

western sunflower *Helianthus occidentalis*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Asterales

Family: Asteraceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Western sunflower, also known as fewleaf sunflower, is a perennial herb with leaves arranged opposite each other on the stem. Most of the large, rough, hairy leaves are found at the base of the plant. The stems are long and often red. The oval-shaped leaves may be toothed. Yellow, flower heads develop on long stalks. Both disk (fertile) and ray (sterile) flowers are present. The one-seeded fruit is dry and hard. Western sunflower may attain a height of one to three feet.

BEHAVIORS

Western sunflower may be found in the northern two-thirds of Illinois. It grows in dry prairies and sandy soil. Flowers are produced from July through September. Insects are the main agent of pollination.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie

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