



## ***Chelone glabra* - Turtlehead**

COMMON NAME: Turtlehead

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Chelone glabra* – comes from Greek *chelone* for “turtle” and Latin *glabra* meaning “smooth”, because of the lack of hairs on the leaves and stems

FLOWER: Dense spike of tubular blossoms that are generally white, but may be tinged with greenish yellow, pink or purple

BLOOMING PERIOD: July to September

SIZE: 2-3 feet

BEHAVIOR: Robust perennial

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Grassy and brushy marshes with wet, humus rich soil in partial shade

NATURAL RANGE: Newfoundland to eastern Manitoba and Minnesota, south to Georgia and Alabama and west to Arkansas, Missouri and Iowa. It grows in all of Wisconsin.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Each blossom resembles the head of a turtle. The tubular blossoms end with an upper lip having two lobes and a lower lip with three lobes. The lower lip protrudes beyond the upper lip creating a landing platform for bumblebees. Only bees with long tongues are able to reach the nectar. The leaves are opposite, stalkless, narrow and sharply toothed. Turtlehead is host to the larvae of the Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly.

SUGGESTED CARE: Does best in wet soil.

COMPANION PLANTS: Jewelweed, Joe-Pye weed, marsh milkweed, tall meadowrue, speckled alder, and red osier dogwood

NOTE: For a long time turtlehead (*chelone glabra*) was placed in the Figwort family, but recent DNA research has shown that it is actually in the Plantain family.