

# SHADE GARDEN

In the early spring 2019, ERP staff cleared out a large area of invasives near the Wetland Lab. The 1,000 square foot area included the following invasive plants: english ivy, japanese honeysuckle, privet and stilt grass. As part of their field investigation, 300 portsmouth high school students planted shade loving plants in the newly cleared area. ***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.***

## 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. Fern species include:

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



## 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 broad 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 protein rich 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.



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