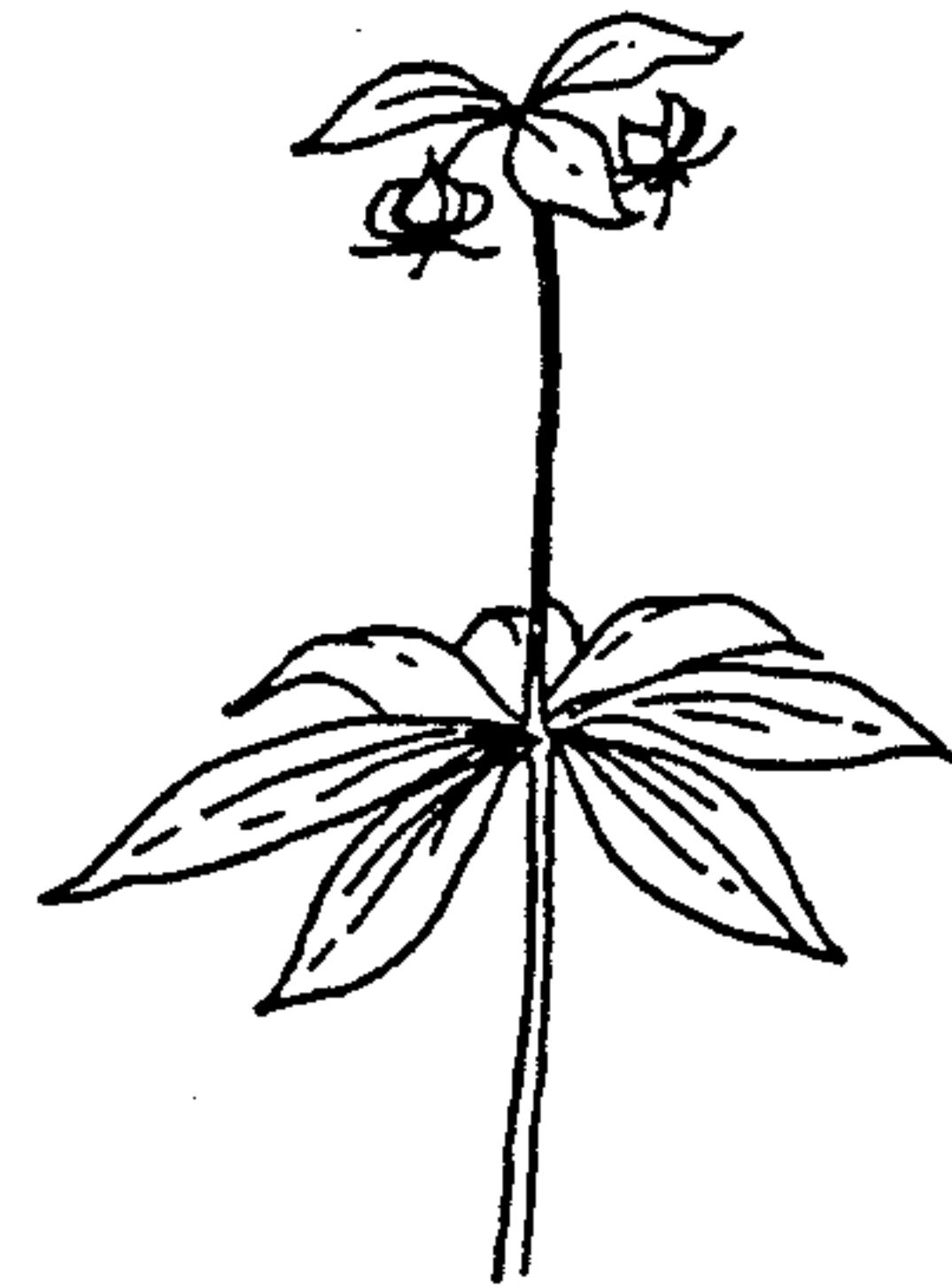


LOOK AGAIN !

The number of wildflowers having whorled leaves is small enough for us to be able to identify many of them, at least as to genus, even in the absence of flowers. Some examples are the Trilliums, Bedstraws and Lilies.

A few, however, are hard to differentiate, and are worth examining. One is Indian Cucumber Root (Medeola virginiana), which has a whorl of 5 to 9 oblanceolate leaves. In mature, flowering plants this is overtopped by a small whorl which bears 3 leaves and a few-flowered umbel, but this will be absent in many individuals.

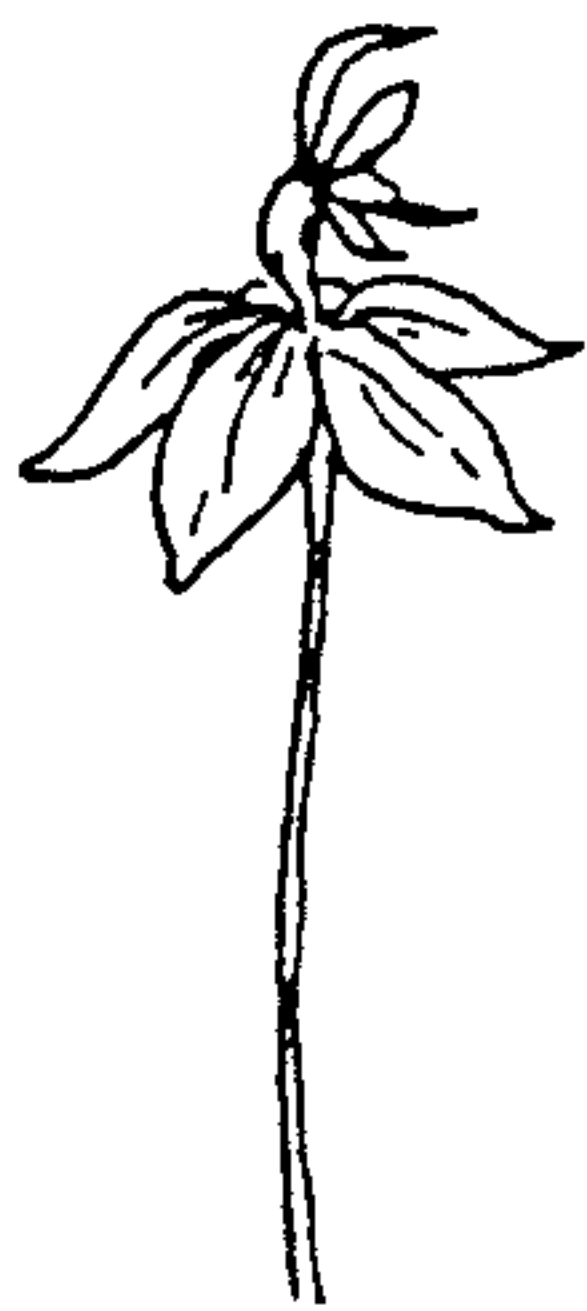


MEDEOLA VIRGINIANA

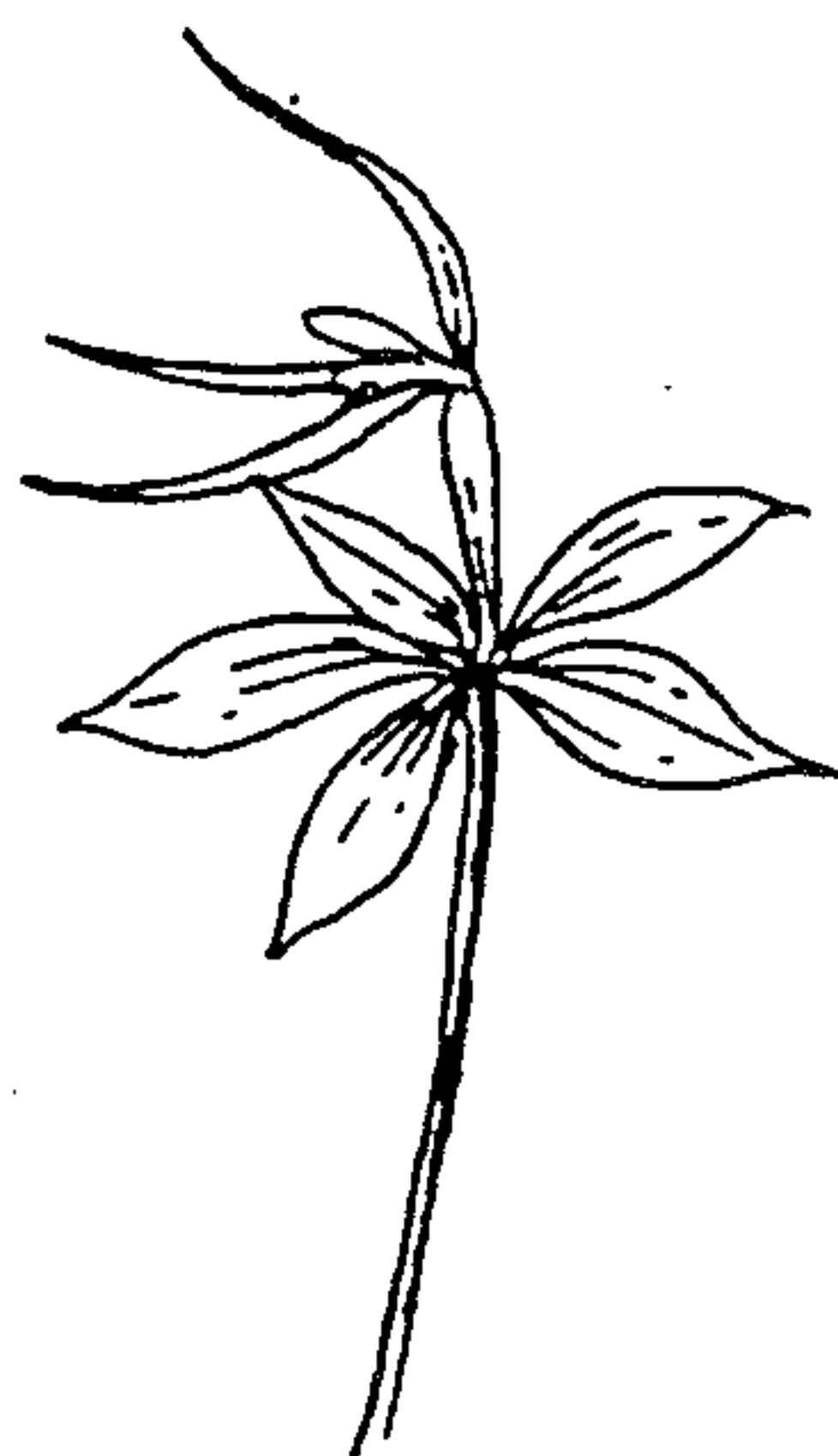
Since Medeola is a monotypic genus we will find no look-alikes among its relatives, but Isotria, in the Orchid Family, fills this gap very nicely. In fact, Whorled Pogonia (I. verticillata), which always has 5 leaves, bears an uncanny resemblance to Medeola when neither is in bloom; however, it helps to know that the stem is hollow in Isotria, solid in Medeola.

The comparative scarcity of the Whorled Pogonias makes it worthwhile to key out such plants carefully, and especially to distinguish the extremely rare I. medeoloides if you should be

fortunate enough to find it. This is the smaller of the two species in every respect, but most noticeably in the sepals, which are under 1" but at least twice as long in I. verticillata. Also, the plant is pale green and the leaves tend to droop.



ISOTRIA MEDEOLOIDES



I. VERTICILLATA

Dick Smith