

Carolina Horsenettle (*Solanum carolinense*)

We recently discovered this toxic native wildflower while removing invasive plants.

Carolina horsenettle is not a true nettle, but a member of the Solanaceae, or nightshade family. All parts of the plant are poisonous to varying degrees due to the presence of *solanine* which is a toxic alkaloid and one of the plant's natural defenses. While ingesting any part of the plant can cause fever, headache, scratchy throat, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, ingesting the fruit can cause abdominal pain, circulatory and respiratory depression, or even death.



It is a perennial herbaceous plant, native to the southeastern United States that has spread widely throughout much of temperate North America. At least thirty-two insects, including long-tongued and short-tongued bees, as well as the meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) have been recorded feeding on this species in Virginia alone. Fruits are eaten by a variety of native animals, including turkey (there are turkey in LRPRA), bobwhite quail, and striped skunk. Most mammals avoid eating the stems and leaves due to both the spines and toxicity of the plant.

Sources/Additional Information:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solanum_carolinense

<http://eol.org/pages/581115/details>