

School-to-Nature



Burdock



Wood-Aven



Beggar-Tick

What's That Stuck To My Socks? Hitchhiker Seeds

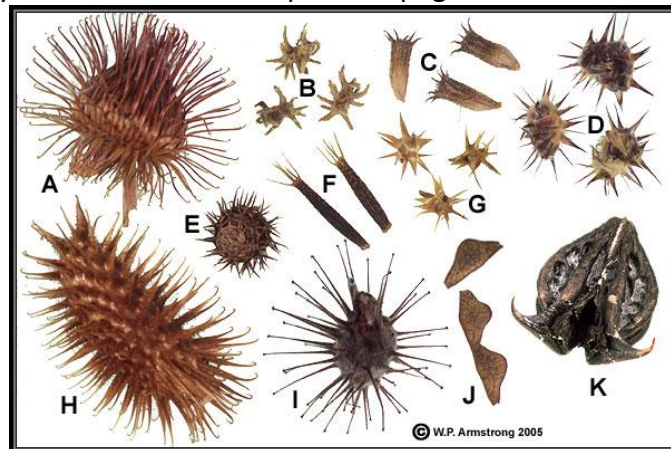
In late summer and autumn, when you return from walking on the Caledonia Conservancy trails, or other woods or prairie areas, you may find “hitchhiker seeds” on your socks, other clothing, or on your pet. Burrs and sticky seeds may be a chore to remove and throw away.

Quite a few wild plants have this unique way of dispersing seeds and re-seeding themselves—traveling on the fur of animals, and for humans, on our clothing or even our hair. Each plant of this kind has a unique way of doing this: by the use of tiny hooks, or starry spikes, or even sticky sap. Seeds may be carried many miles from the original plant in this way.

Some years ago, a Swiss inventor, George de Mestral, examined the burdock seeds sticking to his dog and to himself, and came up with the idea that was patented as VELCRO. Burdock seeds and Velcro work in much the same way.

Here is a picture chart of hitchhiker seeds, with their common names, so that you can identify these pesky seeds correctly. The three at the top of this page are found locally.

- A. Burdock
- B. Grappling-hook
- C. Horehound
- D. Bur-grass
- E. Bur-clover
- F. Beggar-tick
- G. Sand-bur
- H. Cocklebur
- I. Krameria
- J. Stick-tight
- K. Devil's Claw



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