

CUP PLANT

Silphium perfoliatum L. var. *perfoliatum*

Plant Symbol = SIPEP

Contributed by: USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center



© William S. Justice
Botany Department, Smithsonian Institution
@ PLANTS

Alternate Names

Carpenter's weed, cup rosinweed, *Silphium perfoliatum* L. var. *connatum* (L.) Cronq. (SIPEC2), *Silphium perfoliatum* L. var. *perfoliatum* (SIPEP)

Uses

Ethnobotanic: Cup plant's young leaves were cooked in the spring as an acceptable green (Kindscher 1987). This species was also used as a chewing gum to help prevent vomiting (Runkel & Roosa 1989). The Winnebagos tribe believed that this species has supernatural powers. They would drink a concoction derived from the rhizome to purify them before going on a buffalo hunt. It is used in the treatment of liver and spleen disorders and has also been used to treat

morning sickness (Moerman 1998). A decoction of the root has been used as a face wash and to treat paralysis, back and chest pain, and lung hemorrhages (Ibid.).

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

Description

General: Composite family (Asteraceae). Cup plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*) is a tall perennial native that grows up to eight feet tall. This species has square stems and leaves that are mostly opposite, egg-shaped, toothed, with cuplike bases that hold water (Kindscher 1987). The flower heads are rich, golden yellow, 2.5 centimeters in diameter, and closely grouped at the tips of the stems (Hunter 1984). The small, tubular disk flowers are in the middle of the flower and is sterile and does not produce fruits (Ladd, 1995).

Distribution: Cup plant ranges from Ontario to South Dakota, south to Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, and Oklahoma (Steyermark 1963). For current distribution, please consult the Plant profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Adaptation

Silphium perfoliatum occurs on low ground, in moist areas, along prairie streams, alluvial thickets, floodplains, and along the edges of wet woodlands. This species is found throughout the tall grass region, but more sporadic northward (Ladd 1995).

Establishment

Propagation by Seed: Seeds are best sown as soon as they are ripe in a greenhouse. If the seeds are collected in the fall, they should be stratified for twelve weeks and then sown at 24 to 32°F for four to eight weeks, and then moved to 68°F for germination. When the plants are large enough to handle, place them into individual pots and plant them out in the summer.

Management

Silphium perfoliatum species should be transplanted when they are young. This species is much easier when transplanted young because it is very difficult

to transplant once it is older due to its extensive root system.

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Materials are occasionally available through native plant seed sources and nurseries. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the phone book under "United States Government." The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture."

References

Dension, E. 1998. *Missouri wildflowers*. 5th ed. Missouri Department of Conservation, Jefferson City, Missouri.

Fisher, T.R. 1988. *The dicotyledoneae of Ohio part III: Asteraceae*. Ohio State University Press, Columbus, Ohio.

Freeman, C.C. & E.K. Schofield 1991. *Roadside wildflowers of the southern Great Plains*. University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.

Gleason, H. A. & A. Cronquist 1993. *Manual of vascular plants of northeastern United States and adjacent Canada*. 2nd ed. The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York.

Grimm, W.C. 1993. *The Illustrated book of wildflowers and shrubs*. Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

Hunter, C.G. 1984. *Wildflowers of Arkansas*. The Ozark Society Foundation, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Hylander, C.J. 1954. *The MacMillan wildflower book*. The MacMillan Company, New York, New York.

Kindscher, K. 1987. *Edible wild plants of the prairie: an ethnobotanical guide*. University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, Kansas.

Ladd, D. 1995. *Tallgrass prairie wildflowers*. Falcon Press, Helena, Montana.

Moldenke, H.N. 1949. *American wildflowers*. D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., New York, New York.

Runkel, S.T. & D.M. Roosa. 1989. *Wildflowers of the tallgrass prairie: the upper Midwest*. Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa.

Steyermark, J. A. 1963. *Flora of Missouri*. The Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa.

Strausbaugh, P. D. & E. L. Core 1977. *Flora of West Virginia*. 2nd ed. Seneca Books, Inc., Morgantown, West Virginia.

Prepared By

Jammie Favorite

Formerly USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Species Coordinator

M. Kat Anderson

USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center, c/o Plant Sciences Dept., Davis, California

Edited: 19jun02 jsp; 03jun03 ahv; 060817 jsp

For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Read about [Civil Rights at the Natural Resources Conservation Service](#).