

# compass-plant

## *Silphium laciniatum*

### FEATURES

Compass-plant is a perennial herb that may grow from four to eight feet tall. It has very large, deeply divided leaves. Most of the leaves are at the base of the plant. These stiff, prickly leaves are arranged alternately along the upright, hairy stem. Leaves are often held vertically in a north to south plane, which is how the plant's common name came about. Each leaf may be up to one foot wide. Yellow flowers are crowded together in a head that may be five inches wide. The outer flowers are raylike, while the inner flowers are tubular. Dry, hard, oval fruits, up to one-half inch long, are produced.

### BEHAVIORS

Compass-plant may be found throughout Illinois. It grows in moist prairies. Flowers are produced in July and August. Compass-plant was once important in the diet of bison on the Illinois prairies.

### TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Plantae  
Division: Magnoliophyta  
Class: Magnoliopsida  
Order: Asterales  
Family: Asteraceae

### ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

### ILLINOIS RANGE





flower head



leaves



stem



**Aquatic Habitats**

none

**Woodland Habitats**

none

**Prairie and Edge Habitats**

black soil prairie