

## downy sunflower *Helianthus mollis*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Asterales

Family: Asteraceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

Downy sunflower is also known as hairy sunflower, ashy sunflower and soft sunflower. This perennial plant has most of its leaves in pairs. The stalkless, heart-shaped leaves clasp the stem. The entire plant is covered with white hairs. Flower heads are about two and one-half inches wide and bear yellow ray flowers around yellow disk flowers. The disk flowers are fertile, and the ray flowers are sterile. The one-seeded fruit is dry and hard. Downy sunflower may grow two to three and one-half feet tall.

### BEHAVIORS

Downy sunflower may be found throughout Illinois. It grows in prairies. Flowers are produced from August through September. This species is an important food plant for grazing animals of the prairie. Downy sunflowers quickly form colonies as they spread from their underground stems.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

**none**

Woodland Habitats

**none**

Prairie and Edge Habitats

**black soil prairie; sand prairie**

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