

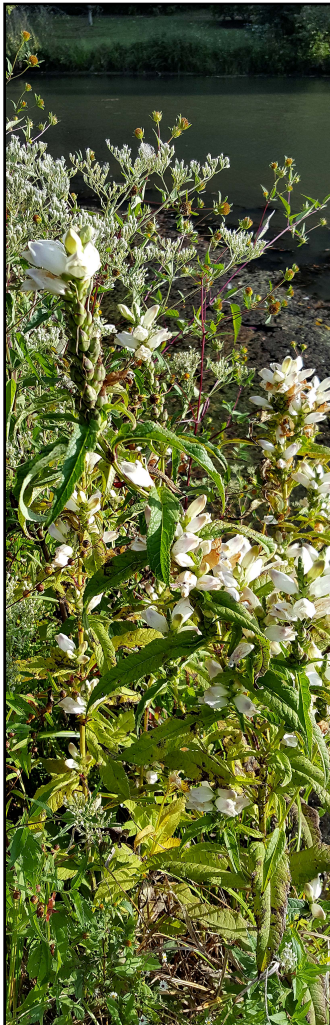



# Chelone glabra

## White Turtlehead

Tried and True  
Native Plant Selections  
for the Mid-Atlantic

With snapdragon-like flowers, which resemble turtle heads, this robust native\* perennial is named for Chelone (rhymes with “baloney”), a nymph of Greek mythology who was punished for her insolence by being turned into a tortoise. The Virginia Native Plant Society named White Turtlehead as Wildflower of the Year in 2024.



Perennial	Clump, Close-ups of Flowers, Fruit	
Height: 1–4 feet	   	
Spread: 1½ –2½ feet		
Bloom Color: White, tinged with pink/lavender		
Characteristics		
Clump-forming herbaceous <a href="#">perennial</a>		
<a href="#">Opposite</a> , sharply-toothed, linear to <a href="#">lanceolate</a> , dark green leaves on stout, erect <a href="#">stems</a>		
Spikes of showy, hooded, <a href="#">bilabiate</a> (two-lipped), white flowers with whitish beards July to October		
<a href="#">Ovoid</a> seed <a href="#">capsules</a> September to December		
Attributes		
Tolerates erosion, wet soil, temporary flooding		
No serious pests or diseases		
<a href="#">Deer</a> occasionally severely damage		
Staking usually not needed except in excess shade		
Attracts bees, butterflies, hummingbirds; <a href="#">larval</a> host for ~3 <a href="#">lepidopterans</a> , incl. Baltimore Checkerspot		
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for	
<a href="#">Soil Requirements</a> : <a href="#">Humus</a> -rich	<i>Antirrhinum majus</i> - Snapdragon (fall-blooming)	
<a href="#">Light Requirements</a> : Sun, Partial Shade	<i>Lysimachia clethroides</i> - Gooseneck Loosestrife	
<a href="#">Water Requirements</a> : Moist, Wet	<i>Physostegia virginiana</i> - Obedient Plant ( <i>native but aggressive</i> )	
Maintain good air circulation and soil moisture to prevent mildew; mulch in sunny areas		
Pinch back stems in spring to reduce plant height, especially if grown in shade		
Use in pollinator, shade, woodland, or rain gardens	*It is <a href="#">native</a> to DC, common in DE, present in most MD counties and in all PA counties, and is frequent throughout VA.	
<a href="#">Hardiness</a> : USDA Zones 3a–8b		
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria		

Images by Robert Kline (left) and Elaine Mills, Meadowlark Botanical and Longwood (top flower) Gardens