

## VIRGINIA ROSE

*Rosa virginiana* P. Mill. var.  
*virginiana*

plant symbol = ROVIV2

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### Alternative Names

pasture rose, wild rose, common wild rose

### Uses

**Ethnobotanic:** The seed was a good source of vitamin E, it was grounded into a powder and mixed with flour or added to other foods as a supplement (Facciola 1990). A decoction of the roots was used as a bath and to treat worms in children (Moerman 1998). An infusion of the roots was used to treat bleeding cuts on the feet and as a wash to treat sore eyes (Ibid.). The fruit served as a good source of essential fatty acids, which is fairly rare for a fruit.

**Medical:** It is being investigated as a food that is capable of reducing the incidence of cancer and also as a means of halting or reverting the growth of cancer (Matthews 1994). The fruits are high in vitamin C and may be eaten out of hand or used to make preserves.

### Status

Please consult the Plants Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

### Description

**General:** Rose family (Roseaceae). Virginia rose (*Rosa virginiana*) is an upright shrub growing

between four to six feet tall. The glossy dark green foliage develops excellent yellow to red fall color (Dirr 1997). This species bear fragrant pink flowers that are two to three-inches in diameter, which occur in clusters of five to eight.

**Distribution:** *Rosa virginiana* ranges from Arkansas, east to Alabama, north to Newfoundland and west to Ontario (Vines 1960). For current distribution, please consult the Plant profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

### Adaptation

Virginia rose grows in pastures, along roadsides and along the edges of salt marshes. This species succeeds in moist soils, growing well in heavy clayey soils. It prefers a sunny position and does well under winter conditions. This is an outstanding ornamental shrub that is easy to grow.

### Establishment

**Propagation by Seed:** Most rose seeds often take one to two years to germinate because of an immature embryo and a hardened seed coat. To reduce the waiting period, scarify the seed and place in damp peat at a temperature of 27 to 32°C for four to five months by which the seed should began to germinate. Place the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle. Out plant seedling in the summer if the plants are more than twenty-five centimeters tall, otherwise grow in a cold frame for the winter and out plant in late spring.

### Management

Pruning should be done to remove spent blooms, and diseased areas, after winter for winter injury, and to shape a plant.

Roses are one of the most susceptible ornamentals to most pests and require control from intensive IPM control programs.

Beneath the flesh of the fruit, there is a layer of hairs around the seeds that can cause irritation to the mouth and digestive tract if ingested.

### Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Materials are somewhat available through native plant nurseries.

### References

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Grimm, W.C. 1970. *Home guide to trees, shrubs, and wildflowers*. Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

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#### **Prepared By**

*Jammie Favorite*

Formerly USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

#### **Species Coordinator**

*Lincoln M. Moore*

USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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