

ASCLEPIAS AMPLEXICAULIS Smith  
Blunt-leaved Milkweed

FAMILY: Asclepiadaceae

HABIT: Herbaceous perennial with milky sap, 4-9 dm.; flowering May-July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The pinkish-green flower color and cordate leaf base superficially may cause this plant to be confused with *A. sullivantii*. The cordate-clasping tomentulose leaves of *A. amplexicaulis* have wavy margins whereas the glabrous leaves of *A. sullivantii* have short red petioles and smooth margins. Both *A. amplexicaulis* and *A. viridis* generally have a solitary terminal umbel. *A. amplexicaulis* tends to flower slightly earlier than other species of milkweeds.

TOTAL RANGE: NH to se. MN, s. to FL, w. to NE and TX.

STATE RANGE: Two main centers of distribution in Ohio: south-central Ohio, and north-central and northwestern counties bordering or near Lake Erie. Post-1980 records occur from Adams, Fairfield, Fulton, Gallia, Jackson, Lawrence, Lucas, Meigs, Pike, Scioto, Vinton, and Washington Counties. Pre-1980 records are known from Athens, Erie, Fairfield, Huron, Lorain and Ross Counties.

HABITAT: Open, dry, chiefly sandy or gravelly soils in fields, prairies, old sand dunes, meadows and pastures.

HAZARDS: Unknown, possibly overshadowing by woody species as a result of succession and perhaps repeated mowing of fields.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Due to its stout perennial caudex which annually produces herbaceous flowering stems, probably good if planted in a suitable habitat.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: This plant can be accurately identified either in flower or fruit. Its foliage is generally distinctive when compared to other milkweed species. Flowering stalks only should be collected.

COMMENTS: Due to its wide range of habitats this species may be more common than the records indicate and should be sought in suitable habitats throughout its range.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Andreas, B.K. and T.S. Cooperrider. 1980. The Asclepiadaceae of Ohio. *Castanea* 45: 51-55.

Price, P.W. and M.F. Willson. 1979. Abundance of herbivores on six milkweed species in Illinois. *Am. Midl. Nat.* 101: 76-86.

Woodson, R.E., Jr. 1954. The North American species of *Asclepias* L. Ann. Mo. Bot. Gar. 41: 1-211.



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