

VERNONIA FASCICULATA Michx.
Prairie Ironweed

FAMILY: Compositae (Asteraceae)

HABIT: Perennial herb to 1.5 m.; flowering July-September; fruiting August, September.

SIMILAR SPECIES: *Vernonia fasciculata* can generally be distinguished from other Ohio species of *Vernonia* by its glabrous leaves that are pitted beneath, and its unusually flat and densely flowered inflorescence. These characters are extremely variable and flowering of fruiting material is essential for accurate determination.

TOTAL RANGE: OH to ND, s. to MO, OK, and e. TX.

STATE RANGE: There are post-1980 records from Clark, Defiance, Erie, Marion, Paulding, Summit, Van Wert, Wood and Wyandot counties. There are pre-1960 records from 9 counties: Ashland, Auglaize, Champaign, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Montgomery, Pickaway, and Preble. Not all of the pre-1960 records may be accurately identified.

HABITAT: Occurs in wet to moist, open situations, usually in rich soil: mainly in wet prairies, occasionally in marshes.

HAZARDS: Overshading by woody species as a result of succession; also drainage or other activity causing of the wet habitat.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Presumed poor due to the large decline in range of this species in Ohio, and the small amount of suitable habitat remaining in the state. However, planting this species in wet prairies and marshes in southern and western Ohio may facilitate a partial recovery.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering or fruiting material is needed for positive identification.

COMMENTS: Although this species seems restricted to prairie areas of Ohio, its true range and status in the state are not known with certainty. It is easily misidentified as the common Ironweed (*Vernonia gigantea*) and also hybridizes with that species. Ohio specimens often are difficult to determine. This situation is further complicated by the occasional populations of *V. missurica* in the state, a taxon of uncertain origin. More fieldwork is required before the true status of *V. fasciculata* is accurately known.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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