

ARISTOLOCHIACEAE – BIRTHWORT FAMILY

Plant: herbs (perennial) or woody vines, sometimes shrubs, may be aromatic

Stem:

Root:

Leaves: alternate, simple or basal; Large and heart-shaped without teeth, sometimes 3-lobed

Flowers: perfect, irregular (zygomorphic); 3 sepals that are reddish-brown, purple or brown that form triangular flowers, or sometimes 'S'-shaped or pipe-like; no petals; (5)6 or 12 stamens; ovary superior or inferior, 1 pistil, 4-6 carpels, 1 style, 3-6 stigmas; sometimes carrion-scented

Fruit: capsules, 4-6 chambered, with seeds

Other: wild ginger most common in this area, family most common in the tropics; Dicotyledons Group

Genera: 5 genera; locally *Hexastylis*, *Aristolochia*, *Asarum* (wild ginger)

Flower Morphology in the Aristolochiaceae (Birthwort) Family)

Examples of common genera

Flower pipe-like, climbing stem
(woody)



Woolly [Pipe-Vine] Dutchman's Pipe
Aristolochia tomentosa Sims

Flowers and stem from rhizome, flower regular



[Canadian] Wild Ginger
Asarum canadense L.

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Woolly [Pipe-Vine] Dutchman's Pipe

Aristolochia tomentosa Sims

Aristolochiaceae (Birthwort Family)

Alley Springs, Ozark National Scenic Riverways,
Shannon County, Missouri

Notes: vine, woody at base; calyx (no petals) flower, 'S'-shaped
(like curved pipe), pale greenish yellow, hairy, purple inside;
leaves entire, cordate; both stem and leaves downy hairy; fruit a 6-
ribbed capsule; late spring to summer

[V Max Brown, 2006]



[Canadian] Wild Ginger

Asarum canadense L.

Aristolochiaceae (Birthwort Family)

Maumee River Metroparks, Lucas County, Ohio

Notes: calyx flower (no petals), 3-lobed, reddish to purple-brown inside, solitary; 2 leaves, heart-shaped with cordate base, long petioles from rhizomes; no stems; root tastes and smells like ginger; spring to summer

[V Max Brown, 2004]

