

smooth sumac *Rhus glabra*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Sapindales

Family: Anacardiaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Smooth sumac is a small, deciduous tree that may grow to 20 feet tall with a trunk diameter of up to eight inches. The bark is light brown. The smooth twigs are red-brown or green-brown and covered with a white coating. Leaves are arranged alternately along the twigs. The pinnately compound leaves may have as many as 31 leaflets. Each leaflet is lance-shaped and up to four inches long and two inches wide. The leaflet is toothed along the edges, smooth, green on the upper surface and white on the lower surface. Male (staminate) and female (pistillate) flowers may be on separate plants, the same plant or in the same flower. The small, green-white flowers develop in clusters. The fruit is a small, red drupe (a seed enclosed in a hard, dry material that in turn is covered with a fleshy material). Drupes are covered with tiny hairs and develop in clusters.

BEHAVIORS

Smooth sumac may be found throughout Illinois. It grows in dry to moist prairies, roadsides, fields and woods. Flowers are produced from June through July. Smooth sumac is sometimes grown as an ornamental plant, particularly for the bright-red color of its leaves in the fall of the year.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge; hill prairie

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