

cream wild indigo *Baptisia bracteata*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Rosales

Family: Fabaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Cream wild indigo is a perennial herb that has hairy stems and leaves. Each leaf is divided into three leaflets. This plant produces showy, cream-colored flowers in a spike that extends horizontally from the stem tips. A single flower may be one and one-fourth inches in length. The fruit is a pod that contains seeds. Cream wild indigo grows to a height of one and one-half to two feet.

BEHAVIORS

Cream wild indigo may be found throughout Illinois, although it is rarely present in the southern tip of the state. It grows in dry to moist prairies and open woods. Flowers are produced from May through June. The leaves and fruits of this plant can provide a dark, blue dye. Leaves turn black with the first frost of the season. At the end of the growing season, the plant detaches from the ground, but the leaves remain on the stem.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; sand prairie

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