

Friends of the Arboretum Native Plant Sale



## ***Dicentra cucullaria* – Dutchman's Breeches**

COMMON NAME: Dutchman's Breeches

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Dicentra cucullaria* – This name comes a Greek word meaning two spurred and *cucullaria* refers to a hood.

FLOWER: This is a very distinct shape. It is white, tinged with cream or yellow and resembles a pair of pantaloons upside down. There will be 2 to 6 pairs of these flowers on a stalk.

BLOOMING PERIOD: April

SIZE: 5 to 10 inches high

BEHAVIOR: This spring ephemeral appears as soon as the ground thaws, blooms, sets it seed and dies back for the season in early June.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Dry to medium forests, cliffs. Flourishes on slopes with loose, rich, sandy loam. Not good for wet sites. Needs the shade of large trees such as sugar maple, basswood or red oak.

NATURAL RANGE: Most of the eastern United States. Found in most of Wisconsin.

SPECIAL FEATURES: This is a delicate plant with lacy leaves and the distinctly shaped flowers. The leaves are all basal and each is divided into three secondary leaflets. It takes several years for young seedlings to reach flowering size.

SUGGESTED CARE: The corms (bulbs) should be planted close to the surface and well watered. Allow a cluster of showy patches to develop before thinning. Digging the corms should happen after the leaves have died back in June. In the spring it helps to remove a heavy leaf layer, especially oak leaves, so the emerging leaves get sunlight.

COMPANION PLANTS: Wild leek, blue cohosh, spring beauty, toothwort, bloodroot.

SPECIAL NOTE: A very similar plant, Squirrel Corn (*Dicentra Canadensis*) has similar leaves and flowers in a similar arrangement. The flowers, however, have a different shape, are white, tinged with lavender, fragrant, and bloom slightly later. Squirrel Corn is found in Wisconsin but rather infrequently.