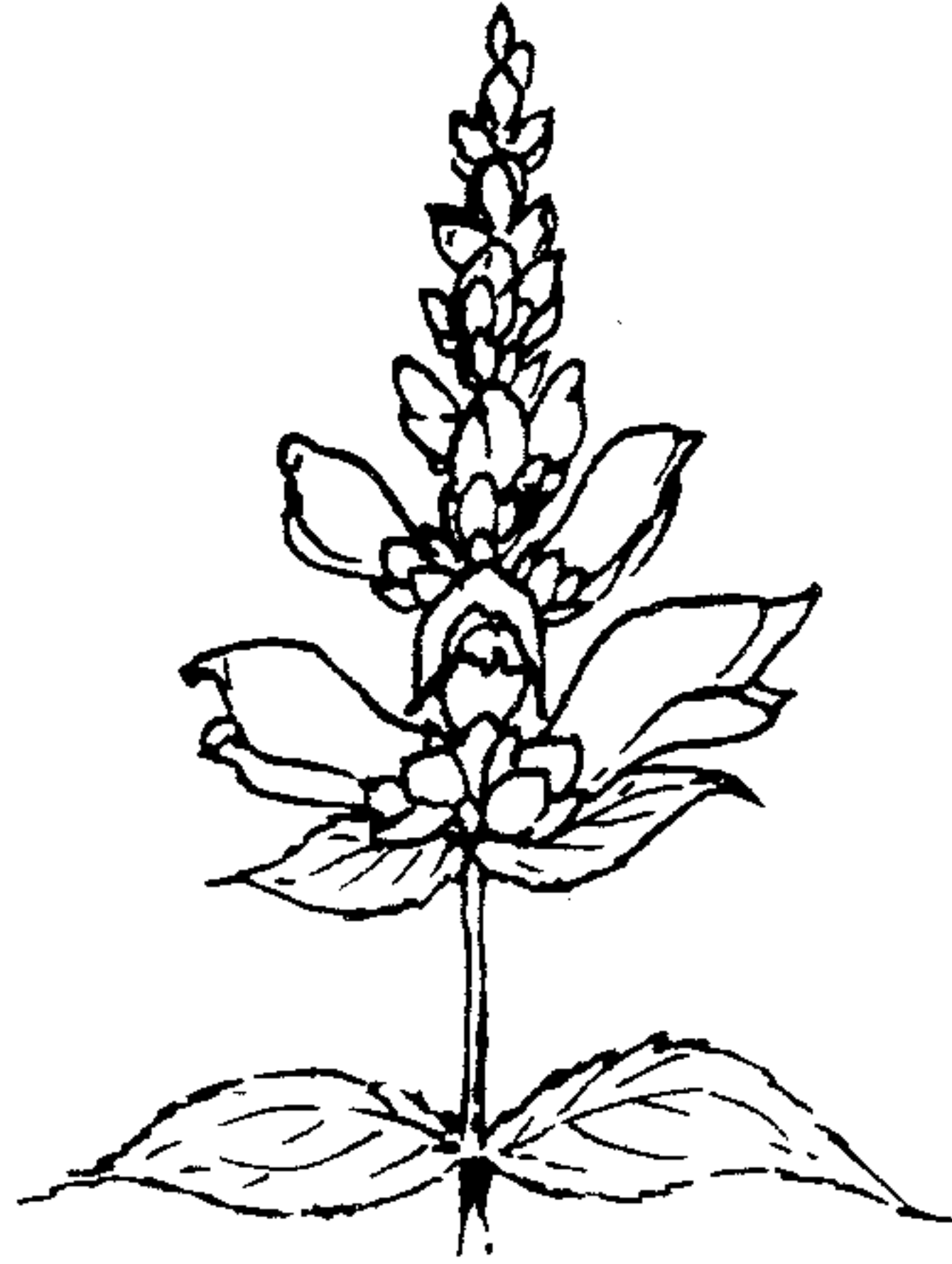


LOOK AGAIN !

In the northeast, where there is only a single species, Turtlehead is thought of as a white flower, but actually there are three others in the genus -- each pink or rose-purple in color and southern in distribution -- and all four occur naturally in our area.

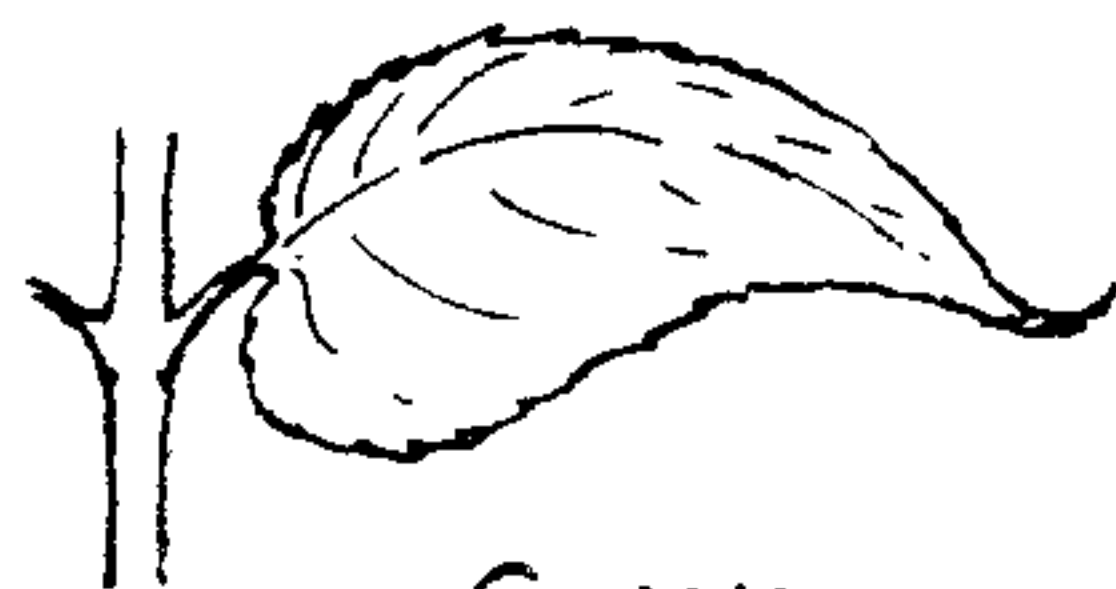


CHELONE CUTHBERTII

The one with the most restricted range is probably our most abundant. It is Chelone lyonii, and is limited to the western Carolinas and eastern Tennessee where it is often found in spruce-fir forests. Its leaves are its best distinguishing mark: ovate, rounded at the base, and tapering to a long point, with a slender petiole from $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $1\frac{1}{2}$ " long. The short sterile stamen, which in all Turtleheads arises from behind the four anther-bearing ones, is white, sometimes pink-tinged at the apex.

Less common is C. cuthbertii, a plant of wet meadows and bogs whose distribution is divided between a few mountainous sections of North Carolina and the coastal plain in Virginia. It is the only species with leaves that are both rounded at the base and sessile; other distinctive clues are the purple color of the sterile stamen and the arrangement of the flowers in four definite vertical ranks.

The third pink species, infrequent in our region, is C. obliqua. Here the leaves are broadly lanceolate, tapering to a short petiole, and the sterile filament is white.



C. LYONII



C. OBLIQUA



C. GLABRA

Then we come to C. glabra, which ranges over a wide area all the way from Newfoundland to Alabama, and is scattered across the two Carolinas. Typically its flowers are white, but they may be suffused with green, yellow or purple; the sterile stamen is green. Its leaves are virtually sessile, but the blades are more narrowly lanceolate than in C. obliqua. It is highly variable, and several of its forms are considered by some to be separate species, notably C. montana and C. chlorantha.

Dick Smith