

## 2015 September *Guess that Plant*



*Hackelia virginiana* (L.) M. Johnson, Stickseed or Beggar's Lice

The September *Guess that Plant* was a challenge. The basal leaves of this otherwise common and often nuisance plant of New Jersey's rich, dry woodlands do not look like the mature plant's normal cauline leaves. Anyone who has spent time in the dry woodlands and road edges of our Inner Coastal Plain, Piedmont or northern regions knows this plant by its method of distribution. What is a messy problem to us is success to the Virginia stickseed. *Hackelia* is a member of the Boraginaceae, the Borge family. The flowers characteristically unfurl in a scape so distinctive of the family. The seed forms from small, 5-petal white flowers. When mature, these form nutlets fringed with armor providing Velcro-like projections that stick to anything with a fibrous texture. Deer, rabbit, bear or other mammal hair is probably the normal mode of travel. If your sock or pant leg rubs against a fruiting plant from late August until winter, then you are just as likely to spread the seeds and eventually the plant.

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