

White Milkweed *Asclepias variegata*

Plant Type: Native Perennial Wildflower

Sun Exposure: Sun, Part Sun

Season of Interest: Summer, Fall

Bloom Time: Summer

Bloom Color: White

Height: 8 to 36 in.

Spread: 12 to 24 in.

Spacing: 24 in.

Water Needs: Average

Maintenance: Very Little

Soil Type: Clay, Loam, Sandy, Rocky

Soil pH: Acidic, Neutral

Soil Drainage: Well Drained

Pests: None

Diseases: None

Wildlife: Bees, Butterflies



Description: White milkweed like most milkweeds has a deep tap root that helps the plant survive fire and drought. It is a slow growing milkweed often found in semi-shaded, dry woodlands. Fragrant, creamy white flowers with subtle red rings bloom in late spring to early summer. The flowers attract a wide array of pollinators and must be cross pollinated to produce viable seed. This species does not set abundant seed like most other milkweed species. This together with its very slow growth have made it rare even in native plant nurseries. The plant grows to about 3 feet tall, sometimes taller, with pairs of large deep green leaves. The leaves are more or less elliptical and 3 to 5 inches long by 1 to 3 inches wide. The underside is lighter in color than the upper side and may have hairs on it. Flowers are waxy and white, frequently with reddish, pinkish, to purplish rings around the center. Several weeks after pollination, narrow, upright seed pods (follicles) are borne in pairs. The fruits of this plant resemble those of purple milkweed and poke milkweed.



This milkweed, like most milkweeds, produces copious amounts of nectar and is an important plant supporting pollinator insects. The flowers have a sweet fragrance. White milkweed is a host plant for monarch butterfly caterpillars. For more information see: plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/asclepias-variegata .

Care and Growing Tips: White milkweed is most often found growing along moist to dry shaded roadsides, in woodlands, savannas, and open forests. It tends to grow in light to moderate shade but tolerates full sun. This plant can grow and bloom in any cultivated and at least slightly fertile soil. Established plants are not bothered by either draughts or wind, but young shoots can be blown down by strong winds. Therefore, this milkweed prefers sites with some shelter from winds. Watering these plants is only necessary in times of drought when there is no rainfall for an extremely long-time during flowering. Fertilize only where the soil is extremely poor, and only once a year in early spring.