

New Jersey tea *Ceanothus americanus*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Rhamnales

Family: Rhamnaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

New Jersey tea is also known as wild snowball. This perennial shrub has leaves that are arranged alternately along the stem. Each oval to oblong leaf is about two and one-half inches long and one and one-fourth inches wide. Leaves are usually hairy on the lower surface. Five-petaled, white flowers develop in clusters at the stem tip. The three-lobed fruits (drupes) are borne in clusters. New Jersey tea grows to a height of about three feet.

BEHAVIORS

New Jersey tea may be found statewide in Illinois. It grows in dry, open woods, on rocky slopes and in moist to dry prairie edges. Flowers are produced from June through August. Insects are the main agent for pollination while the seeds are dispersed from the explosive action of ripe fruit. The leaves and fruit of this plant are used for food by wildlife.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge; gravel prairie;

hill prairie

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2017. Biodiversity of Illinois.