

# common milkweed

*Asclepias syriaca*

## FEATURES

Common milkweed is a perennial herb. The stems of this species are upright, unbranched and hairy. Its leaves are arranged opposite each other on the stem. Each oblong-to-oval leaf is simple and leathery. A leaf may be as much as four inches wide. The leaves and stems exude a milky sap when broken. The unique hourglass-shaped rose, lavender or purple-brown flowers are arranged in domed, umbrellalike clusters. Flower clusters develop in the leaf axils. The fruit is a long, pointed seedpod that has a warty, outer covering and contains several seeds. Each seed is attached to silky hairs. The plant may grow three to five feet tall.

## BEHAVIORS

Common milkweed may be found throughout Illinois. It grows in prairies, fields and roadsides. Flowers are produced from May through August.

## TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Plantae  
Division: Magnoliophyta  
Class: Magnoliopsida  
Order: Gentianales  
Family: Apocynaceae

## ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

## ILLINOIS RANGE





pod



seeds



seeds with silk



buds





leaf



milky sap

plant



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### **Aquatic Habitats**

none

### **Woodland Habitats**

none

### **Prairie and Edge Habitats**

black soil prairie; edge; sand prairie