

leadplant *Amorpha canescens*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Rosales

Family: Fabaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Leadplant is also called prairie shoestring because of its roots that may grow to 15 feet or more in depth. The name “leadplant” is given to this perennial shrub due to the color of its foliage. The leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. Leaves are pinnately compound, divided into 21 to 51 leaflets. The leaflets are hairy, sessile and up to three-eighths inch wide. Deep-purple flowers are produced in a dense spike. The fruit is a pod containing seeds. This plant grows to a height of one to three feet.

BEHAVIORS

Leadplant may be found throughout Illinois, although it is more commonly seen in the northern two-thirds of the state. It grows in sand, hill, black soil and gravel prairies. Flowers are produced from May through August. Leadplant is an important food source for grazing animals of the prairie.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie

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