

Wood Betony

(Pedicularis canadensis)

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Wood Betony is a flowering perennial plant that is native to the eastern half of the United States. This species begins growing early in the spring and its leaves initially emerge with a red color. When viewed from above, the plants flowers look like a pinwheel.

Wood Betony is also known by the common name Lousewort. This common name refers to a misguided belief that livestock grazing on pastures where the plant grew would become infested with lice. This is ironic as Wood Betony itself is a parasite. A brief description of its hemiparasitism can be found below. Through its parasitism the plant is able to promote diversity by hindering the growth of tall grasses. This allows shorter grasses and forbs to thrive.

Wood Betony flowers attract a variety of pollinators. However, long-tongued bees are the primary visitors. These include bumble bees and mason bees.

Wood Betony Quick Facts:

- Classification: Forb
- Life Cycle: Perennial
- Flower Color: Yellow
- Bloom Time: April through May
- Other Traits: Hemiparasitic Plant



Habitat

Wood Betony prefers full sun to partial shade. The plant can be found on a variety of soil types ranging from mesic to dry.

Hemiparasitism

Wood Betony is a hemiparasitic plant species. This means that the plant can photosynthesize but often attach to host plants such as short grass species. Several of these host plants include Little Bluestem, June Grass, Common Oak Sedge, Hairy Grama and Blue Grama.

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