

cup-plant

Silphium perfoliatum

FEATURES

The cup-plant is a perennial herb. Its rough, hairy leaves are toothed. Each leaf may be up to one foot long and six inches wide. The leaf shape is triangular to ovate. Lower leaves have a stalk. The opposite, upper leaves surround the flowering stem, forming what appears to be one, large leaf. This structure makes a cup around the stem that acts to catch water. The stem is smooth and upright. This plant may grow to a height of four to eight feet. Its many, yellow flowers are crowded into a head that may be three inches wide. The outer flowers are raylike, while the inner flowers are tubular. The dry, hard seeds are ovoid, winged up to one-half inch wide and usually have two teeth at the tip.

BEHAVIORS

The cup-plant may be found throughout Illinois. It grows in low areas along streams and ponds, in prairies, in wet meadows and in open woods. Flowers are produced from July through August. Cup-plant is an important food source for grazing animals of the prairie.

TAXONOMY

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE



plants with flower heads



leaves and stems



water in leaf cup



flower head



flower buds

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams;
wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge