

Sweet Autumn Clematis or Japanese Virgin's Bower (*Clematis terniflora*)

Identification:

This is a deciduous perennial woody vine in the buttercup family. Blooming in the fall, it was frequently introduced as a landscape plant, but has escaped cultivation and can be seen invading forest edges, along streams and roadways, and disturbed areas.

The native *Clematis virginiana* to eastern North America looks very similar and blooms at the same time. The native variety can be differentiated by its serrated leaves, where the invasive species have smooth edges.

Starting from a tap root, shallowly-grooved stems grow from it which start out green in color and turn into a light brown color with longitudinally shredded bark as it matures. The leaves are opposite, shiny, leathery, green, pinnately compound with 3-5 oval to elliptic leaflets.

In August or September white star shaped flowers appear. A silvery plume-like seed appears after the flower which helps the plant be prolific at spreading as well as having the ability to self-seed.



Sweet Autumn Clematis Flower

Management Techniques:

The plants can be manually removed by digging up the roots. All the roots need to be removed or re-sprouting may occur. In order to prevent seeding, cut back to plant by about three feet after the flowers start to fade.



Sweet Autumn Clematis Plume

Native Range and Original Introduction:

Native to Japan, it was introduced in 1877 in the form of seeds that were sent to the Arnold Arboretum in Boston, Massachusetts. Frequently sold as a landscape plant, it is sometimes sold as *Clematis maximowicziana*, *Clematis paniculata* and *Clematis dioscoreifolia*.

On the left is *Clematis terniflora*, an invasive species, with smooth edged leaves. On the right is *Clematis virginiana*, a native species, with serrated leaves.

