

# Solomon's Seal (*Maianthemum/Polygonatum* spp.)



Notes:

This guide discusses two species of *Maianthemum* and two species of *Polygonatum*. There is another *Maianthemum* species in Indiana called Canada Mayflower (*M. canadense*). This resembles European Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria majalis*) so it will be described in another guide.

The two species of *Maianthemum* are named "False," and the two species of *Polygonatum* are named "True." Plants are often called "False" if they resemble a plant that was classified earlier.

The "True" species are typically referred to as Solomon's Seals and the "False" are sometimes called False Lily of the Valley. It's all quite confusing. The species have been split and lumped by different taxonomists, and therefore your field guide may show different species. This guide follows the USDA Plants Database.

The "False" species have flowers at the end of the plant, and the "True" species have flowers hanging down from the base of each leaf.

| <b>Feathery False Lily of the Valley</b><br><i>(Maianthemum racemosum)</i>          | <b>Starry False Lily of the Valley</b><br><i>(Maianthemum stellatum)</i>                           |
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|  |                |
| <p>This very common plant is found in woodlands across the state.</p>               | <p>This less common species is also found in or near woodlands, but usually in a sunnier spot.</p> |



Flowerhead is a branching panicle of flowers.



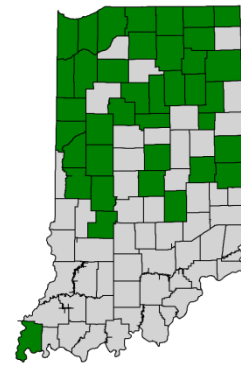
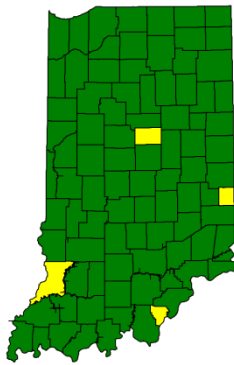
Flowerhead is a single raceme of flowers.



Leaves are fatter than *M. stellatum*.



Leaves are thinner and pointier than *M. racemosum*.



**Hairy Solomon's Seal**  
(*Polygonatum pubescens*)

**Smooth Solomon's Seal**  
(*Polygonatum biflorum*)



This plant is smaller and blooms earlier than Smooth Solomon's Seal.



This very common plant can be quite variable in size, some plants being over four feet tall.



Flowers hang below each leaf, generally only one or two per leaf.



Flowers also hang below each leaf, often have more than two per leaf.



Typical leaf



Typical leaf



Fold the leaflet in half and hold it up to the light to see the hairs.



Smooth underside of leaflet

