

# mapleleaf

## *Quadrula quadrula*

### FEATURES

The mapleleaf mussel has a thick shell with well-developed teeth. It is square in outline. The anterior end of the shell is rounded while the posterior end of the shell is squared. Two rows of warty bumps on the outer shell are separated by a small depression. The adult's shell is brown while the shell of a young individual is green or yellow. The inside of the shell is pearly white. The mapleleaf mussel grows to four inches in length.

### BEHAVIORS

The mapleleaf mussel lives in rivers and reservoirs with a mud, sand or gravel bottom. This mussel often lives for more than 10 years, and some individuals may live for more than 100 years. The sexes are separate. The male releases sperm into the water. The female draws sperm in through the incurrent siphon along with water and other particles. The eggs are fertilized internally. Fertilized eggs develop into an intermediate larval stage called glochidia. Glochidia are stored in the female's gills, providing them with a safe place to develop and ample oxygen. In the spring or summer, glochidia are released from the female into the water, where they begin their parasitic stage. Glochidia attach to a fish and form a cyst. Within the cyst, the larva transforms into the adult form, a process that may take from one to 25 weeks depending on the host, water temperature and place of attachment. The adult breaks free of the cyst and drops off to the bottom where it begins its adult life, if conditions are favorable. The host fish species for this mussel is the flathead catfish. The mapleleaf mussel is a filter-feeder, bringing in water and the organic matter it contains through the incurrent siphon, filtering the particles out, then sending the rest of the water away from the body through the excurrent siphon. Particles filtered include plankton and detritus.

### TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Mollusca  
Class: Bivalvia  
Order: Unionoida  
Family: Unionidae

### ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

### ILLINOIS RANGE



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inside and outside of shell

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shell

### **Aquatic Habitats**

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams

### **Woodland Habitats**

none

### **Prairie and Edge Habitats**

none