

## Vitaceae

### grape family

Most are woody vines, with 700 species worldwide. Three species reach Nova Scotia. Flowers are regular and hypogynous, perfect or unisexual. They are 4–5-merous. Calyx is much-reduced or vestigial. Corolla is also small, the petals opposing the stamens. Ovaries have two locules, sometimes inserted into nectary disk. Leaves are palmately compound or lobed and opposed by others modified into tendrils.

#### Key to genera

Leaves palmately compound; petals spreading at anthesis. *Parthenocissus*

Leaves simple; petals connate above; petals deciduous before anthesis. *Vitis*

### ***Parthenocissus* Planchon**

Of Asia and North America, the genus includes only 15 species. Unusual here, as Nova Scotia has only a few woody vines, trailing or climbing by tendrils. Flowers are five-merous, the petals distinct and spreading. They may be axillary or terminal. Fruit is a thin-fleshed berry, with 1–4 seeds.

#### Key to species

Tendrils branching; inflorescence with a central axis. *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*

Tendrils with few branches; inflorescence bifurcate. *P. vitacea*

### ***Parthenocissus quinquefolia* (L.) Planch.** **Virginia Creeper; vigne vierge à cinq folioles**



Photo by Marian Munro

Vining shrubs, they are supported by freely-branching tendrils, adhesive at the tips. Leaves are rugose above and glaucous below. Leaves are compound on long petioles, the leaflets on short stems. Inflorescence is terminal, flowers producing black insipid fruit.

Flowers from late June to early July.

Common about fallow fields and edges; commonly cultivated.

From Digby to Victoria counties.

Ranges from NS to SK, south to TX and FL. Native.

***Parthenocissus vitacea* (Knerr) A. Hitchc.****Woodbine; vigne vierge commune**

Resembling the first species, it is often confused with it. Tendrils of this species are less branched and have no adhesive disks at their tips. The inflorescence is bifurcate. Leaves are glossy above and lightly pubescent below.

Flowers during June and July.

Found in moist soils.

Collected from Shelburne County eastward.

Continental US, but for the southeast; NS. Native.

***Vitis* L.****grapes**

Northern in distribution, 60 species are scattered across the northern hemisphere, with two found in NS. All are woody vines, bearing simple leaves opposed by tendrils. Flowers are arranged in cymes or panicles; five-merous. Generally all species are functionally unisexual, but not fully dioecious. Calyx is much-reduced. Petals connate at the summit, soon deciduous. Staminate flowers bear a vestigial pistil; pistillate flowers carry sterile stamens. Fruits are juicy berries, with four or fewer seeds.

Key to species

Leaves tomentose beneath; fruit dark-red to black.

*Vitis labrusca*

Leaves with pubescence on lower surface of mature leaves limited to vein axils and sometimes the veins; fruit blue.

*V. riparia*

***Vitis labrusca* L.****Fox Grape; vigne lambruche**

A high-climbering vine, its leaves are cordate, coarsely dentate. There are three shallow lobes, each of which is acuminate. Lower leaf surfaces are densely white-woolly. Fruit ranges in colour from red to black. Provides one of the parent species for Concord, Champion and other cultivars of grape.

Flowers from May to July; fruit ripens late fall after leaves

Photo by Martin Thomas



Photo by Martin Thomas

***Vitis riparia* Michx.**  
**Riverbank Grape; vigne des rivage**



Photo by Martin Thomas



Photo by Sean Blaney

have dropped.

Frequently grows in thickets, wet or dry.

Spryfield, Halifax Co. in the Thornhill region; Wile Carding Mill property, Bridgewater.

NS, NB and ON, south to LA and GA; UT. Introduced from further south.

Another high-climbing vine, its stems may be glabrous or pubescent. Leaves acuminate and serrate; sparsely pubescent below. Grapes blue, 8–12mm across and glaucous.

Limited to shady thickets along streams.

Escaped throughout the Annapolis Valley (Berwick to Gaspereau and reported from Gaspereau; long known along the Gaspereau River Rd; reported from Bridgewater

Ranges from NS to MB, south to OR and LA. Native to eastern US and NB, now spreading into Nova Scotia.