

MILKWORT FAMILY.

POLYGALACEAE.



Fringed Polygala.
Gaywings
Bird-on-the-wing.
Flowering Wintergreen.

Polygala paucifolia.



Found in light woods during May.

The single stalk is flattened beneath the leaf, from 3 to 5 inches in height, and slender. It is smooth, and strongly tinted with purple, even with crimson, at the foot.

The lower leaves are small, clasping, and alternate; the upper are on stems, and form a terminal cluster of 4 or 5 around the flowers, —they are oval, with an entire margin, and a thick texture, smooth, and glossy green.

The irregular-shaped flower, like a gayly colored fly, has a very delicate and fine texture, and is of an exquisite clear crimson tint, the one fringed petal being white, tinged with a light yellow-green. From 1 to 3 flowers, on their green stems, form a terminal cluster.

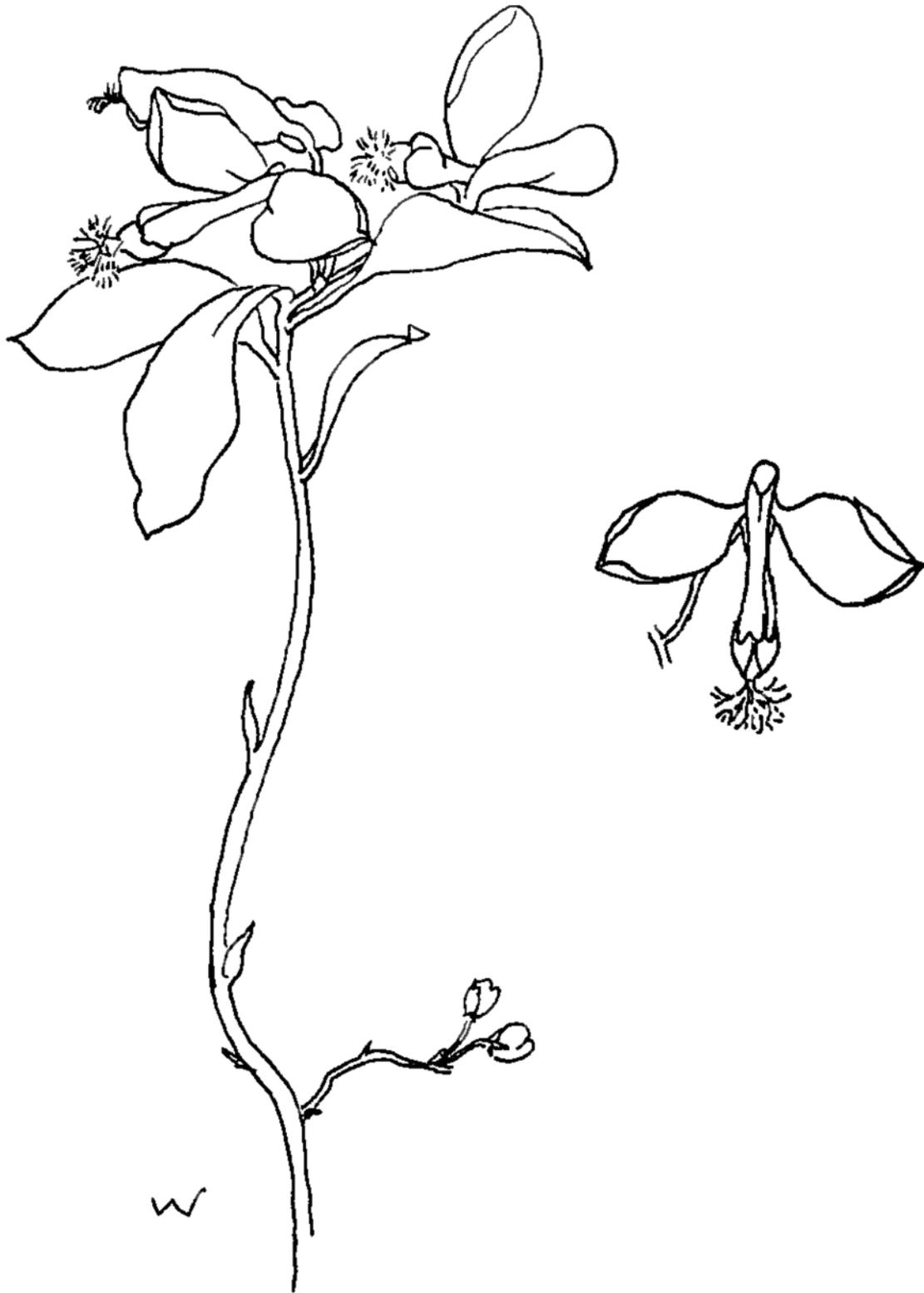


These flowers are the idle beauties of the plant; the unnoted homely Cinderella flower, very small, misshapen, and dull, that sits down in the dust on a little side-stem close to the root (shown at left), bears the seeds. The leaves last over winter, turning a rich crimson-bronze hue, almost as brilliant as the flowers; the fresh leaves are simultaneous in growth with the blossoms, unfolding as the buds swell. White varieties are occasionally found.



Lowest photo on left: Dana at abundantnature.com
Top and center photos on left and photo on right: [kbaron](http://kbaron.com)

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FRINGED POLYGALA: *Polygala paucifolia*.

Text and drawing excerpted from *Wildflowers from the North-Eastern States* by Ellen Miller and Margaret Christine Whiting, 1895
Nomenclature and Families updated.