



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

One of the most attractive deciduous vines, Virginia Creeper provides deep green cover to most any object, rapidly climbing by means of tendrils and adhesive disks (Fig. 1). The palmately divided leaflets turn a beautiful scarlet color in fall and the bluish-black berries, usually hidden by foliage, are quite attractive to birds. The seeds germinate readily in the landscape and the plant often becomes weedy.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*

**Pronunciation:** parth-en-no-SIS-us kwin-kweff-FOLE-lee-uh

**Common name(s):** Virginia Creeper

**Family:** *Vitaceae*

**Plant type:** ground cover

**USDA hardiness zones:** 3B through 10 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** year round

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Planting month for zone 10:** year round

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Uses:** naturalizing

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

### Description

**Height:** depends upon supporting structure

**Spread:** depends upon supporting structure

**Plant habit:** spreading

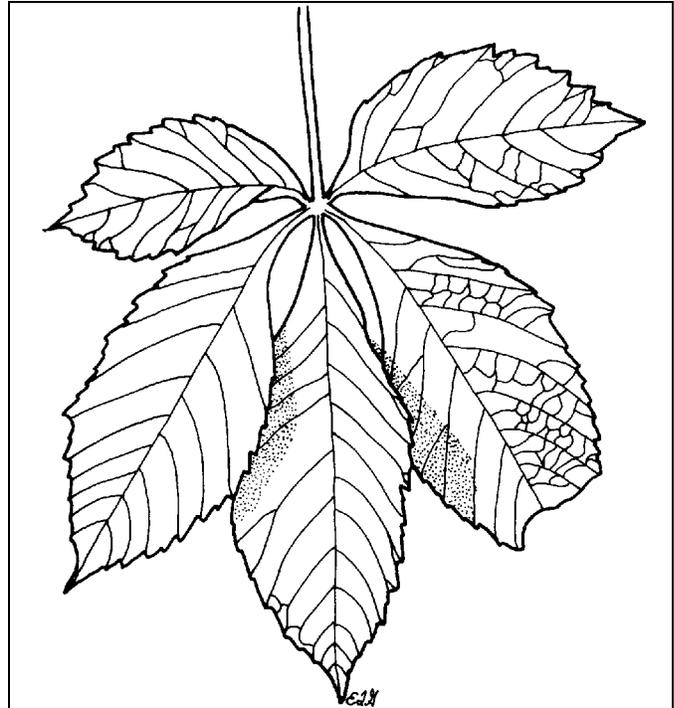


Figure 1. Virginia Creeper.

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** medium

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** palmately compound

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf margin:** serrate  
**Leaf shape:** obovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** red  
**Fall characteristic:** showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** green  
**Flower characteristic:** spring flowering

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** round  
**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch  
**Fruit cover:** fleshy  
**Fruit color:** purple  
**Fruit characteristic:** persists on the plant

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig color:** brown  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** thin

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade  
**Soil tolerances:** acidic; clay; sand; occasionally wet; loam; slightly alkaline  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown  
**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

**Other**

**Roots:** not applicable  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** native plant that often reproduces into nearby landscapes  
**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

## Use and Management

Virginia Creeper can be espaliered against a wall and provides great visual appeal during winter when the leaves have fallen. Stems do not branch readily so a large number of plants need to be installed to create a dense effect. While ideal for use on buildings or trellises, Virginia Creeper should probably not be grown on wood siding. Its tendrils will work themselves between the boards and are difficult to remove. Also the dense foliage will dry out slowly after a rain, causing a variety of moisture problems for wood siding. It can be established as a ground cover but the deciduous habit makes it undesirable in the winter.

Growing in full sun to fairly deep shade, Virginia Creeper does best on fairly rich soil high in organic matter but will tolerate hot, dry locations.

The cultivar 'Engelmanni' has smaller leaves and denser growth, making it well-suited to small gardens.

Propagation is by seed.

### Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern but Virginia Creeper is occasionally bothered by Japanese beetles.