

prairie milkweed *Asclepias sullivantii*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Gentianales

Family: Asclepiadaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Prairie milkweed is a smooth, perennial herb with a milky sap. The leaves are arranged opposite each other on the stem. The simple, entire leaves may be sessile or on a short stalk. Flowers develop in a cluster at the stem tip. The five, downward-pointing petals per flower support five, inwardly curving horns. Flowers are purple and about three-eighths inch in length. The fruit is a long, pointed, smooth seedpod. Prairie milkweed may attain a height of two to four feet.

BEHAVIORS

Prairie milkweed may be found statewide in Illinois but is much more common in the northern two-thirds of the state. It grows in moist to wet prairies. Flowers are produced from June through July. Flowers are pollinated by insects, and seeds are wind-dispersed.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie

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