

222 W. Lake St.
Bloomington, IL 60108
Phone (630) 529-9394
Fax: (630) 529-3795



2400 Randall Rd.
Carpentersville, IL 60108
Phone: (847) 428-6767
Fax: (847) 428-3812



American Bugbane

Cimicifuga racemosa

Plant Height: 3 feet

Flower Height: 5 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ● ●

Hardiness Zone: 3a

Other Names: Black Snakeroot, Black Cohosh, *Actaea racemosa*

Ornamental Features

American Bugbane features bold spikes of fragrant white flowers rising above the foliage from mid to late summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive serrated compound leaves emerge burgundy in spring, turning dark green in color with prominent deep purple tips throughout the season. The brown fruits are carried on spikes from late summer to late winter.

Landscape Attributes

American Bugbane is an herbaceous perennial with tall flower stalks held atop a low mound of foliage. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. It has no significant negative characteristics.

American Bugbane is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

American Bugbane will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity extending to 5 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 3 feet. It tends to be leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and should be underplanted with lower-growing perennials. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years.



American Bugbane in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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This plant performs well in both full sun and full shade. It prefers to grow in moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some standing water. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.