



## ***Caulophyllum thalictroides* – Blue Cohosh**

COMMON NAME: Blue cohosh, Papoose-root

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Caulophyllum thalictroides* - The Greek word *caulos* means stem and *phyllon* means leaf. The stem seems to be the stalk for the large compound leaf. *Thalictroides* means that it resembles the genus *thalictrum* (meadow-rue).

FLOWER: Inconspicuous brownish-green to yellowish-green flower about ½ inch in diameter. Each flower has 6 pointed sepals.

BLOOMING PERIOD: Late April to mid-May

SIZE: 1 to 3 feet tall

BEHAVIOR: This is a many-stemmed perennial with thick and creeping rootstock. Propagate by seed or divide the rootstock in autumn.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Does best in shady woodland areas with humus-rich slightly acidic soil. It should consistently moist soil that does not dry out. Blue cohosh is frequently found on slopes.

NATURAL RANGE: Eastern Canada to Manitoba, south to Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and west to Missouri. It is found throughout Wisconsin. This species also occurs in eastern Asia.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Blue cohosh is not valued for its flowers, but for the compound leaves that are blue-green. The flower stalks mature to erect clusters of blue fruit-like seeds that resemble very small grapes. These fruits are poisonous.

SUGGESTED CARE: Easy to grow, requiring minimum care. Cover in winter with oak or other deciduous leaves and do not try to uncover the plants in the spring.

COMPANION PLANTS: Plant blue cohosh under maple and basswood trees along with maidenhair fern, wild leek, Jack-in-the-pulpit, spring beauty, toothwort, bloodroot and other woodland spring flowers.

SPECIAL NOTE: While the seed berries are poisonous, the roots have been used in homeopathic medicines, especially as an aid to giving birth.