

wild ginger *Asarum canadense*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Aristolochiales

Family: Aristolochiaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Wild ginger is a perennial plant that grows from underground stems and fleshy roots. No above-ground stems are present. There are usually two, oppositely arranged leaves. The leaf is heart-shaped, hairy, about six inches long and on a hairy stalk. The single flower arises from the leaf axil. There are no petals, but the three, maroon sepals appear petallike. The sepals are united at the base, and the outer tips usually point downward. The fruit is a spherical capsule, about one-third inch in diameter.

BEHAVIORS

Wild ginger may be found statewide in Illinois. This plant grows in rich woods. Wild ginger flowers from April through May. When disturbed, its underground stem gives off the aroma of ginger.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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