

Asclepias syriaca

Common Milkweed,
Milkweed

Native to Maine

Upland
Fields

Leaves



Vital Signs user 72dg6



Look for smooth, pale green leaves that are blade-shaped, 7 to 25 cm long, and 3 to 12 cm wide with smooth edges. The underside has tiny hairs that feel soft and velvety. The leaves can be slightly wavy.

LEAF ARRANGEMENT	LEAF TYPE	LEAF/LEAFLET SHAPE	LEAF/LEAFLET EDGE
 ALTERNATE	 SIMPLE	 PALMATE	 SMOOTH
 OPPOSITE	 COMPOUND-PALMATE	 OVAL	 TOOTHED
 WHORLED	 COMPOUND-PINNATE	 BLADE	 WAVY

Plant

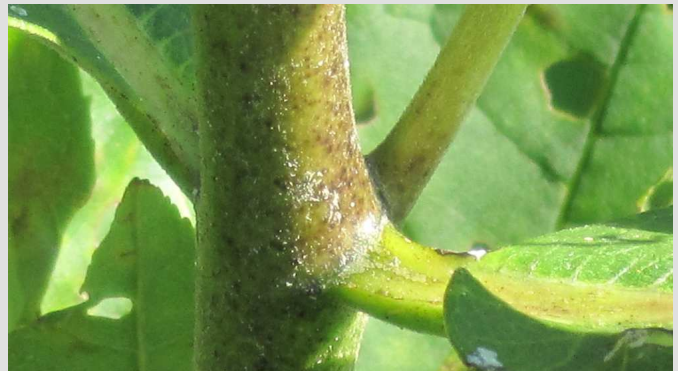


dogtooth77, www.flickr.com



Look for a large-leaved plant with a single stem that has no branches. Common Milkweed grows up to 2 m tall in thrives in sandy soils.

Stem



Vital Signs user The Milkweed Hunters



Look for stems that are thick and light green with no branches. Stems will also be hollow and produce lots of milky latex when cut.

Seasonal Change



Peter Gorman, www.flickr.com



In July look for clusters of tiny purplish flowers. In late summer look for seedpods that are long, pointed, and warty that release soft hairy seeds as they ripen.

Similar Species

Milkweed can be confused with dogbane and Joe Pye weed. Dogbane has solid stems, not hollow and Joe Pye weed has serrated leaves. There are a number of types of Milkweed species. Common Milkweed is the tallest species and has the widest leaves.

Did You Know?

Milkweed is poisonous to many creatures but not to Monarch butterflies or caterpillars. The poison stays in the Monarchs, however, and makes them poisonous to birds and other predators that try to eat them.