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[Rosa virginiana](#)

Common name: Virginia rose

Family: [Rosaceae](#)

Uses: [ground cover](#), [hedge](#), [soil stabilization](#), [anthelmintic](#), [cancer](#), [haemostatic](#), [ophthalmic](#), [fruit](#), [leaves](#).

Description: A deciduous shrub that grows to 2.0 meters (6.6 feet) high by 0.5 meters (1.65 feet) wide and prefers many types of soil with a pH ranging from acid to alkaline and partial to full sun with little to moderate amounts of moisture. This plant has scented flowers and has hermaphrodite flowers and is hardy to zone 3 and is pollinated by bees. Habitat: Eastern N. America - Newfoundland to Ontario, south to Louisiana. A garden escape in Britain[17]. Damp to dry thickets, clearings, swamps and shores[43]. This plant might do well located in a hedge along a dappled edge along a sunny edge or in a woodland garden.

Cultural Notes: Succeeds in most soils, preferring one on the dryish side[11]. Grows well in heavy clay soils. Prefers a circumneutral soil and a sunny position[200]. Dislikes water-logged soils. Does well in a windy position[11]. Grows well with alliums, parsley, mignonette and lupins[18, 20]. Garlic planted nearby can help protect the plant from disease and insect predation[18, 20]. Grows badly with boxwood [18]. The flowers are fragrant[245]. The form in cultivation in Britain is very invasive, forming thickets with its suckers, whilst the wild form does not produce suckers[11]. Hybridizes freely with other members of this genus[80]. Plants in this genus are notably susceptible to honey fungus[200].

Propagation Notes: Seed. Rose seed often takes two years to germinate. This is because it may need a warm spell of weather after a cold spell in order to mature the embryo and reduce the seedcoat[80]. One possible way to reduce this time is to scarify the seed and then place it for 2 - 3 weeks in damp peat at a temperature of 27 - 32°C (by which time the seed should have imbibed). It is then kept at 3°C for the next

4 months by which time it should be starting to germinate[80]. Alternatively, it is possible that seed harvested 'green' (when it is fully developed but before it has dried on the plant) and sown immediately will germinate in the late winter. This method has not as yet(1988) been fully tested[80]. Seed sown as soon as it is ripe in a cold frame sometimes germinates in spring though it may take 18 months. Stored seed can be sown as early in the year as possible and stratified for 6 weeks at 5°C[200]. It may take 2 years to germinate[200]. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle. Plant out in the summer if the plants are more than 25cm tall, otherwise grow on in a cold frame for the winter and plant out in late spring. Cuttings of half-ripe wood with a heel, July in a shaded frame. Overwinter the plants in the frame and plant out in late spring[78]. High percentage[78]. Cuttings of mature wood of the current seasons growth. Select pencil thick shoots in early autumn that are about 20 - 25cm long and plant them in a sheltered position outdoors or in a cold frame[78, 200]. The cuttings can take 12 months to establish but a high percentage of them normally succeed[78]. Division of suckers in the dormant season. Plant them out direct into their permanent positions. Layering. Takes 12 months[11].

Known Hazards: There is a layer of hairs around the seeds just beneath the flesh of the fruit. These hairs can cause irritation to the mouth and digestive tract if ingested.

Edible Uses: Fruit - raw or cooked[177]. The fruit is up to 15mm in diameter[200], but there is only a thin layer of flesh surrounding the many seeds[K]. Some care has to be taken when eating this fruit, see the notes above on known hazards. The buds are eaten by native Indians in N. America[161, 177, 183]. No further details are given, does this refer to the leaf or flower buds? The seed is a good source of vitamin E, it can be ground into a powder and mixed with flour or added to other foods as a supplement [102, 183]. Be sure to remove the seed hairs[102].

Medicinal Uses: A decoction of the roots has been used as a bath and to treat worms in children[257]. An infusion of the roots has been drunk and used as a wash in treating bleeding cuts on the feet[257]. An infusion of the roots has been used as a wash to treat sore eyes[257]. The fruit of many members of this genus is a very rich source of vitamins and minerals, especially in vitamins A, C and E, flavanoids and other bio-active compounds. It is also a fairly good source of essential fatty acids, which is fairly unusual for a fruit. It is being investigated as a food that is capable of reducing the incidence of cancer and also as a means of halting or reversing the growth of cancers[214].

Other Uses: Can be grown as a hedge, succeeding in windy positions[1, 11]. The suckering form of this species can be used to fix sand dunes[11]. It also makes a good ground cover[245].

Cultivar List:

": No entries have been made for this species as yet.
 : No entries have been made for this species as yet.
 : No entries have been made for this species as yet.

References:

[1] RHS Dictionary of Plants plus Supplement. 1956 by F. Chittendon. (Oxford University Press 1951

- ISBN#-) Comprehensive listing of species and how to grow them. Somewhat outdated, it has been replaced in 1992 by a new dictionary (see [200]).
- [11] Trees and Shrubs Hardy in Great Britain. Vol 1 - 4 and Supplement. by Bean. W. (Murray 1981 ISBN#-) A classic with a wealth of information on the plants, but poor on pictures.
- [18] Companion Plants. by Philbrick H. and Gregg R. B. (Watkins 1979 ISBN#-) Details of beneficial and antagonistic relationships between neighbouring plants.
- [20] Companion Planting for Successful Gardening. by Riotte. L. (Garden Way, Vermont, USA. 1978 ISBN#0-88266-064-0) Fairly good.
- [43] Gray's Manual of Botany. by Fernald. M. L. (American Book Co. 1950 ISBN#-) A bit dated but good and concise flora of the eastern part of N. America.
- [78] Propagation of Trees, Shrubs and Conifers. by Sheat. W. G. (MacMillan and Co 1948 ISBN#-) A bit dated but a good book on propagation techniques with specific details for a wide range of plants.
- [80] Hardy Woody Plants from Seed. by McMillan-Browse. P. (Grower Books 1985 ISBN#0-901361-21-6) Does not deal with many species but it is very comprehensive on those that it does cover. Not for casual reading.
- [102] Native Harvests. by Kavasch. B. (Vintage Books 1979 ISBN#0-394-72811-4) Another guide to the wild foods of America.
- [161] Food Plants of the N. American Indians. Publication no. 237. by Yanovsky. E. (U.S. Dept of Agriculture. 0 ISBN#-) A comprehensive but very terse guide. Not for the casual reader.
- [177] Plants for Human Consumption. by Kunkel. G. (Koeltz Scientific Books 1984 ISBN#3874292169) An excellent book for the dedicated. A comprehensive listing of latin names with a brief list of edible parts.
- [183] Cornucopia - A Source Book of Edible Plants. by Facciola. S. (Kampong Publications 1990 ISBN#0-9628087-0-9) Excellent. Contains a very wide range of conventional and unconventional food plants (including tropical) and where they can be obtained (mainly N. American nurseries but also research institutes and a lot of other nurseries from around the world).
- [200] The New RHS Dictionary of Gardening. 1992. by Huxley. A. (MacMillan Press 1992 ISBN#0-333-47494-5) Excellent and very comprehensive, though it contains a number of silly mistakes. Readable yet also very detailed.
- [214] The New Plantsman. Volume 1, 1994. by Matthews. V. (Royal Horticultural Society 1994 ISBN#1352-4186) A quarterly magazine, it has articles on *Himalayacalamus hookerianus*, hardy Euphorbias and an excellent article on Hippophae spp.
- [245] Scented Flora of the World. by Genders. R. (Robert Hale. London. 1994 ISBN#0-7090-5440-8) An excellent, comprehensive book on scented plants giving a few other plant uses and brief cultivation details. There are no illustrations.
- [257] Native American Ethnobotany by Moerman. D. (Timber Press. Oregon. 1998 ISBN#0-88192-453-9) Very comprehensive but terse guide to the native uses of plants. Excellent bibliography, fully referenced to each plant, giving a pathway to further information. Not for the casual reader.



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