

## The Weekly Plant

14 October 2016

**Common names:** Drummond's clematis, Texas virgin's bower, old man's beard

**Scientific name:** *Clematis drummondii*<sup>1</sup>

**In our Community:** while waiting at the stop sign on Raintree, look across the road and to the right. You'll see it growing on the fence.

### Discussion

I've not personally seen this plant in the Village, but I notice it every fall along Old Spanish Trail. I bet you've seen it, too - puffy white clouds climbing in trees and shrubs and along fences.

Those clouds belong to Drummond's clematis, a vine native to southern Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and adjacent Mexico. Each seed has a long tail with many silky filaments. As the seed matures, those filaments fluff out, creating the white clouds we notice each fall.

I've yet to notice the flowers which, though white and an inch wide, seem to never attract attention. Each plant has only female or only male flowers. Though male plants may be a bit showier in flower, the female plants win the prize when they "go to seed."



Clematis vines climb in an unusual way, not by twining their stems around a support but sending out long leaves with twisty, twining petioles. That's hard to see right now as most of the leaves have fallen off. The leaves of Drummond's clematis are compound and opposite with a tendency toward 3s - three leaflets toward the end of the leaf, each leaflet with three lobes.

Common names intrigue (and frustrate) me. I understand old man's beard, but why virgin's bower, a general name for Clematis? See [this article](#) on the Clematis Queen website for a possible explanation.

On a final note: I read on a couple of websites that this vine is hard to eliminate once it is established. Think twice before you bring it into your yard.



Left, top: A fresh leaf (photo taken in April). Note 3-part terminal leaflet and the 3 lobes on most leaflets.

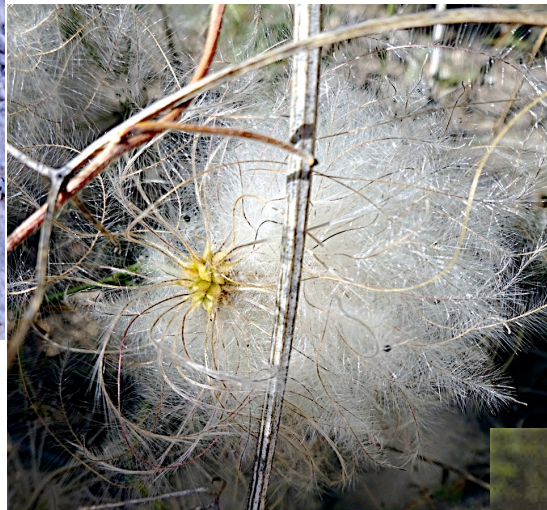
Left, bottom: leafless twining petiole

Far right, top: a female flower; note 4 slender sepals that look like petals. There are no true petals.

Far right, bottom: male flower with 4 sepals.

Center: fruit from one flower. The seeds are numerous, each with a 3-inch, fluffy tail.

PLEASE NOTE: flower photos are not mine. They are taken from <http://www.backyardnature.net/n/w/drumclem.htm>.



<sup>1</sup> [Tropicos](#) is source for accepted scientific name.

