

# Black Cohosh



The common name of bugbane is in reference to the odoriferous insect repellent properties of this plant. Native Americans used black cohosh for a variety of medical conditions ranging from gynecological problems to snake bites. Physicians made use of it in the 19th century to treat fever, menstrual cramps, and arthritis. In Europe, black cohosh has been used for over 40 years as a treatment for menstrual pain. Other traditional and folk uses were for treatment of sore throats and bronchitis. In recent years, this material has been used as an alternative to mainstream hormone replacement therapy for treatment of menopause and premenstrual syndrome. Black cohosh has been clinically proven to create an "estrogen-like" effect in the user, often reducing unpleasant menopausal symptoms, such as hot flashes and night sweats.



## *Actaea racemosa*

- **Use:** Adds architectural height and late summer bloom to a shaded part of the border or shade garden. Also effective in woodland gardens, cottage gardens and naturalized areas. Best in groups, although single plants have good specimen value once established. White flower spires are generally more demonstrative in front of darker backgrounds. Deep green foliage provides excellent texture and color to the landscape throughout the growing season. Shade-loving perennial herb with deeply cleft, glossy leaves. A tall spike of tiny white flowers blooms in summer. Another common name is "fairy candles" which refers to the bright spires of flowers that stand out in the deep shade where this plant naturally occurs. Excellent deep shade pollinator support, attracts many species of bees, and numerous butterflies.
- **Exposure/Soil:** *Part to full* Shade. Moist, well-drained soil, but not soggy. Good drainage is a must. Take care to amend the soil with plenty of organic matter, such as well-aged leaf mold and compost.
- **Growth:** Grows 4-6' tall and 2-3' wide; multiplies well.
- **Hardiness:** Zone 3-8; Perennial
- **Foliage:** Deciduous; Astilbe-like, deeply cut, tripinnate foliage is an attractive deep green.
- **Flower:** Small, numerous, creamy white, fragrant flowers appear in late summer to early fall in long, terminal racemes resembling fluffy spires (typically 1-2' long) rising well above the foliage on wiry stems.

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