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Clematis virginiana

[Synonyms : *Clematis canadensis*, *Clematis holosericea*, *Clematis ligusticifolia*, *Clematis missouriensis*, *Clematis virginiana* var. *missouriensis*, *Clematis virginica*]

COMMON VIRGIN'S BOWER is a deciduous vine. Native to the eastern United States it has small, dull or greenish-white flowers with many stamens.

It is also known as Devil's darning needle, Devil's hair, Devil's thread, Gander vine, Ladies' bower, Leather flower, Love vine, Old man's beard, Pipe stem, Travelers' ivy, Travelers' joy, Travellers' joy, Virginia clematis, Virginia virgin's bower, Virgin's bower, Wild clematis, Wild hops, and Woodbine; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of filial love.

Warning – most of the plant is poisonous and should not be taken internally. It can cause severe abdominal pain, gastro-intestinal irritation and death. The sap from the bruised plant can cause blistering, inflammation and sores. Because of its acrid taste animals (for which it is also fatal) rarely eat it.

Virginiana means 'of or from Virginia (United States)' which itself was named after the English 'Virgin Queen' Elizabeth I (1533-1603).

The Cherokee North American Indians included the plant as an ingredient in a ritual medicine. According to records common virgin's-bower was used medicinally by a few North American Indian tribes. It was picked as a remedy for some kidney problems by both the Iroquois and Cherokee tribes. In addition the Cherokees used it to treat backache and some stomach problems, while the Iroquois employed it in treatments for certain venereal diseases. It was also taken by the latter for hallucinogenic properties that according to authorities caused strange dreams.

Medicinally, this species has sometimes been used in homoeopathic treatments as an alternative to upright virgin's bower (*Clematis recta*). It has also been used by herbalists to treat rheumatism and some skin conditions.