

PLANTAIN FAMILY.

PLANTAGINACEAE.



Turtle-head. Snake-head.

Chelone glabra.

Found, in low and swampy ground, during August and September.

The single stalk (from 1 to 2 or 3 feet high) is large, and square, and grooved on the two opposite sides; it is tough-fibred, and hollow; rigid in gesture. In color, a light yellowish-green.

The long, narrow, oval leaf tapers gradually to a long tip, has a sharply toothed margin, and strongly marked ribs; it is of a coarse tough fibre although its surface is smooth. Its color is dark green, lighter underneath. The leaves, on very short stems, occur in pairs.



This curious flower is 2-lipped; the upper lip is arched, and folded together with a slight notch in the middle of its margin, the lower lip is 3-lobed; the throat is compressed and filled within by woolly hairs. In texture the corolla is smooth and leathery; in color it is dull white, or sometimes tinged faintly with pink. Under the arched upper lip the tips of the dark, wool-covered stamens show. The calyx, formed of 5, distinct, oval, pale green parts, is surrounded by broader leafy bracts. The flowers grow in short, crowded, terminal clusters.

The resemblance to the turtle or snake is most apparent in the bud where the reptile-like mouth is quite pronounced. The plant lurks among the sedges of swampy lauds, and is generally unattractive, for its foliage is almost always so eaten by insects that a perfect leaf is rarely to be found.

Upper photo: W.D. and Dolfia Bransford, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Lower photo: R.W.Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center



TURTLE-HEAD: *Chelone glabra*.

Text and drawing excerpted from *Wildflowers from the North-Eastern States* by Ellen Miller and Margaret Christine Whiting, 1895
Nomenclature and Families updated.