

## The Rusty Owl Museum

The items in the museum were found in an area at the base of the cliffs. There was a time period before the establishment of landfills when landowners would dispose of non-burnable trash in a gully or pit on their property. The past property owners, whose house was at the location of the chimney on The Knowe, would simply throw bottles and metal household items over the edge of the cliff to dispose of them. Some items were retrieved and are on display in The Rusty Owl, and other such items were left and can be seen on the banks of The Knowe as a living history experiential reminder of how life was years ago and how things have changed.



## List of Wildflowers and Woodland Plants

Trout Lily  
*Erythronium Americanum*

Mayapple  
*Podophyllum peltatum*

Solomon's Seal  
*Polygonatum biflorum*

Virginia Bluebells  
*Mertensia virginica*

Dutchman's Breeches  
*Dicentra cucullaria*

Bloodroot  
*Sanguinaria canadensis*

Christmas Fern  
*Polystichum acrostichoides*

Wild Ginger  
*Asarum canadense*

Spring Beauty  
*Claytonia virginica*

Ground Ivy  
*Glechoma hederacea*

Garlic Mustard  
*Alliaria petiolate*

Jack-in-the-Pulpit  
*Arisaema triphillum*

Lowland Bladder Fern  
*Cystopteris protrusa*

Golden Ragwort  
*Packera aurea*

And so many more .....

## The Rusty Owl



A natural area, living history,  
and wildflower preserve in  
Albemarle County, Virginia

"You belong among  
the wildflowers!"



## The Rusty Owl

The purpose of the Rusty Owl property along the North Fork of the Rivanna River is for the production, presentation, collection, and education of native wildflowers and riverside woodland plants.

The seven acre Rusty Owl property has been basically unused for approximately 60 years. Prior to 1965, the acreage was used as a farm and pasture land. With the accidental happenstance in 2021 of discovering the unusual abundance of wildflowers in one small area, the property is now being used as a natural sanctuary for the conservation and enjoyment of a wide variety of plants.

The property is maintained with no grazing, no chemical usage, no cultivation of crops, no fertilizer, and no soil amendments so the growing environment can remain as natural as it has during the past 60+ years.



## Trails and The Knowe

### Trails

A quarter of a mile trail system has been developed for the exploration and enjoyment of the native wildflowers and woodland plants. The trails and footpath map indicates the numbers of the trails and the location of significant wildflowers and plants that can be found on the property.

### The Knowe

*(A Scottish variant of the word knoll)*

The Knowe is the location of a historical homestead that sat high on the cliffs above the Rivanna River. Currently the site is a crumbled foundation and a standing chimney of where a dwelling once stood. There is an old roadbed that leads up to the homestead site. Due to the higher elevation than the surrounding properties, in the fall season, the two mountain ranges in the area, The Blue Ridge and The Southwest, can be seen and enjoyed from The Knowe.



## The Plant of the Year

**2023**

Meet the  
Delightful Spring  
Ephemeral

### Trout Lily

*(Erythronium  
Americanum)*



The Trout Lily is a beautiful early spring ephemeral, meaning it is a short-lived spring beauty. Over time, the Trout Lily can grow in huge colonies and spread over an entire forest floor. A colony can be hundreds of years old and can take a significant amount of time to spread to such magnitude.

The Trout Lily has an underground bulb that spreads via runners. A bulb lies dormant for about seven years and then produces leaves but no flowers. When a plant matures, it will produce two leaves and one strikingly beautiful yellow flower. However, the majority of Trout Lily plants will never flower but simply live in a sub-flowering state for many years before dying.

### Distinguishing Features:

- Blooms March – May
- Brown mottled leaves that resembles the skin of trout
- A singular nodding yellow flower with six petals
- Height 3-8 inches
- Grows in Eastern Canada and Eastern United States
- Thrives in partial shade and moist soil
- Other name – Yellow Dog Toothed Violet
- One of the most common spring wildflower