

prairie dock *Silphium terebinthinaceum*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Asterales

Family: Asteraceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Prairie dock is also known as dock rosinweed. This perennial herb has an upright, smooth stem. Its very large, rough, heart-shaped or oval leaves develop only at the base of the plant. Each simple, toothed leaf may be two feet long and eight inches wide. The small, yellow flower heads are borne at the tip of a long stalk. The outer flowers are raylike (12 to 20 per head), while the inner flowers are tubular. The fruit is a dry, hard and smooth with two teeth at the tip. Prairie dock may attain a height of six to ten feet.

BEHAVIORS

Prairie dock may be found throughout Illinois. It grows in moist prairies. Flowers are produced from July through September. This plant is an important food source for grazing animals of the prairie. Prairie dock forms a rosin that was chewed by early settlers as a gum.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; gravel prairie; hill prairie; shrub prairie

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