



## Signs of the Seasons: A Maine Phenology Program

### Indicator Species Fact Sheets

#### Virginia Strawberry, *Fragaria virginiana*

Virginia strawberry, also called Wild strawberry, is a low-growing, perennial, herbaceous (i.e. not woody) plant growing less than 1 foot tall. It is a creeping plant, producing new plants along runners (stolons) that extend sideways along the surface of the soil, rooting as they grow. They provide food for many small animals and birds. Wild strawberry is a native plant found in much of the US and Canada.

**Leaves:** Leaves that extend from the base of the plant are composed of long hairy petioles (leaf stems) and three leaflets. Each leaflet is 1 to 1.5 inches long, with toothed edges.

**Flowers:** Individual flowers (less than one inch diameter) have five white petals surrounding a yellow center with many stamens. Flowering time is April to June.

**Fruit:** Wild strawberries resemble cultivated strawberries, but they are smaller.

**Tips for Observing:** This plant is deciduous but leaves remain green throughout the winter, so observers will need to look carefully to determine whether they see “initial growth” or last year’s leaves. In early spring, when the snow is receding and before the grass turns green, little active growth occurs. If you see strawberry leaves then, they’re probably last year’s. Check back the next week to be sure. When the grass starts to green up you’ll probably see strawberry greening up as well. Look for new fresh growth from underneath the old leaves. “Initial growth” (on the data sheet) will be leaves; flowers develop sometime in May, and fruits appear in June.

#### Sources and Additional Information:

USDA, NRCS. 2012. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>, 20 May 2012). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA.

USA Phenology Network – Observing Plants and Animals  
[http://www.usanpn.org/Fragaria\\_virginiana](http://www.usanpn.org/Fragaria_virginiana)

UMaine Cooperative Extension: Maine Native Wild Blueberries, White flowers, Virginia strawberry, <http://umaine.edu/blueberries/factsheets/weeds/blueberry-weed-images/herbaceous-broadleaf-weeds/white-flowers/virginia-strawberry/>

Native Plant Database, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, University of Texas at Austin, [http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=FRVI](http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=FRVI)



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 2: 260.



Wild Strawberry flower  
 B.Bisson ME Sea Grant



Wild strawberry leaves, flowers and fruit.  
 J. D'Appollonio, UMaine



Distribution of wild strawberry. USDA Plants Database