

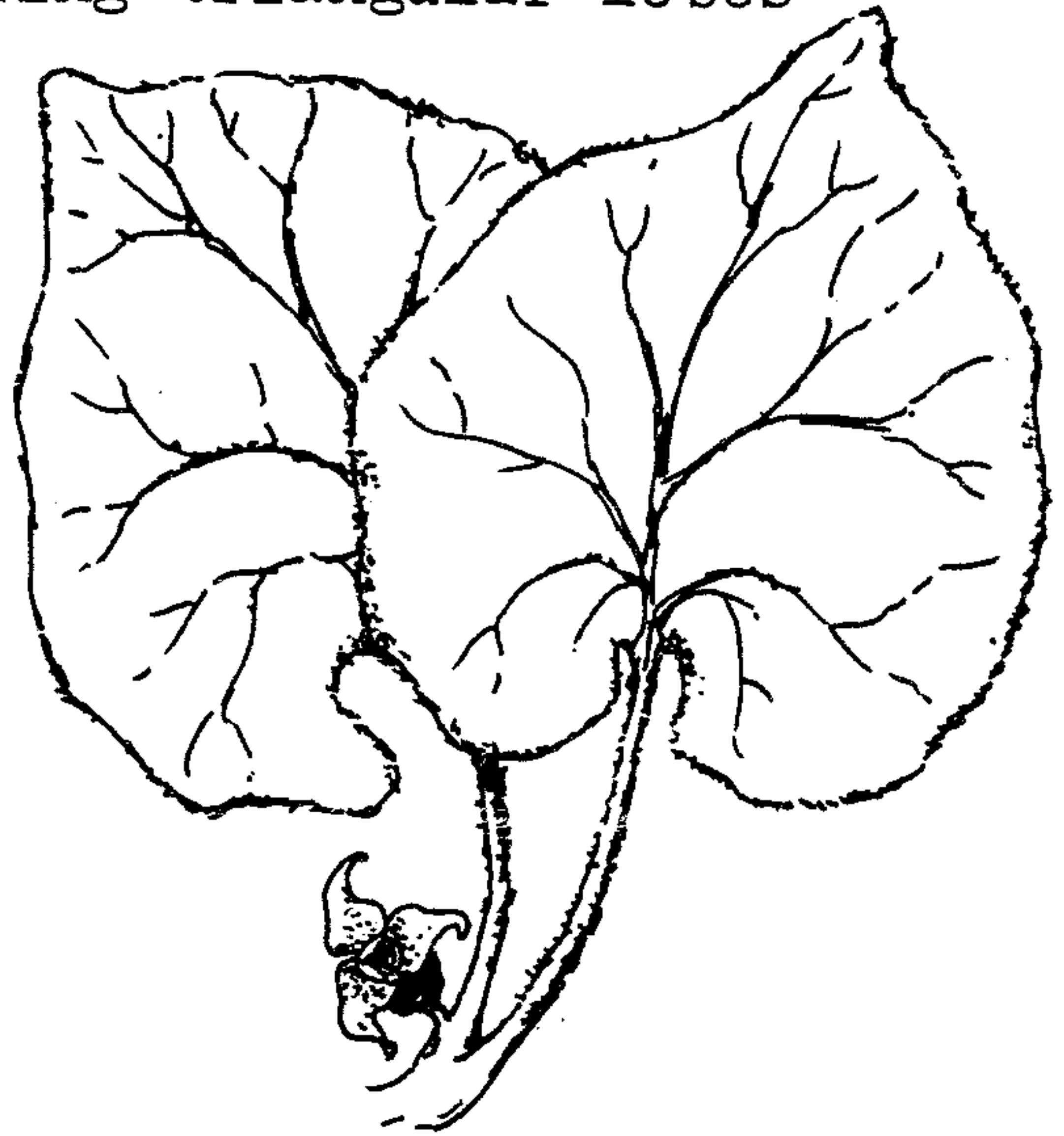
LOOK AGAIN !

Although not even distantly related to the true ginger of the tropics, the roots of our Wild Ginger, Asarum canadense, have a surprisingly similar flavor and tang.

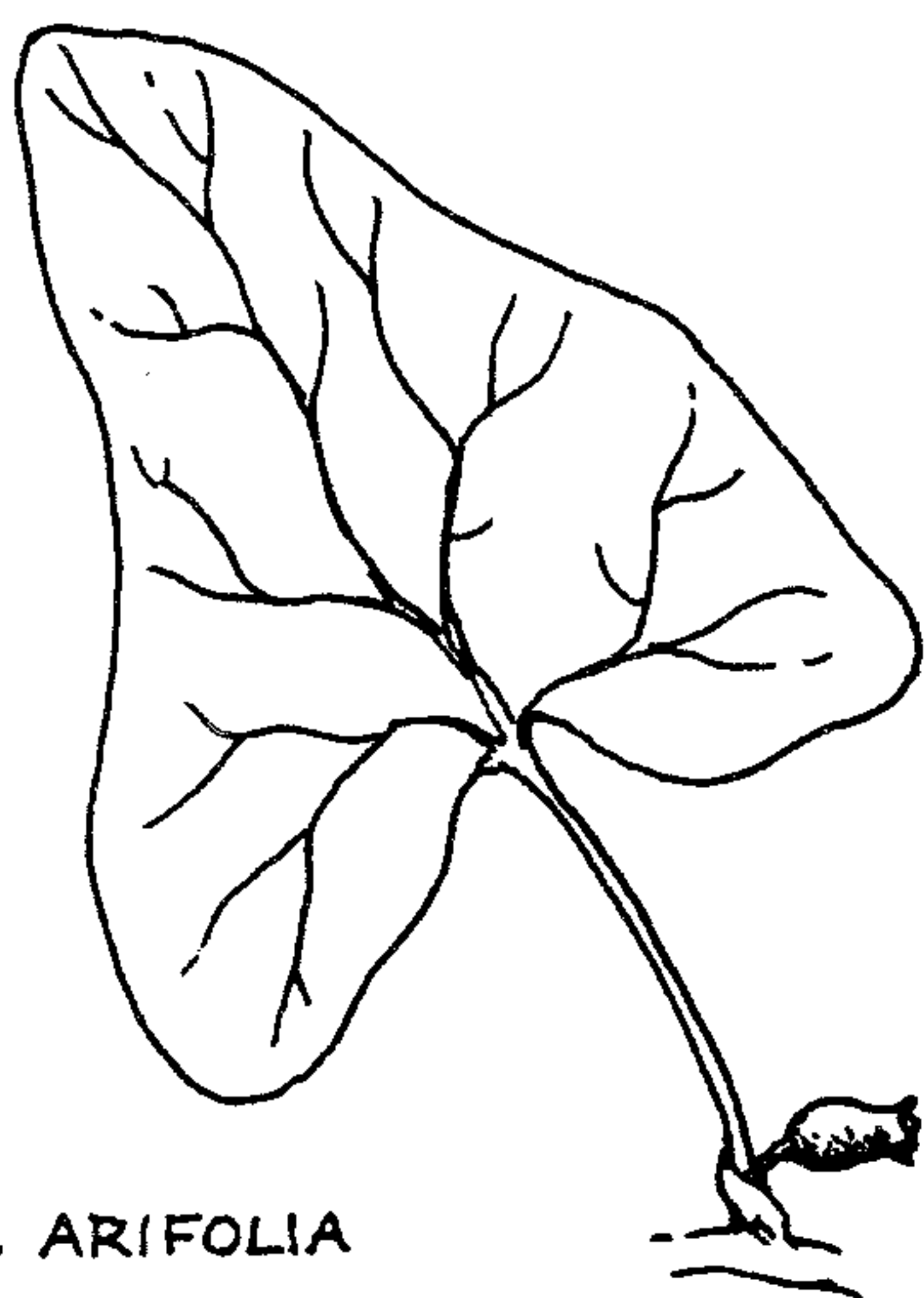
Each spring this plant puts out a pair of large downy leaves, and a solitary reddish or purplish brown flower near ground level. The flower is actually a fleshy calyx (there are no petals), bell-shaped with three spreading triangular lobes which may vary greatly in length.

Another group of plants popularly known as Wild Ginger but endemic to the Southeast possesses a different set of characters; some authors have placed these in the genus Hexastylis and have given them the alternative common name of Heartleaf. They have smooth evergreen foliage (sometimes variegated), a single leaf being formed each year to join the persistent older ones.

The earliest of these to bloom is H. arifolia, in which the leaves are triangular. The little flowers, which are greenish brown and flask-shaped, have given it the colloquial name of Little Brown Jugs.



A. CANADENSE



H. ARIFOLIA

This is followed in our area by three species with more rounded leaves and larger flowers that vary from cylindrical to urn-shaped. The calyx lobes are very short in H. virginica, longer in H. heterophylla. H. shuttleworthii is made conspicuous by its big flowers, which usually exceed an inch in length.

Dick Smith