

# SHADE GARDEN

Early spring 2019, along with the seasonal educators, PCNP staff cleared out a large area near the wetland's lab. We removed English ivy, Japanese honey suckle, privet and still grass. The 1000 square foot area cleared of invasive and surrounded by native vegetation, like elder box trees and grapevines, got ready for the 300 high school students to get involved in the planting of shade loving plants.



***The plants of the shade garden at Paradise Creek Nature Park play a crucial ecological role in enriching the biodiversity of the Elizabeth River watershed.***



## Wild Ginger

Wild ginger is one of the many fascinating plants that can be found in this garden. Playing a crucial role in the habitat of insects, this plant has an aroma similar to ginger, giving it the name "wild ginger". These flowers bloom throughout the late spring and early summer. These dark red flowers hide under their board kidney shaped leaves and are pollinated by beetles and flies. The seeds of wild ginger are dispersed by ants which get a meal out of the elaiosome of the seed.

## May-Apple

May-apple produce a small white flower underneath its leaves that is pollinated by bees before it turns into a yellow fruit enjoyed by the eastern box turtle in the late summer.



## Ferns

One of the more notable features of the shade garden is the diversity of fern species living here. These ferns provide an essential habitat for a variety of wildlife including ground feeding and nesting birds. Along your walk, you can find:

- Lady ferns (*Athyrium filix-femina*)
- Christmas ferns (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)
- Cinnamon ferns (*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*)