

*Actaea simplex* 'Autropurpurea Group' Zones 4-8

Cultivars: 'Black Negligee', 'Brunette', 'Hillside Black Beauty', 'Pink Spire'  
aka black bugbane, black cohosh, black snakeroot



In 1998 based on taxonomic study, the original genus of this plant, *Cimicifuga*, was discontinued and the group joined the *Actaea* genus. *Actaea* is a perennial member of the Ranunculaceae (buttercup) family. *Actaea* enjoy woodland habitat and shade. The cultivars noted above will not bloom well in deep shade. They grow well in moist, rich, acidic soil. They take awhile to establish but will form attractive clumps. Plant height is 25-60cm. They have a tap root and resent being moved (I located my first four plants in too wet a spot and had to move them, they sulked for several years before beginning to bloom!). The foliage is a stunning bronze to deep purple. Mine are planted in a shady bed with hostas. The plants are deer and rabbit resistant.

*Actaea* send up tall wands of white or very light pink blooms (inflorescences) on purple-black stems. The flowers open in my garden in mid August and last well into September. The flower spikes can be up to 50cm long. They have a pleasant smell and dry well. The plants do not require staking and are long lived (the oldest of mine were planted eleven years ago).

The roots of the native cohosh continue to be used for medicinal purposes.

