

This Week in the Woods June: Week One

JUNE WEEK ONE



Little bluets



American redstart (male)



Bluebead lily



Mayapple



Sheet web



Chestnut-sided warbler (male)

This Week in the Woods, Assistant Editor Meghan McCarthy McPhaul discovered a patch of **little bluets**. Also called known as Quaker ladies, these exquisite little flowers typically grow in clusters in sunny, disturbed areas such as the edge of lawn. Their pollinators include small native bees. Here's a [profile from the Native Plant Trust](#).

Here are some other nature sights this week (clockwise):

American redstarts often appear on woods edges, and we frequently find them gleaning insects in yard trees. The males are hard to miss. They can be very bold (we once watched one unsuccessfully try to chase off a sleeping dog), and their black and orange colors is eye-catching. According to the [American Bird Conservancy](#), in their Central and South American wintering grounds, people often call them “candelita,” or “little torch.” As noted in a [previous post in this series](#), males may have more than one mate, but nonetheless are actively involved in feeding chicks.

Bluebead lily is in bloom now. Named for its berries (it also often goes by its genus name, *Clintonia*), this forest lily tolerates a variety of growing conditions. We often find it in large patches in sun-dappled, south-facing hardwood stands. Here’s a [profile from the U.S. Forest Service](#).

As noted in this [article by Chuck Wooster from our archive](#), our region is “a heck of a good place for seeing birds,” because we’re located at the overlap of northern and southern breeding grounds for different species. For **chestnut-sided warblers**, the Upper Valley is smack in the middle of the breeding range, and the birds’ *pleased, pleased, pleased to meetcha* call is a common voice in the late-spring chorus. The birds prefer young, shrubby forest areas – for example, regrowth after a timber patch cut. We discovered this one perched in an apple tree not far from the forest edge. The chestnut-sided warbler is one of Audubon Vermont’s “birders’ dozen,” a species list developed as part of the nonprofit’s *Foresters for the Birds* project. You can learn more about this project to promote [bird habitat in working forests at this link](#).

If you visit a meadow in the morning, you’ll likely find numerous dew-spotted **sheet webs**. If you look above the main web, you’ll see higher threads that tangle insects and lead them down into the bowl-shaped platform. At this point, the spider rises up through the platform and seizes its prey. We’re pretty sure that the web in the image was made by a bowl and doily weaver, a common species of our region that constructs a double-layered sheet. Here’s a [profile of the species from entomologist Eric Eaton’s blog](#).

Last spring, we found almost no blooms under the leaves of local **mayapples**, so we’re pleased to see that the plants appear to be having a more productive 2021. It’s worth noting that this wildflower is considered rare in northern New England, and that some populations we find growing here may be from introduced stock. Mayapples produce magnolia-like flowers that beautiful but easy to overlook, because they grow beneath the plants’ umbrella-like leaves. They get their name from their fruit which – unlike the rest of the plant – is edible. Here’s a [profile from the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Extension Horticulture Program](#).

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