**Maianthemum canadense** Desf.
Canada Mayflower; Wild Lily-of-the-Valley; False Lily-of-the-Valley

LILIACEAE (Lily Family)

**Blooming season:** May to early June.

**Plant:**
- 7.5 - 15 cm high; zigzag stem if more than one leaf.
- Perennial with slender, creeping rhizomes.
- Often forms carpets of stemless one-leaved plants.
- Plants with pubescence on stems and under surface of leaves are the variety *interius* Fern., while smooth forms are the variety *canadense*.

**Leaves:**
- Alternate; mature plants usually two, sometimes three leaves.
- Clasping, cordate, sessile or short petioled (2-3 leaved plants).
- One leaved plants stemless with 2.5 - 10.0 cm long petiole directly from rootstock.
- Some leaves have” conspicuous, raised cross veins”, usually on the lowest leaves (Rickett 1966 Part 1).

**Flower:**
- White, 4.0 mm wide, terminal fairly dense raceme 2.5- 5.0 cm long.
- Unusual for *Liliaceae*, the flowers are two-parted with 2 sepals, 2 petals, and 4 stamens
- Pedicels mostly longer than flowers.

**Fruit:**
- Berries, pale red, usually speckled with brown; contain 1-2 seeds.

**Geographic range:**
- Type specimen location: State: Throughout.
- Regional: Labrador west to British Columbia, and south to Delaware, Tennessee, Iowa, and in mountains to Georgia.
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Habitat:
Local: Riparian.
Regional: “Almost everywhere, in dry to moist sites: deciduous and coniferous woods, dunes, bogs, and swamps” (Voss 1972).

Common local companions:
Indian cucumber, wintergreen, partridgeberry, and maple

Usages:
Human: Reportedly with (unspecified) medicinal usage in the past. Berries have been eaten as fruit.
Animal: Grouse, chipmunks and mice eat berries.

Why is it called that?
Maianthemum is derived from the Greek words maios meaning May and anthemon, flower, describing the plant’s blooming season. Canadense is Latin for Canadian, used broadly here to refer to a northern location. Interius, inter or between, refers to an intermediate status. The plant’s resemblance to the garden lily-of-the-valley in the genus Convallaria led to its common names.

Prepared by: Barbara Lukacs Grob December 2007