
Wildflower Spot - April 2011
John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

CUTLEAF TOOTHWORT

Cardamine concatenata
(=*Dentaria laciniata*)

By Helen Hamilton, *President of the John Clayton Chapter,*

The preferred habitat of Cutleaf Toothwort is moist, rich woods, wooded bottomlands, rocky banks and bluffs and limestone outcrops. Found in nearly every county in Virginia, and half the counties of the Coastal Plain, this plant is native from Maine and southern Quebec to Minnesota, and south to Florida, Louisiana and Oklahoma.

The rootstocks are peppery- pungent, and can be used as a horseradishlike condiment, mixed with vinegar and a pinch of salt. The root has been used as a folk remedy for toothaches. American Indians chewed root for colds and gargled with root tea for sore throats.

The common name refers to the tooth-like projections on the underground stems. ❖



A member of the Mustard Family, this small plant is easily recognized by the whorl of 3 leaves, each divided into 3 long, narrow, jagged-lobed segments. The 6-12 inch stem is downy and topped with a cluster of small, four-petaled pink or white flowers. Toothworts bloom in the spring, before the leaves of deciduous trees appear.

Photo: Cutleaf Toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*) taken by Jan Newton
For more information about native plants visit www.vnps.org.