

false dragonhead *Physostegia virginiana*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Lamiales

Family: Lamiaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

False dragonhead is also known as obedience plant. This perennial herb has a square stem that is erect, unbranched and smooth. The simple leaves are arranged opposite each other on the stem. Each toothed leaf is elliptic to lance-shaped. A leaf may be six inches long and two inches wide. The pink flowers, each up to one and one-fourth inches long, have a spotted three-lobed lip. Flowers are clustered in a spike at the stem tip. The fruits are nutlets. Each of the four, smooth nutlets produced per flower is about one-sixth inch long. False dragonhead may attain a height of one to four feet.

BEHAVIORS

False dragonhead may be found statewide in Illinois. It grows in moist soil in wet prairies, thickets and along streams. Flowers are produced from May through September. The name “obedience plant” is sometimes applied to this species because when its flowers are pushed either to the right or the left, they stay in that position.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge; hill prairie

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