



Trillium grandiflorum in spring

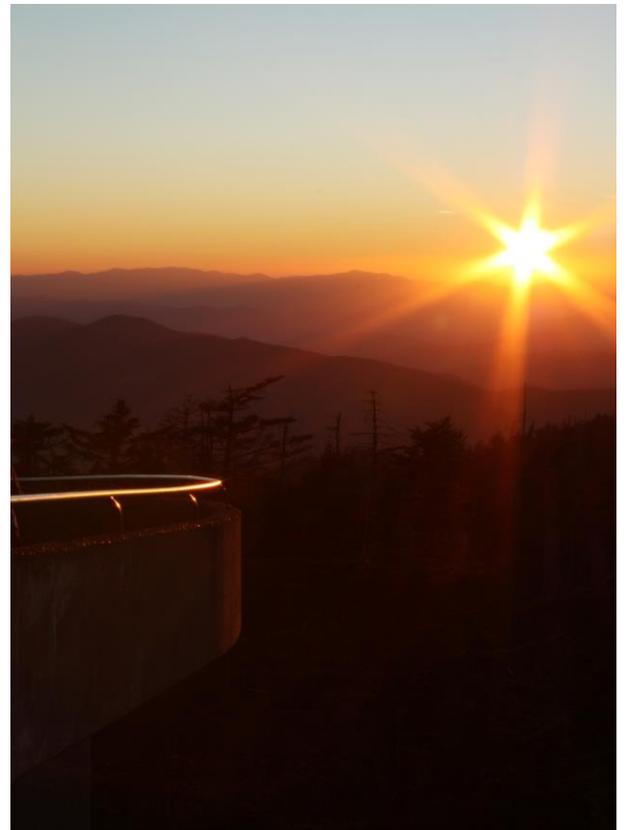
# Spring in the Smokies with Sarett Nature Center

Tuesday, April 11 to Sunday, April 16, 2023

Join Sarett Nature Center as we travel to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park! The park offers wonders for everyone interested in the natural world – **beautiful wildflowers, an abundance of wildlife, lovely vistas, and rich cultural history.** The Smoky Mountains are home to the richest deciduous forests in the world! Thousands of years ago much of North America was scraped clear of life by glaciers, but the Smokies were spared from the glaciers and served as an oasis of biodiversity. The rich soils of the area give rise to a stunning variety of plants and animals, including more than 1,500 species of flowering plants, 200 species of birds, 60 species of mammals, and over 20 species of salamanders!

Sarett naturalists will offer a variety of hikes in the National Park, from short and easy to longer and more challenging, as well as special programs such as driving tours, morning birding walks, and evening programs. Along our walks, we'll always keep our eyes open for new and interesting plants and wildlife. We may even turn over a few rocks to look for salamanders – after all the Smoky Mountains are the salamander capital of the world!

We will be traveling to the National Park during peak spring ephemeral wildflower season in the lower elevations and will have the chance to see trillium (the park has ten species!), lady slipper orchids, showy orchis, crested dwarf iris, fire pink, columbine, bleeding heart, jack-in-the-pulpit, phacelia, little brown jugs, and violets among many others.



Sunset from Clingman's Dome

**Travel:** We will use Sarett's passenger vans to travel to and around the Smoky Mountains. The drive will take about 11 hours to Gatlinburg. Pack plenty of snacks for eating as we travel down to Tennessee. We will stop often for gas and bathroom breaks. We will eat lunch and dinner during stops at fast food restaurants or you may bring your own food.

**Accommodations:** We will be staying at Carr's Northside Cottages ([www.carrscottages.com](http://www.carrscottages.com)) in Gatlinburg, TN. Carr's is located close to restaurants and attractions in Gatlinburg and the National Park. It is nestled on a hillside at the edge of town and has a mountain stream flowing past. Accommodations are motel style with two beds, one bathroom, a refrigerator, microwave, and coffee pot. Carr's also has other amenities on the grounds such as a heated swimming pool, a hot tub, and wireless internet. Sarett has enjoyed staying at this location for many years!

**Meals:** Meals are a separate expense (except for the pizza dinner). We'll make a stop at a grocery store in Pigeon Forge, just outside Gatlinburg, on Tuesday, April 11. You may eat breakfast in your room and prepare a sack lunch for yourself each day. Utensils are not included in the rooms, so you will want to bring your own. There are many wonderful restaurants within walking distance in Gatlinburg for dinner. There is also a trolley that runs all around Gatlinburg, with a stop close to Carr's.

**Gear:** One small suitcase per person should suffice, plus extra shoes and a day pack for carrying your lunch, rain gear, binoculars, etc. Shoes should be sturdy, comfortable and well broken-in. Take warm clothing that can be layered as it can get very cold in the mountains. It can also be very warm so be sure to also bring along shorts and a swimsuit. Other important items are a camera, sunglasses, and extra money for souvenirs.

**Sample Walks and Activities:** Sarett naturalists will offer a variety of hikes to see and appreciate this wonderfully diverse park during our four-day exploration. We will be visiting near peak of the ephemeral wildflowers. As we change in elevation, we should witness forests carpeted with trilliums, fringed phacelia, and many others. We will have the opportunity to visit many favorite spots, such as Clingman's Dome, Ramsey Cascade and Cades Cove, as well as explore a variety of hiking trails. Sites visited will depend on desires and the physical ability of the group. We will be traveling in a few different vans, so you may have choices as to what planned activities you'd like to participate in for the day. We will offer hikes and activities for different ability levels.

**Trip Cost:** \$975.00/person based on double occupancy.

This includes:

- Round trip transportation in Sarett Nature Center vans
- Five nights lodging
- Pizza dinner on Friday
- Services of nature center naturalists

**Deposit:** You must pay a \$100.00 deposit to sign up for this trip.

**Membership:** You must be a current member of the nature center. The cost of a one-year membership is \$50.00/family and \$40.00/individual.



Mount Le Conte

**Final Payment:** You must have your final payment to us by April 1, 2023. Email reminders will be sent out.

**Cancellation Policy:** Every attempt will be made to refund any recoverable costs if you must cancel.

**Responsibility:** Sarett Nature Center reserves the right, at their sole discretion, to make changes in the itinerary should that become necessary, and Sarett is not responsible to any person for expenses, loss of time, money, or happenings resulting from a change of tour scheduling. Sarett Nature Center reserves the right to accept, decline, or retain any person as a member of the tour and is not responsible for any losses or damages of personal property, injuries, expenses, or damages incurred or claimed by any tour member.

**Sample Itinerary** – The following is a general itinerary – our trip options are subject to change depending on weather, flowering conditions, and the groups' interests. Please remain flexible.

### **Tuesday, April 11, 2023**

We will leave the nature center at 6:30 A.M. (please arrive before then). We will stop for lunch at a fast food restaurant and also for rest breaks and gas. Dinner will be at a fast food restaurant in Pigeon Forge and then we'll shop for groceries. After arriving at Carr's Cottages this evening, you may settle in and relax or head into Gatlinburg for souvenir shopping.

### **Wednesday, April 12, 2023**

Start the day with an optional bird walk around Carr's Cottages at 7:00 A.M.

At 9:00 A.M we will meet in the parking lot for the rest of the day's activities. Bring your sack lunch and supplies for the day. We will visit some of the park's most iconic spots to take in the views, flora, and fauna. We will visit Sugarlands Visitor Center, hike and eat lunch at Chimney Tops picnic area, take in spectacular scenery and a walk on the Appalachian Trail at Newfound Gap, and visit Clingman's Dome, the highest spot in the park. We will end the day in the park with an auto tour through winding Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail with several stops to enjoy wildflowers, mountain streams, and historic homesteads.

Dinner will be on your own, or with the naturalists, in Gatlinburg. After dinner, take an optional trip to the new Skybridge in Gatlinburg, the longest suspension pedestrian bridge in North America and take in the sunset. The cost of the ticket for the Skybridge is not included in the price of the trip.

### **Thursday, April 13, 2023**

Meet in the parking lot at Carr's at 9:00 A.M. for the day's activities. You will have two options.

**Option one** for the day will be to take in the west side of the park. We'll begin at Meigs Creek Trail. This trail is known for its pretty creek and wildflowers. Then we'll travel a little farther down the road to Chestnut Tops Trail.

The first half mile of this trail may be the most spectacular wildflower trail in the park. After looking for spring beauty, bloodroot, hepatica, trillium, and toothwort we continue our journey to Cades Cove. Cades Cove offers something for everyone - wonderful walks, historical buildings, great birding and wildlife. We'll do as much as we can, taking into consideration the interest of the group.



A bull elk resting in the park

The **second option** is a botanical motorcade to Cherokee, NC. We will enjoy the beautiful drive over the mountains to North Carolina and the Oconaluftee Visitor Center. There will be short walks to learn about the major plant communities. We will also visit the Museum of the Cherokee Indian in Cherokee, NC and learn about the history and culture of the Cherokee people through modern exhibits and displays.

Dinner will be on your own, or with the naturalists, in Gatlinburg. Join the naturalists for an optional owl prowl at 9:00 P.M.

### **Friday, April 14, 2023**

Meet in the parking lot at Carr's at 9:00 A.M for the day's activities.

Today we will combine a few different hikes to take in more wildflowers, fauna, and waterfalls in the park. Some trail possibilities are Cove Hardwoods Nature Trail, Noah "Bud" Ogle Nature Trail, Grotto Falls and Trillium Gap Trail, and Alum Cave Trail to Arch Rock.

Dinner will be on your own, or with the naturalists, in Gatlinburg.



Grotto Falls

### **Saturday, April 15, 2023**

Meet in the parking lot at Carr's at 9:00 A.M for the day's activities.

We will offer two different hiking opportunities today. The **first option** combines Cucumber Gap Trail, Little River and Jake Creek Trail. These three trails combine to make one of the finest short loops in the park. We should see blooms of trout lily, spring beauty, bloodroot and trillium, among others. The **second option** will include the Cucumber Gap Trail and a hike on the moderately-rated Laurel Falls Trail, one of the most popular in the park, to see the 70-foot waterfall.

We will have a pizza party for dinner at Carr's around 6:00 P.M.

### **Sunday, April 16, 2023**

We will depart Carr's at 7:00 A.M. and head home, stopping for lunch at a fast food restaurant. We should arrive back at Sarett around 7:00 P.M.