



# Wildflowers of Eastern North America



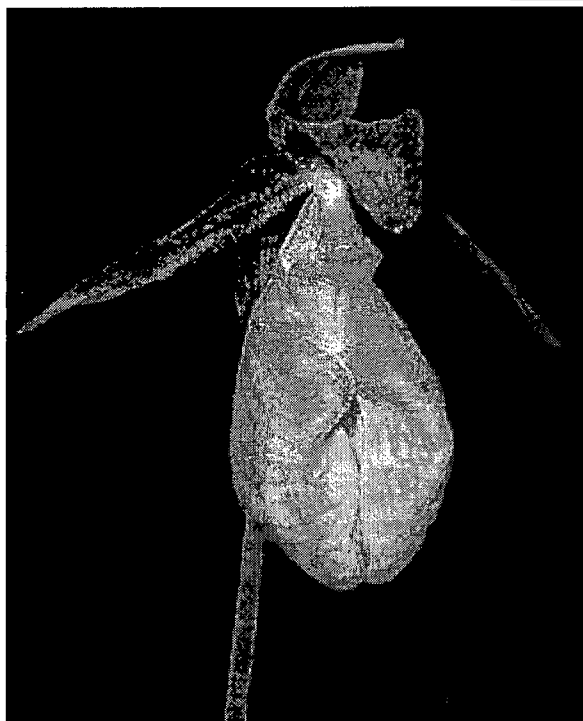
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## Virginia Thistle

(*Cirsium virginianum*)



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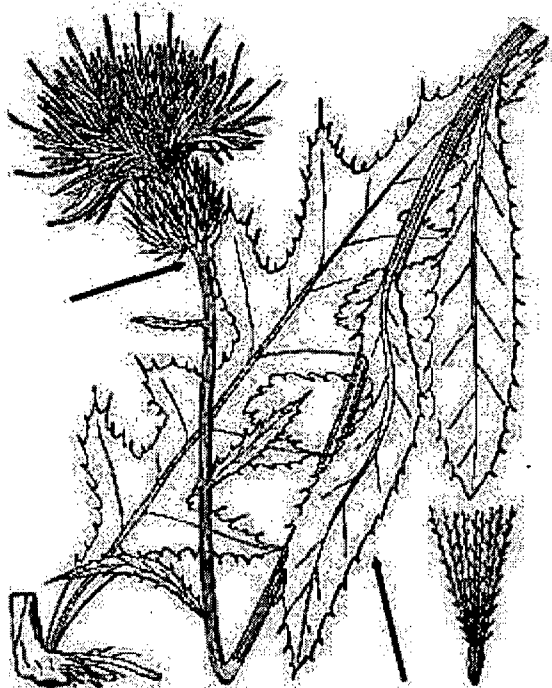
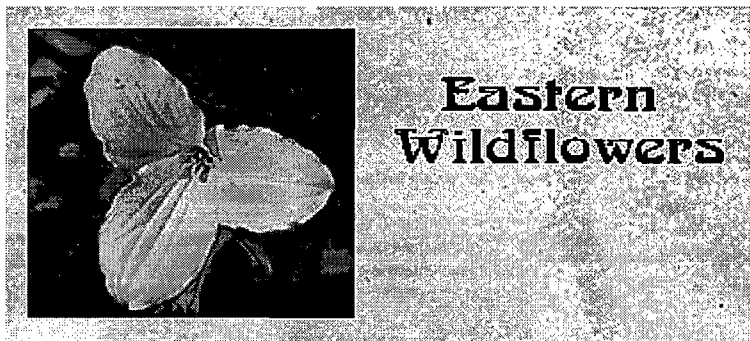


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Line Drawing: Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, Second Edition.

### Virginia Thistle (*Cirsium virginianum* [L.] Michx.)

**Identification:** Flower head ovate, usually solitary at the top of the plant, topped with a spray of lilac to purple florets. Upper leaves do not embrace the bottom of the flower head. Flower bracts tipped with spines. Stem smooth, without spines or spiny plates. Upper leaves thin, lanceolate, and reduced. Bottom leaves larger, with spine-tipped lobes. Leaves with white, woolly hair on bottom side. Plant 1 to 4 feet in height.

**Distribution:** Found along the eastern Coastal Plain from New Jersey south to Florida.

**Habitat:** Virginia Thistle is an inhabitant of bogs and wet pine barrens.

**Flowering period:** August to October.

**Similar Species:** The thin upper leaves of Virginia Thistle can be confused with those of Tall Thistle. However the upper leaves of Tall Thistle embrace the bottom of the flower head. In addition Virginia Thistle is found in wet,

coastal areas unlike the drier, more ubiquitous  
habitats of Tall Thistle.



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## Butterfly Pea

(*Clitoria mariana*)



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Color Photograph: Susan Ladd Miller, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

### Butterfly Pea (*Clitoria mariana* L.)

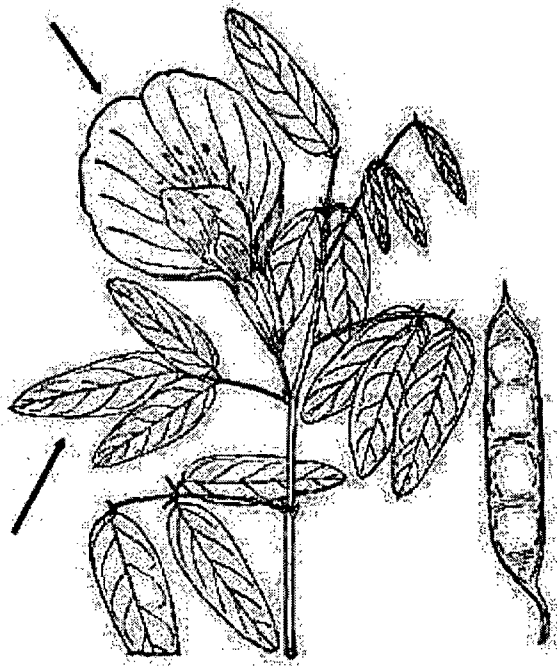
**Identification:** Plant low, climbing on other plants by tendrils. Flowers lavender to pale blue, top two petals fused into a single huge (2 inches), round standard. Flowers arising singly on long flower stalks from the leaf axils. Stem smooth. Tendrils present, arising from the flower stalk, not the leaves. Leaves divided into 3 elongate, ovate leaflets.

**Distribution:** Iowa in the west to New York in the east, southward to Florida and Texas.

**Habitat:** Butterfly Pea is found on dry soils, particularly in open woods.

**Flowering period:** June to August.

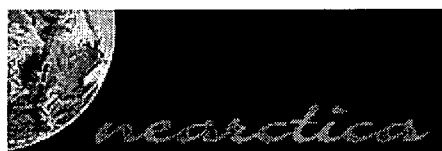
**Similar Species:** The huge flowers and upper standard, and the tendrils arising from the flower stems are distinctive features of Butterfly Pea.



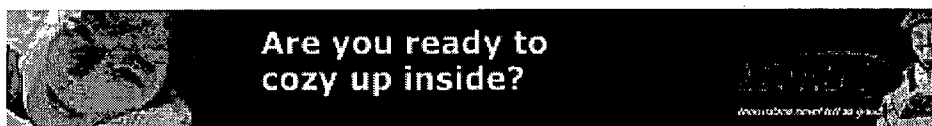
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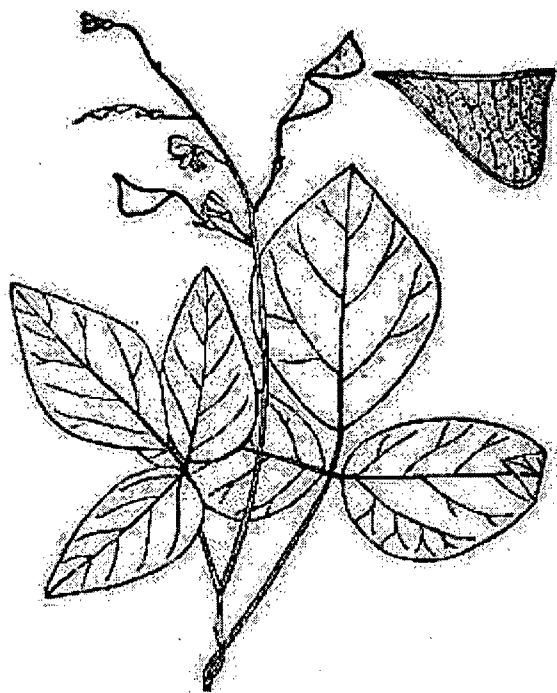
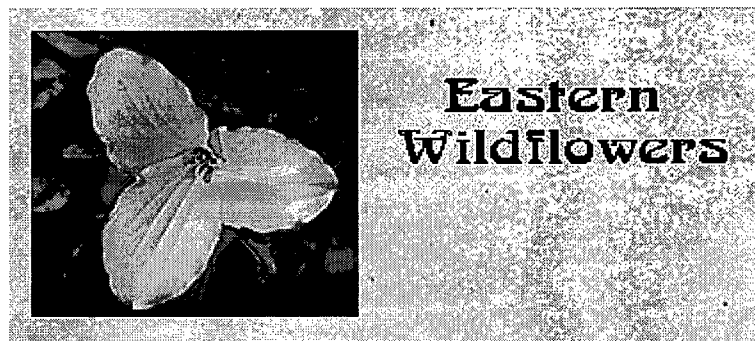


## Few-flowered Tick-Trefoil (*Desmodium pauciflorum*)



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### Few-flowered Tick-Trefoil (*Desmodium pauciflorum* [Nutt.] DC.)

**Identification:** Flowers white, pealike, with lower petals forming an elongate projection. Seedpods jointed with 1 to 4 segments. Flowers arranged sparsely on an elongate flower stem. Leaves with 3 leaflets, each leaflet ovate, tapering at both the apex and the base and borne on short petioles. Plant 1 to 3 feet in height.

**Distribution:** Michigan and western New York southward to Florida and Texas.

**Habitat:** Few-flowered Tick-Trefoil is found in woodland habitats.

**Flowering period:** July to August.


**Similar Species:** The white flowers, not pink or lavender, are almost distinctive for this species. A related species (*Desmodium illinoense*) (not treated here) is found in prairies and has prominent stipules at the base of the leaf petiole.



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## Sea Milkwort (*Glaux maritima*)



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Color Photograph: Western wetland flora: Field office guide to plant species. U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service, West National Technical Center.

### Sea Milkwort (*Glaux maritima* L.)

**Identification:** Flowers small, white, with 5 petals, mostly fused except for terminal petal lobes. Flowers sessile and arising from the leaf axils. Stem green, smooth. Leaves fleshy, small, ovate, sessile to the stem, and in opposite pairs. Plant 2 to 12 inches in height.

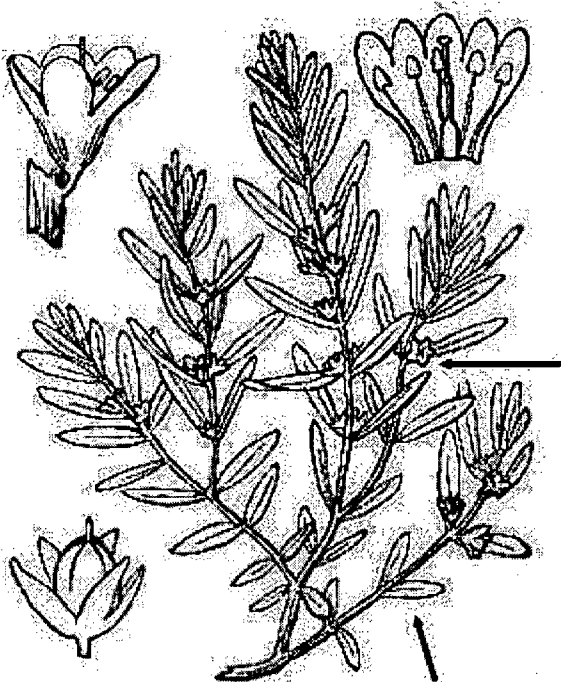
**Distribution:** Found along the Atlantic Coast from The Gaspé Peninsula to Virginia. Also occurs in the northwestern United States.

**Habitat:** Sea Milkwort is found in salt marshes and brackish marshes.

**Flowering period:** June to July.

**Similar Species:** Sea Milkwort could be superficially confused with some species in the family Euphorbiaceae. However the flower is a typical white flower with 5 petals without the complicated structure of the euphorb flower.





Line Drawing: Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, Second Edition.



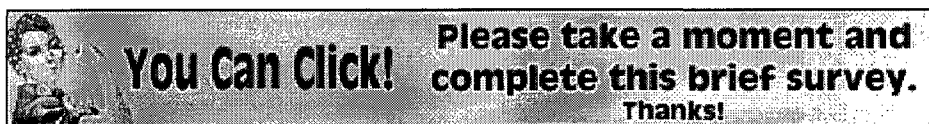
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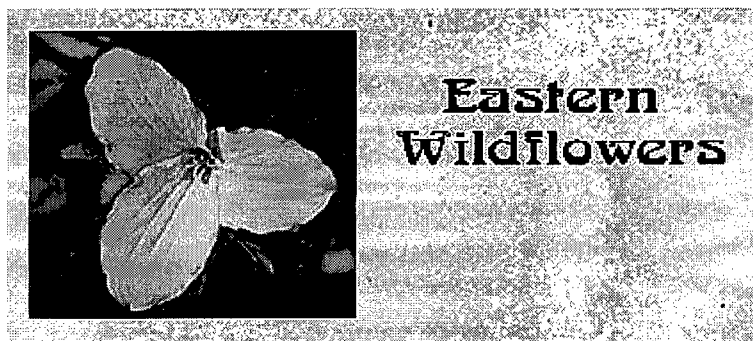
## Bunchflower

(*Melanthium virginicum*)



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Color photograph: Homer D. House. 1918. Wildflowers of New York.

### Bunchflower (*Melanthium virginicum* L.)

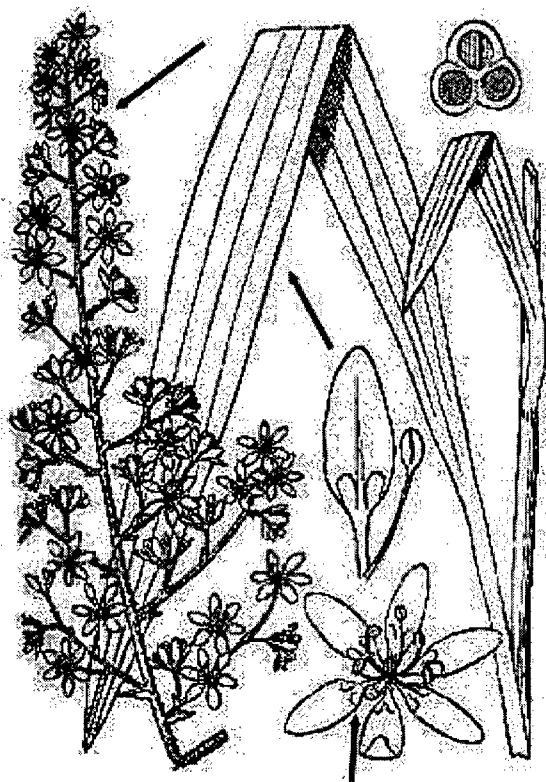
**Identification:** Flowers white, numerous, arranged in a central panicle. Petals narrowing at the base giving the flower an open look. Leaves elongate, rough, most arising from near the base of the plant. Plant height 3 to 5 feet in height.

**Distribution:** Minnesota in the west, to New York in the east, southward to Florida and Texas.

**Habitat:** Bunchflower is found in meadows and wet thickets.

**Flowering period:** June to July.

**Similar Species:** Bunchflower might be confused with Fly Poison. The petals of Bunchflower are constricted at the base, but those of Fly Poison are not. The flowers of Fly Poison are more tightly arranged around the stem than those of Bunchflower.



Line Drawing: Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, Second Edition.



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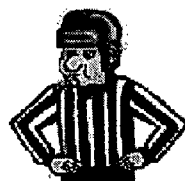
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## Mountain Bellwort

(*Uvularia puberula*)

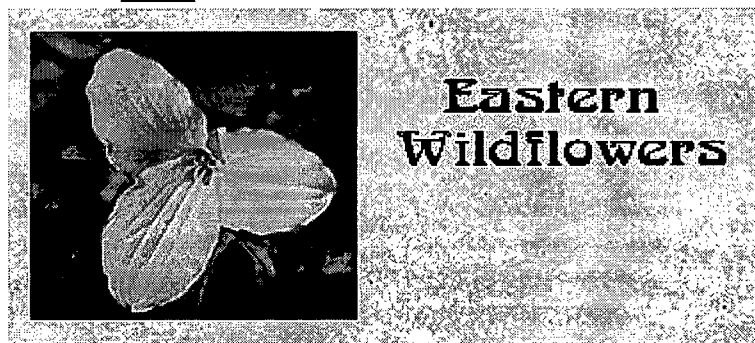
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Cook, 1823, Botanical Cabinet

### Mountain Bellwort (*Uvularia puberula* Michx.)

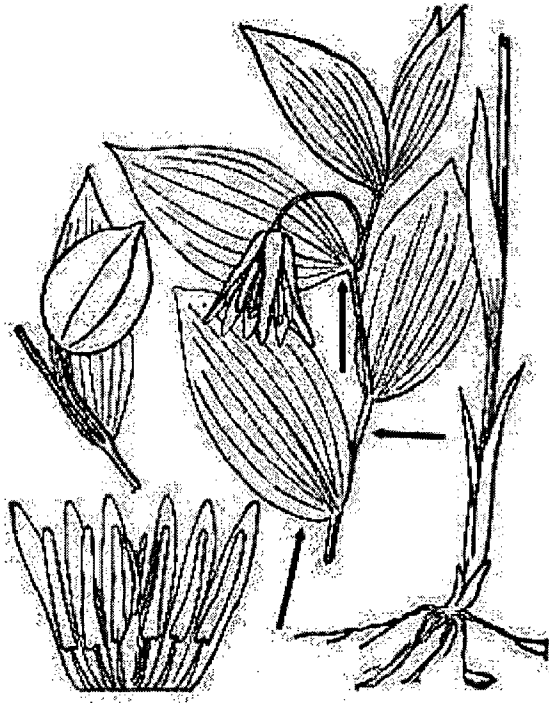
**Identification:** Flowers single, cream-yellow to yellow, petals not spreading and not as pointed as in Large-flowered Bellwort or Perfoliate Bellwort. Leaves sessile to the stem, stem not appearing to pierce leaf, and leaves rounded at the base. Stem slightly hairy. Plant 6 to 12 inches in height.

**Distribution:** New York in the north, southward to Georgia and Alabama.

**Habitat:** Mountain Bellwort is found in pine barrens or mountain forest.

**Flowering period:** April to May.

**Similar Species:** Mountain Bellwort is very close in appearance to Wild Oats. The base of the leaf of Mountain Bellwort is rounded at the base, but that of Wild Oats tapers towards its base. The stem of Mountain Bellwort is finely hairy, but smooth in Wild Oats.



Line Drawing: Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, Second Edition.



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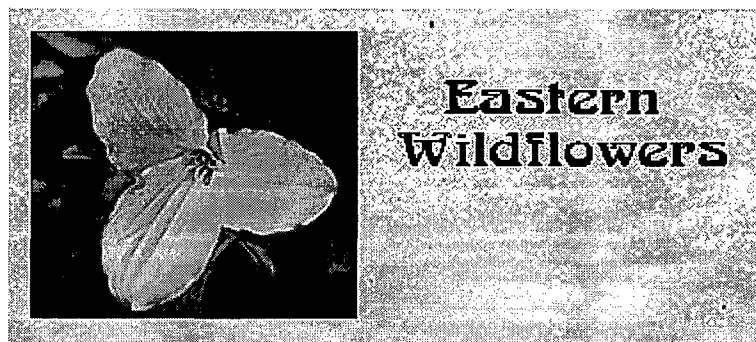
## Narrow-leaved Vervain

(*Verbena simplex*)



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### Narrow-leaved Vervain (*Verbena simplex* Lehm.)

**Identification:** Flowers lavender to purple, small, with a fused corolla and 5 free petal lobes. Flowers arranged in a series of elongate, highly branched flower spikes. Only a few flowers open at any one time. Stem and leaves slightly hairy. Leaves elongate, blade-shaped, with a toothed outer margin. Base of leaf tapering, without a distinct petiole. Plant 1 to 2 feet in height.

**Distribution:** Throughout eastern North America.

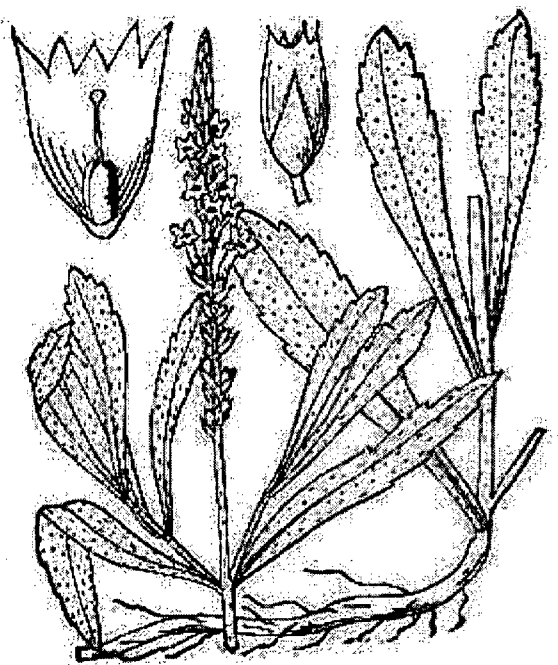
**Habitat:** Narrow-leaved Vervain is found in fields and prairies.

**Flowering period:** May to September.

**Similar Species:** The elongate, narrow leaves with their bases tapering to the stem in combination with the lavender flowers will identify this species.



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**Line Drawing: Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An  
Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and  
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