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A NEW LEATHER FLOWER FROM ILLINOIS

WITH ONE PLATE

By

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A NEW LEATHER FLOWER FROM ILLINOIS.

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During the last three or four years Mr. Robert Ridgway, Curator of the Division of Birds of the U. S. National Museum, has presented to the National Herbarium several interesting lots of plants collected at his summer home, Bird Haven, near Olney, Richland County, in southern Illinois. Coming from a region of whose flora we know comparatively little, either through published reports or through herbarium material, these collections have proved to be especially interesting and might well be reported upon fully.

Bird Haven consists of some eighteen acres situated two and one-half miles north of Olney. The land was once entirely cleared and many of the original components of its flora have doubtless disappeared. In later years the ground has remained untilled and un-pastured and is now covered with a growth of trees and shrubs, while many of the herbaceous plants have reestablished themselves. Although some of the arborescent species are represented only by still immature individuals no less than 56 have been detected within this small area. As examples of the interesting variety of trees and shrubs growing spontaneously here may be enumerated the following: *Juniperus virginiana*, *Salix nigra*, *Populus deltoides*, *Quercus imbricaria*, *Q. schneckii*, *Q. palustris*, *Q. macrocarpa*, *Q. platanoidea*, *Q. rubra*, *Q. velutina*, *Q. marilandica*, *Q. minor* and *Q. acuminata*; *Juglans nigra* and *J. cinerea*; *Hicoria minima*, *H. alba*, *H. glabra*, *H. villosa*, *H. laciniosa*, and *H. ovata*; *Ulmus fulva* and *U. americana*; *Morus rubra*, *Celtis crassifolia*, *Toxylon pomiferum*, *Asimina triloba*, *Liriodendron tulipiferum*, *Platanus occidentalis*; *Malus angustifolia* and *M. coronaria*; *Prunus americana* ?, *P. hortulana*, *P. angustifolia* ?, and *P. serotina*; two species of *Cratægus*, *Gleditsia triacanthos*, *Cercis canadensis*; *Acer saccharum*, *A. rubrum* and *A. nigrum* ?; *Sassafras*, two species—perhaps three—of *Fraxinus*; *Nyssa sylvatica*, *Cornus florida*, *Diospyros virginiana*, *Catalpa catalpa*, and *Viburnum prunifolium*. Liquidambar grows near by, as well as *Quercus michauxii*. Along the Big Fox not far distant are found *Ulmus*

alata and *Quercus lyrata*. These trees were formerly abundant in the surrounding region but the utilization of the land for agricultural purposes has greatly lessened their numbers.

Most interesting, perhaps, of the woody plants from this locality is a member of the genus *Viorna*, a group best developed in the southern United States, of which Dr. J. K. Small has named a number of well marked species within the past few years. This plant whose description appears here seems to be undescribed. It is a near ally of the most common species, *Viorna viorna*, a plant not rare in rich woods as far north as Pennsylvania. Probably our species will be found to occur elsewhere in southern Illinois and Indiana and adjacent Kentucky. So far it has been collected only at Bird Haven and the number of specimens here is limited. The plants from which the type was taken grow along or near the south bank of the "East Fork" of the Fox River in a flat bottom land that is overflowed for short periods many times annually. Associated with it are such species as *Cephalanthus occidentalis*, *Symphoricarpos symphoricarpos*, *Sambucus*, *Ptelea trifoliata*, *Evonymus atropurpureus*, *Amorpha fruticosa*, *Rubus (nigrobaccus ?)*, *Menispermum canadense*, *Psedera quinquefolia*, *Tecoma radicans*, and *Rhus toxicodendron radicans*. This plant may be known as

VIORNA RIDGWAYI Standley, sp. nov.

PLATE I

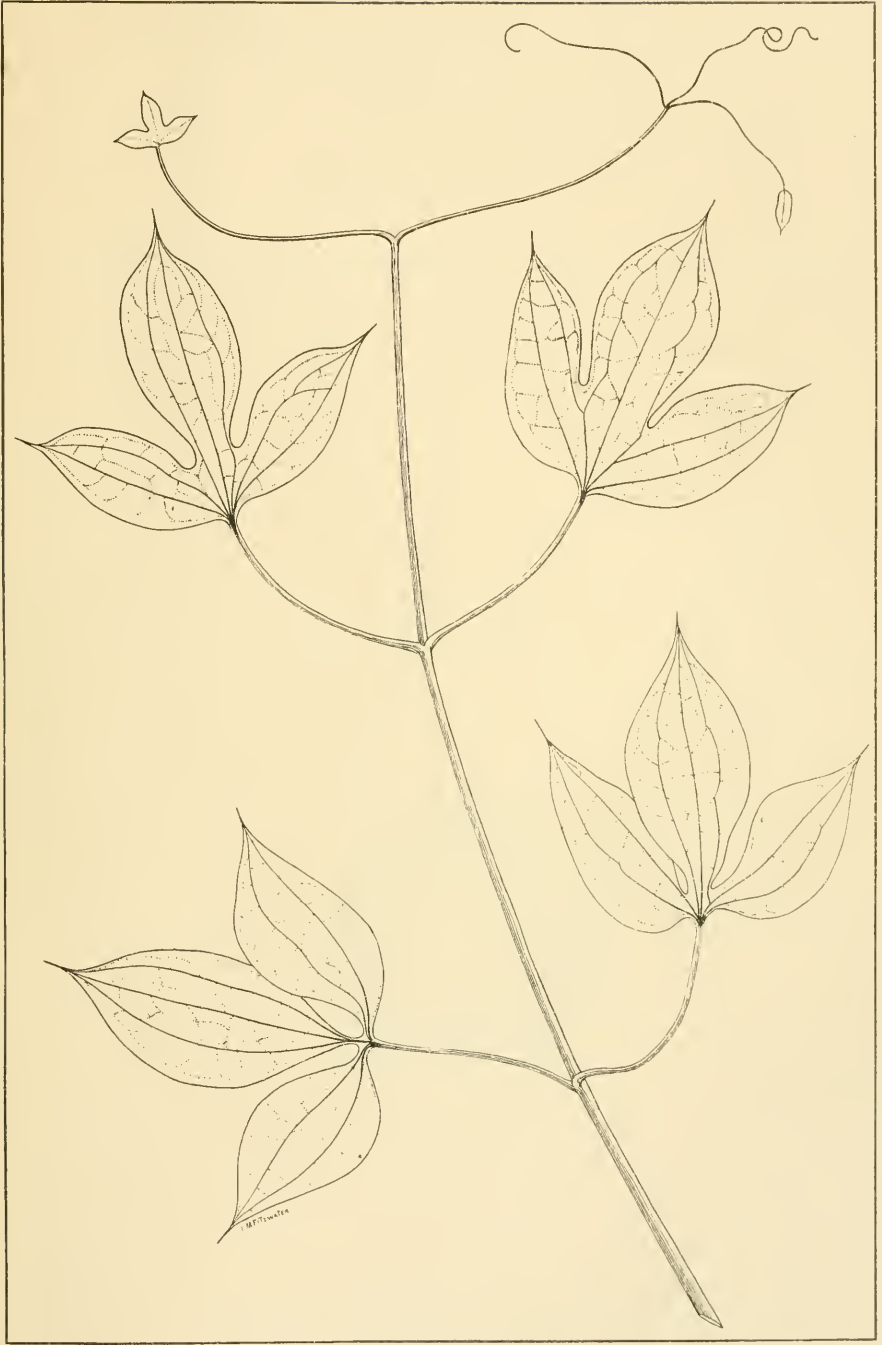
A slender vine; stems striate, somewhat swollen at the nodes, brown, rather densely silky pubescent when young, in age glabrous or sparingly pubescent; leaves pinnate, with 3 or 4 pairs of leaflets, commonly ending in a tendril; petioles 4 to 5 cm. long, striate, sparingly pubescent or glabrous; leaflets 3-parted or 3-cleft, on petiolules 30 to 35 mm. long; segments of the leaflets thin, finely reticulate-veined, bright green, glabrous on the upper surface, with a few scattered appressed hairs beneath, entire, the lateral ones inaequilateral, rhombic-ovate or rhombic-oval or oblong, 25 to 45 mm. long, 10 to 20 mm. wide, abruptly acute or attenuate, the terminal segment broadly elliptic or oval, 30 to 50 mm. long and 15 to 25 mm. wide, abruptly long-acuminate, the nearly linear tip 4 or 5 or even 6 mm. long; secondary petiolules 5 mm. long or less; leaflets when entire deltoid-ovate, abruptly short-acuminate, subcordate; peduncles slender, appressed pubescent, 5 to 10 cm. long; sepals thick and leathery, 20 mm. long and 10 mm. wide or smaller, ovate or ovate-lanceolate, abruptly acuminate and with long subulate tips, silky

pubescent, densely so about the apex; mature achenes not seen, the immature ones with long persistent plumose styles.

Type in the U. S. National Herbarium, no. 619852, collected by Mr. Robert Ridgway at Bird Haven, two and one-half miles north of Olney, Richland County, Illinois, June 6, 1910. Additional material is mounted on sheet 619853.

The proposed species is a near relative of *Viorna viorna*, the common leather-flower. It differs chiefly in the outline and especially the tips of the leaf-segments. In *V. viorna* the leaflets are merely abruptly acute and the tips, if there are any, are not more than a millimeter or perhaps two, in length. The pubescence is much more abundant in *V. ridgwayi*, as well. I have seen no other collections of the species, but this is not surprising since so few collections have been made in southern Illinois.

Plate 1 represents a leaf of the type, two-thirds natural size.



VIORNA RIDGWAYI Standley
(TWO-THIRDS NATURAL SIZE)