



# Flora of North America

Veronicastrum (Plantaginaceae)  
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X. VERONICASTRUM Heister ex Fabricius, Enum., 111. 1759 [Genus *Veronica* and Latin -  
*astrum*, resembling]

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**Herbs**, perennial; rhizomatous. **Stems** erect, sparsely to densely villous proximally or, sometimes, glabrous. **Leaves** cauline, 3--7-whorled, rarely opposite, not leathery; petiole present; blade margins serrate to doubly serrate. **Inflorescences** terminal, spikelike racemes; bracts present. **Pedicels** present; bracteoles present. **Flowers** bisexual; sepals (4--5), connate, calyx bilaterally symmetric, cylindric, lobes lanceolate; petals 4, corolla white or pinkish, weakly bilaterally symmetric, weakly bilabiate, tubular-salverform, spurs absent, abaxial lobes 3, adaxial lobes 1; stamens 2, adnate to corolla proximally, equal, filaments pubescent proximally, staminode 0; ovary 2-locular, placentation axile; stigma capitate. **Capsules** symmetric, dehiscence loculicidal, sometimes also septicial, becoming 2- or apparently 4-valved distally. **Seeds** 10--30, brown or reddish brown, ellipsoid, not winged.  $x = 17$ .

Species ca. 20 (1 in the flora): c, e North America, e Asia.

*Veronicastrum* appears to be part of a grade of genera in tribe Veroniceae that is ancestral to *Veronica* (D. C. Albach et al. 2004).

1. *Veronicastrum virginicum* (Linnaeus) Farwell, Druggist's Circ. 61: 231. 1917 \* Culver's-root or -physic  
E F

*Veronica virginica* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 9. 1753

**Stems** 1, unbranched or branched distally, 80--200 cm, sparsely villous or glabrous distally. **Leaves**: abaxial surface lighter than adaxial surface; proximal leaves withering, petiole 2--4 mm, blade lanceolate to broadly lanceolate or elliptic, (4--7)--14 x 1--3.6 cm, base tapered, apex acuminate; distal leaves: petiole 0.1--3 mm, blade lanceolate to narrowly lanceolate or elliptic, 2--4 x 0.3--1 cm, base tapered, apex acuminate. **Racemes** 1--8(--12), continuous, cylindric, 6--35 cm; bracts leafy, greatly reduced distally, (4--12)--75 x 1--12 mm, margins serrate, apex acuminate; cymes 1--2-flowered. **Pedicels** ascending, 0.3--1.2 mm, glabrous; bracteoles linear-lanceolate to linear. **Flowers**: calyx, glabrous, lobes 1.2--3 x 0.5--1 mm, abaxial 2 shorter than abaxial (2--3), margins white to pinkish, entire or obscurely erose, membranous, apex acuminate; corolla 4--5.5(--6.5) mm, glabrous externally, obscurely pubescent internally, especially near filaments, tube not differentiated from throat, 1--1.3 mm wide, lobes spreading, broadly ovate to triangular, 1.2--2.2 mm, abaxial 3 narrower than adaxial 1; stamens distinct, long-exserted, filaments 7--9 mm, anther sacs oblong, navicular to nearly explanate, 1.2--1.5 mm, glabrous; nectariferous ring at base of ovary; style 7--9 mm. **Capsules** slightly compressed laterally, ovoid to ellipsoid, 2.5--4.5(--5.2) x 1.8--2.3 mm, glabrous. **Seeds** 0.3--0.7 x 0.2--0.4 mm.  $2n = 34$ .

Flowering Jun--Aug. Dry to mesic forests, tallgrass prairies, thickets, oak savannas; 0--300 m; Man., N.S., Ont.; Ala., Ark., Conn., Del., D.C., Fla., Ga., Ill., Ind., Iowa, Kans., Ky., La., Maine, Mass., Mich., Minn., Miss., Mo., Nebr., N.J., N.Y., N.C., N.Dak., Ohio, Okla., Pa., S.C., S.Dak., Tenn., Tex., Vt., Va., W.Va., Wis.

The roots and rhizomes of *Veronicastrum virginicum* were used widely by Native Americans as an emetic and cathartic (D. E. Moerman 1998). The pharmacologic properties of this species have been studied and promoted since the early 1800s (K. Kindscher 1992). *Veronicastrum virginicum* is grown widely as an ornamental and often escapes from cultivation. Populations in Nova Scotia are introduced.