

## common milkweed *Asclepias syriaca*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Gentianales

Family: Asclepiadaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

Common milkweed is a perennial herb. The stems of this species are upright, unbranched and hairy. Its leaves are arranged opposite each other on the stem. Each oblong-to-oval leaf is simple and leathery. A leaf may be as much as four inches wide. The leaves and stems exude a milky sap when broken. The unique hourglass-shaped rose, lavender or purple-brown flowers are arranged in domed, umbrellalike clusters. Flower clusters develop in the leaf axils. The fruit is a long, pointed seedpod that has a warty, outer covering and contains several seeds. Each seed is attached to silky hairs. The plant may grow three to five feet tall.

### BEHAVIORS

Common milkweed may be found throughout Illinois. It grows in prairies, fields and roadsides. Flowers are produced from May through August.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge; sand prairie

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