lid until you have one large hole.
3. Preheat the hot glue gun. Push about one quarter of the paper towel or napkin through the threaded part of the pop bottle lid, out the top of the lid. Place four dabs of hot glue on the top of the pop bottle lid near the edges. Press the pop bottle lid into the center of the upside down jar lid, making sure you don't glue down the paper towel. The paper towel is creating a gap between the two lids.
4. Let the glue dry. Pull out the paper towel.
5. Screw the bottle into the lid and set the bottle so it is standing upside down on the lid. Wrap the bottle with wire to create a hanger for the feeder. Once you're satisfied with the hanger, use dabs of hot glue to hold the wire in place. Let the glue dry, then decorate the bottle with non-toxic paint, stickers, or anything else you can imagine.
6. Fill feeder with hummingbird nectar and hang on a tree or pole near flowers.

Recipe for Hummingbird Nectar

2 cups water

½ cup sugar

Over medium heat, boil sugar and water together until slightly thickened. Let cool completely, then pour into your feeder.

Remember to clean your hummingbird feeder and fill with it with fresh nectar at least once a week.

The Gunflint Trail Explorers Program

The Gunflint Trail Explorers program is a Gunflint Trail wide naturalist program based at Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center. This free program is designed for families with elementary school aged children, but is suitable for all individuals curious about the natural and cultural history of the Gunflint Trail. The program features activity bins loaded with themed supplies and an activity guide, adventure booklets, indoor and outdoor games, field guides, and other kid-friendly information all related to the unique nature of northeastern Minnesota.

With Gunflint Trail Explorers program material, families immerse themselves in the great outdoors at their own pace. All activities are self-guided and feature a mix of exploration, science, dress-up and play. Families check out activity materials at the Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center front desk. Everyone participating in an activity receives a handmade journal to record their “findings” and take home.

During the summer months, the U.S. Forest Service and other outdoor educators offer a wide variety of naturalist programs each week at Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center and Gunflint Trail businesses. Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center also hosts journal making workshops throughout the summer.

Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center is located 55 miles up the Gunflint Trail (Cook County Hwy 12) outside of Grand Marais, at 28 Moose Pond Drive. For more information call 218-388-9915, email info@chikwauk.com, or visit www.chikwauk.com.

WILDFLOWER FACTOIDS



Many wildflowers get their names from what they resemble. Some examples are: moccasin flowers, Dutchmen's breeches, and pus-sytoes. Can you guess what the flower pictured above is called? If you guessed “starflower,” you're correct!

Wildflowers have more function than just being pretty. Native Americans used parts of some wildflowers for medicinal uses such as curing headaches and diseases.



With pollination, all wildflowers will eventually transform into fruits that contain the seeds needed to grow more wildflowers. Some of these fruits are edible. The blueberry blossoms above will turn into juicy, delicious blueberries after the flower disappears from the plant.

The pitcher plant is a carnivorous plant growing along the Gunflint Trail. The plant traps insects to get nitrogen and phosphorus.

Want to learn more about wildflowers? Try *Peterson First Field Guide to Wildflowers*, *Wildflowers of the Boundary Waters* by Betty Vos Hemstad, or *Canoe Country Flora* by Mark “Sparky” Stensaas.

WILDFLOWER COLORING ACTIVITY



Use the photograph of violets below to give you ideas for coloring the illustration, or make up your own color scheme and invent a new kind of violet!

When you are on the Gunflint Trail, look for violets on the forest floor in the early part of the spring.



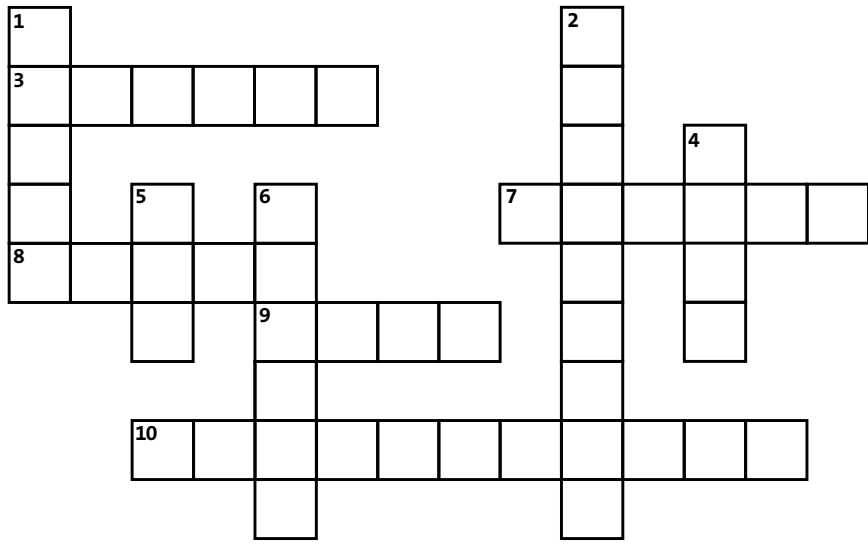
WILDFLOWER MAZE

Find your way out of the maze from the daisy field. Use a pencil to do the "hiking."

When you are on the Gunflint Trail, look for daisies along roadsides throughout the summer.



WILDFLOWER PUZZLE PAGE



WILDFLOWER CROSSWORD

ACROSS

3. A moccasin flower is this type of flower
7. A wildflower is shaped by several of these
8. Marsh marigolds and other water loving plants can be found here
9. Most wildflowers need a mix of sun and this to thrive
10. You might find this wildflower's red, minty berries in the winter

DOWN

1. These are underground and help a wildflower soak up water and nutrients
2. This tasty Gunflint Trail berry has white and pink tinged bell shaped flowers in the spring
4. We recommend you stay on one of these when you look for wildflowers
5. A mammal that pollinates wildflowers
6. Time of year when violets bloom

Z T Y K U B T R I L L I U M T
 R T H I S T L E A K Z W L J A
 D X D V I O L E T R N D F C T
 B P T I E E S K M E D T O O M
 V Z B R L O Z V K B I R A L A
 Y K A I F P C S A S T E R U S
 V L N S R F I R E W E E D M A
 F X E J K G D B Y V L K M B N
 Z F B O I G S K L M I Z V I E
 L D E P Y I I U P U O T X N M
 I J R E F Z G R J V E I H E O
 G W R P C P R V Q N I B G M N
 P K Y Z X H R O Z V R E E G E
 P Y A P I P S I S S E W A L S
 P S A I X L A H V E E W U X L

WILDFLOWER WORD SEARCH

Find the following words in the grid of letters to the left. Words can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal, forwards or backwards.

- TRILLIUM
- PIPSISSEWA
- VIOLET
- BANEBERRY
- ROSE
- BLUEBELL
- FIREWEED
- ASTER
- IRIS
- THISTLE
- ANEMONE
- COLUMBINE

SECRET MESSAGE

Use this code to reveal an important message about wildflowers:

- A=Z
- B=A
- C=B, etc.

SFNFNCFS, EPO'U QJDL XJMEGMPXFST.

UBLF POMZ QJDUVSFT BOE KFZWF UIF

CMPPNT GPS PUIFST UP FOKPZ

WORD SCRAMBLE

Can you unscramble these common names for wildflowers?

SIADY _____

SOER _____

VLCROE _____

YLLI _____

DDNNEAOIL _____



KEY TO ANSWERS:
 Crossword Puzzle: DOWN: 3. orchid, 7. petals, 8. swamp, 9. rain, 10. wintergreen;
 ACROSS: 1. roots, 2. blueberry, 4. path, 5. bat, 6. spring.
 Secret Message: Remember, don't pick wildflowers. Take only pictures and leave the blooms for others to enjoy.
 Word Scramble: daisy, clover, rose, lily, dandelion