

***Clematis virginiana* – Virgin's Bower**

COMMON NAME: Virgin's Bower, Woodbine, Devil's Darning Needle

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Clematis virginiana* – comes from Greek meaning "long, lithe branches"

FLOWER: Tiny white flowers

BLOOMING PERIOD: Late July, August

SIZE: A sprawling vine that may reach 10 feet or more on a suitable support

BEHAVIOR: A weak climber with older stems gradually becoming woody. Established plants tend to sucker, which can become a problem in small areas.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Tolerant of a broad range of soils with average moisture or moist preferred. Does well in semi-shaded areas, but flowers best where it gets more sun. Needs adequate nutrients to support the vigorous growth each season.

NATURAL RANGE: Eastern United States and southern Canada west to the Dakotas and eastern Texas. Grows in most of Wisconsin.

SPECIAL FEATURES: A profusion of tiny, white flowers borne in mid to late summer is the main attraction of this plant. In addition, the silky seed heads in fall are of interest. A single vine can have all male flowers or all female flowers, while another vine may have all "perfect" flowers (each flower having both male and female parts). The leaves are trifoliate (in threes) and have jagged edges.

SUGGESTED CARE: Very tolerant once established. Use it where it can grow over a support such as another shrub or rustic fence. Best used in a "wild" corner of a larger garden.

COMPANION PLANTS: Plants growing in native, low, rather moist thickets such as white snakeroot, green ash, poison ivy, Angelica, and silky dogwood.

Note: The foliage is toxic and thus avoided by mammals, but makes good nesting habitat for songbirds.