



Wandering the Woods with Matt

Speedwells
(*Veronica* sp.)

Observed
5/22/2020

at Glen Run
Nature
Preserve
and the
Learn
Conservation
Easement

Germander Speedwell

The observation this week is a genus of pretty little flowers, known as speedwells (genus *Veronica*). The genus is enormous, containing over 500 species, and is placed in the plantain family (Plantaginaceae). Speedwells are common in natural areas, gardens and lawns, but perhaps often overlooked because they are so small. Many of the species found in PA have been introduced from Eurasia.

The European plants of this genus have been known in English as veronicas since the 16th century, so when Carl Linnaeus assigned the group a binomial name, he picked the one already in common use.

During a visit this week, I noticed several species of *Veronica* at Glen Run Nature Preserve, including germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*) and thyme-leaved speedwell (*Veronica serpyllifolia*). I'm also including corn speedwell (*Veronica arvensis*) observed from the lawn across the street from the Learn Preserve.

The former has relatively showy light purple or deep blue flowers and is patchy along the walking trails at Glen Run (BTW – that preserve is beautiful now, do yourself a favor and visit it!).

The latter has tiny white flowers with purple veins and can be found near the parking lot at Glen Run.

Corn speedwell also has tiny flowers and can be in woods, meadows and lawns.

So the next time you're gardening or working outside, or waiting in a preserve parking lot, take a nice, slow, look at some of the weeds you see. Some of them might surprise you!



Thyme-leaved Speedwell



Corn Speedwell