Spring Ephemerals are an amazing group of plants. Usually found in deciduous forests, where the sun can reach the forest floor to get these plants started early. After blooming, they collect the energy they need to carry on from year to year. Soon going dormant, as the trees leaf out.

I remember my grandfather O’Brien teaching me about Sanguinaria canadensis, our native bloodroot, while out fishing in the early spring. This ephemeral still brings back good memories when it comes into bloom.
In today’s world, there are many selected forms of most plants, and bloodroots are not an exception. Two of our favorites are, the double form of bloodroot, and the pink flowering form. We particularly like the double form, because it flowers a little later than the species. Also it has no flower parts, therefore the flowers last much longer.

Sanguinaria canadensis ‘Multiplex’ – Double Bloodroot
When we first started to grow the pink form, we were disappointed when we saw that the open flowers were white! During the day, when the flowers are open, they are white. Yet, at the end of the day, when the flowers close, the backs of the petals are pink. The pink flowered form recently received a cultivar name of ‘Venus’.
Another favorite ephemeral are the Jeffersonias. Our native Twinleaf is Jeffersonia diphylla, which features a beautiful pair of leaves that mimic each other, hence the name twinleaf. Unfortunately, the flowers of our native twinleaf are so fleeting we often joke at the nursery, “Don’t miss the ten minutes that they are open each year!”

The Asian Twinleaf, Jeffersonia dubia, is a much showier species. The light lavender flowers held on dark red petioles are effective for a longer period of time. We offer both twinlefs in the sales yard, and have nice clumps of each growing in the display gardens.
Another plant that we are awful fond of is Adonis amurensis. This rarely offered ephemeral native to Japan blooms in late winter. It is always one of the first plants to emerge in our garden. In 2019 we have a few Adonis to offer for sale, these plants arrived in February from Japan.