



***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:

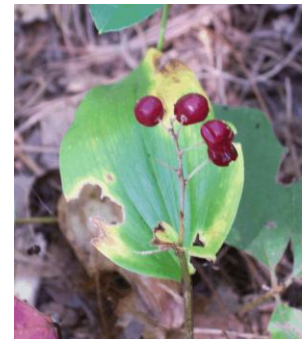
Berries, pale red, usually speckled with brown; contain 1-2 seeds.

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 *antheon*, 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