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Field Guide to Georgia Milkweeds

Milkweed photographs on in this guide are courtesy of renowned nature photographers Carol and Hugh Nourse unless otherwise noted.

Descriptions of the milkweed were compiled by Henning VonSchmeling, horticulturist at [Chattahoochee Nature Center](#), Roswell, GA.



Curley Milkweed

Asclepias amplexicaulis (Smith) Curley Milkweed

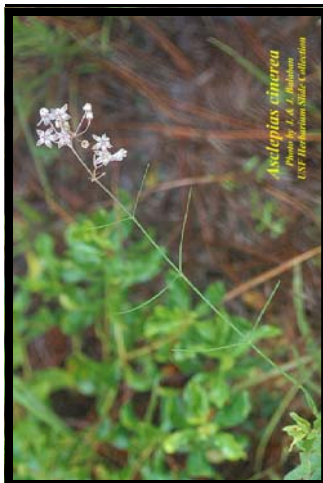
Plant description: 1-3 upright stems that are 40-100 cm tall. Leaves are opposite on the stem, 8-15 cm long and 4-8 cm wide. Plant has 4 to 6 pairs of leaves. Cluster of flowers on the top with rose-purple flowers. The umbel of flowers is 7 to 9 cm wide. Seed pods are upright.

Bloom period: May - July

Seeds: June – August

Habitat: Open woods, roadsides, fields and clearings

Range: Throughout Georgia, common



Carolina Milkweed

Asclepias cinerea (Walter) Carolina Milkweed

Plant description: Single stalk that is 30-70 cm tall. The leaves are opposite on the stem, 5 to 9 cm long and just a few millimeters wide. 1 to 4 flower clusters in the top part of the stem. The flower color is lavender. The umbels are small, only 2- 3.5 cm wide. Seed pods are 10-12 cm long and only 5 to 10mm wide.

Bloom period: June and July

Seeds: August and September

Habitat: Savannahs, moist grasslands

Range: Coastal plain of Georgia, common

Photo by J & J Balaban
USF Herbarium Slide Collection



Fragrant Milkweed

Photo by Shirley Denton

***Asclepias connivens* (Baldwin) Fragrant Milkweed**

Plant Description: Upright stalks that are up to 95 cm tall. The leaves are opposite and sessile. The leaves are 10-12 cm long and 3-5 cm wide. Flower clusters on the top and the top five leaf axils. The flower color is greenish-yellow. The umbels of flowers are 10 to 15 cm wide, each individual flower can measure up to 3 cm. Seed pods are 10-15 cm long and 3-4 cm wide.

Bloom period: June – August

Seeds: August – October

Habitat: Low pinelands, savannahs and margins of Cypress Swamps



Mexican Milkweed

***Asclepias curassavica* Mexican Milkweed, Blood Flower**

Plant Description: Annual, up to 100 cm tall, multiple stems. Leaves opposite, 8-10 cm long, 2-4 cm wide. Flowers are produced on the upper portion of stem, blooms continuously all summer. Umbels are small, 3-5cm wide, flowers are orange and red. Seed pods are 5-8 cm long and 1.5 cm wide.

Bloom Period: May through frost

Seeds: June through frost

Habitat: **not native to Georgia, Central and South American Species**

Range: **This species may become a problem in South Georgia and the Coastal Plain. In Atlanta it is not winter hardy, in a mild winter some seeds survive. Caution should be used in warmer climates.**



Poke Milkweed

***Asclepias exaltata* (Linnaeus) Poke Milkweed**

Plant Description: The single stalk is 50 to 100 cm tall. Leaves are opposite, 14 to 21 cm long and 3-11 cm wide. Flower umbels 2-4, in the upper leaf axils. Flower color is greenish-white and can be tinged with pink. The umbels are 5 to 10 cm across. Seed pod is 12-14 cm long and 1.5 to 2 cm wide.

Bloom Period: June and July

Seeds: August and September

Habitat: Hardwood forests and forest margins

Range: Northeast Georgia, higher altitude species, common



Barrens Milkweed

***Asclepias hirtella* (Woods) Barrens Milkweed**

Plant Description: Several stalks that are 60-70 cm tall. Leaves are opposite and very narrow and long. Leaf length is 8-15 cm and width is 10-15 mm. Flower cluster in the top of the plant only. Each cluster contains up to 50 individual flowers. Seed pods are long and skinny. Sap of this milkweed is not milky.

Bloom Period: May through July

Seeds: July through September

Habitat: Thin Woods and open places

Range: In Georgia only known from Catoosa and Floyd County, rare



Sand Hills Milkweed

***Asclepias humistrata* (Walter) Sand Hills Milkweed**

Plant Description: Many stalks that are spreading away from crown as they grow up, 20-70 cm long. Leaves are opposite; usually the plant has 5-8 pairs. Leaves are 6-10 cm long and 4-8 cm wide. The veins of the leaves are pink to lavender. Several flower clusters on top of the stem, flower color is rose to lavender. Flower clusters 3-6 cm wide. Seed pods are 10-14 cm long and 1.5-2 cm wide.

Bloom Period: May and June

Seeds: June and July

Habitat: Sand hills and sandy pine-oak woods

Range: Throughout coastal plain of Georgia, common



Swamp Milkweed

***Asclepias incarnata* (Linnaeus) Swamp Milkweed**

Plant Description: Many branching stems that are 50-150 cm tall. Leaves opposite, 6-15 cm long and 2-7 cm wide. Flower color is pink, 4-20 umbels, each umbel being 3-5 cm broad. Seed pods are 6-10 cm long and 1-1.5 cm wide.

Bloom Period: July – September

Seeds: August – October

Habitat: Marshes, stream banks and moist meadows

Range: Primarily a mountain species, occasionally found in the Piedmont and coastal plain of Georgia, common



Red Milkweed

***Asclepias lanceolata* (Walter) Red Milkweed**

Plant Description: Single stem up to 120 cm tall. Leaves opposite, 3-6 pairs. The leaves are 7-20 cm long and only 0.5-1.5 cm wide. 2-4 flower clusters towards the top of the plant, 5-10 wide. Flower color is reddish-orange. Seed pod is 8-10 cm long and 1 cm wide.

Bloom Period: June - August

Seeds: August and September

Habitat: Savannahs, swamps and marshes

Range: Coastal plain, common



**Longleaf
Milkweed**

***Asclepias longifolia* (Michaux) Longleaf Milkweed**

Plant Description: Single stem that is 20-70 cm tall. Many opposite, linear leaves that are 8-14 cm long and only 2-7 mm wide. Flower color is greenish white. The flower clusters are on the top of the plant and are 3-5 cm wide. Seed pod is 9-13 cm long and only 5-10 mm wide.

Bloom Period: May and June

Seeds: June

Habitat: Savannahs, low pinelands and bogs

Range: Coastal plain, uncommon



Michaux's Milkweed

***Asclepias michauxii* (Decaisne) Michaux's Milkweed**

Plant Description: Single stalk that is 10-40 cm tall. Many leaves that are primarily opposite and linear. The leaves are 5-12 cm long and 3-6 mm wide. Flower color is greenish white. The single umbel is 3-4 cm across. Seed pods are 10-15 cm long and 5-8 mm broad.

Bloom Period: May

Seeds: June

Habitat: Savannahs and pinelands

Range: Coastal plain, common



Green Milkweed

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***Asclepias obovata* (Elliott) Green Milkweed**

Plant Description: Single stalk that is 40-70 cm tall. Leaves are opposite, 5-9 cm long and 2-3.5 cm wide. Flower color is yellow-green. 1-8 umbels arise from the leaf axils in the upper part of the plant. Umbels are 3-3.5 cm across. Seed pods are 6-8 cm long and 1-2 cm wide.

Bloom Period: June – September

Seeds: July – October

Habitat: Sandy pinelands

Range: Coastal plain, unusual



Savannah Milkweed

Photo by Betty Wargo

***Asclepias pedicellata* (Walter) Savannah Milkweed**

Plant Description: Single, un-branched stalk 10-30 cm tall. Linear leaves are opposite, 2.5 - 4.5 cm long and 2-7 mm wide. Flowers are greenish, sometimes cream colored. 1-3 umbels grow from the upper leaf axils; each umbel will only have 3-6 flowers. Seedpod is 12 cm long and only 5 mm wide.

Bloom Period: July and August

Seeds: September and October

Habitat: Savannahs

Range: Coastal Plain, rare



Aquatic Milkweed

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***Asclepias perennis* (Walter) Aquatic Milkweed**

Plant Description: Many un-branching stems that are 30-50 cm tall. Opposite leaves that are 6-12 cm long and 1-3 cm wide. Flowers are white. 2-4 umbels grow from the upper leaf axils and are 2-3 cm broad. The seed pods hang down and are 4-6 cm long and 1.5 to 2.5 cm wide.

Bloom Period: June-August

Seeds: August and September

Habitat: Swamp forests

Range: Coastal Plain, unusual



Purple Milkweed

Asclepias purpurascens (Linnaeus) Purple Milkweed

Plant Description: Multiple stems from 50-110 cm tall. The leaves are opposite on the stem, 10-15 cm long and 6cm wide. The 1-3 umbels are on the upper portion of the stem. The umbels are large, up to 7cm wide, purple. Seed pods are downy, 10cm long and 2 cm wide.

Bloom Period: June and July

Seeds: August and September

Habitat: Swamp forests and alluvial woods

Range: Northwest Georgia, rare



Four-leaf Milkweed

Asclepias quadrifolia (Jacquin) Four-leaf Milkweed

Plant Description: Solitary stems are 30-50 cm tall. The leaves appear whorled on the stem, 4-12 cm long and 2-5 cm wide. Flowers are white or pinkish. 2-4 umbels from the upper nodes of the plant, each umbel 3-5 cm broad. Upright seedpods are 8-11 cm long and 4-8 mm wide.

Bloom Period: May and June

Seeds: August and September

Habitat: Mixed deciduous forests

Range: Mountains of extreme north Georgia, common

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Red Milkweed

Asclepias rubra (Linnaeus) Red Milkweed

Plant Description: Stems are un-branched and 50-90 cm tall. Leaves are opposite on the stem, 9-12 cm long and 1.5-3 cm wide. Flowers are dull red to lavender. 1-4 umbels on top of the plant which are 3-5 cm across. Upright seedpods are 9-12 cm long and 1-1.5 cm wide.

Bloom Period: June and July

Seeds: July through September

Habitat: Bogs, pocosins and savannahs

Range: Coastal Plain, only known from Douglas County in Georgia, possibly extirpated.



Common Milkweed

Photo by Kevin Adams

Asclepias syriaca (Linnaeus) Common Milkweed

Plant Description: Single, un-branched stalk that is 50-200 cm tall. Leaves opposite on stalk, 10-25 cm long and 3-10 cm wide. Flowers white to pink. 2 to 6 umbels from the upper nodes. Each umbel is 5-10 cm broad. Seed pods are 8-12 cm long and 2.5-3.5 cm broad.

Bloom Period: June through August

Seeds: July through September

Habitat: Meadows, fields and roadsides

Range: Extreme NW Georgia, rare



Butterfly Weed

Asclepias tuberosa (Linnaeus) Butterfly Weed

Plant Description: Multiple stout branching stalks that are 20-80cm tall. Hairy leaves are alternating on the stem. Leaves are 4-10 cm long and 1-2.5 cm wide. Flowers from red to yellow, mostly orange. 3-15 umbels on the sideways branching stems. The umbels are 2-5 cm broad. Seed pods are 8-15 cm long and 1-2 cm wide.

Bloom Period: May through August

Seeds: August through October

Habitat: Dry fields, roadsides and margins of woods

Range: Throughout Georgia, common



White Milkweed

Asclepias variegata (Linnaeus) White Milkweed

Plant Description: Single, un-branching stalks are 20-100 cm tall. Leaves are opposite on the stems and are 5-14 cm long and 3-7 cm wide. Flowers are white. Umbels 1-4 from the upper nodes of leaves. Each umbel is 3-6 cm broad. Seed pods are 10-14 cm long and 1.5 to 2 cm wide.

Bloom Period: May and June

Seeds: July through September

Habitat: Open woods and woodland margins

Range: Throughout Georgia, more common in the north, common



Whorled-leaf Milkweed

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Asclepias verticillata (Linnaeus) Whorled-leaf Milkweed

Plant Description: Stems are 30-80 cm tall, arising from runners. Sometimes branched for the upper third of the plant. Leaves are whorled on the stem, 3-7 cm long and only 1-2 mm wide. Flowers are greenish-white. 2-8 umbels in the upper part of the plant, each umbel is 2-5 cm wide. Seed pods are 4-8cm long and 4-6 mm wide.

Bloom Period: June through September

Seeds: September and October

Habitat: Dry open woods, Sandhills, rocky slopes and roadsides

Range: Mountains and Piedmont of Georgia, common



Green Comet Milkweed

Asclepias viridiflora (Rafinesque) Green Comet Milkweed

Plant Description: Single stems are 20-80 cm tall. Leaves are opposite and extremely variable. They are 3-10 cm long and 1.5-4.5 cm wide. Flowers are green. Umbels 1-6 from the upper nodes. Each umbel is 2.5-3.5 cm across. Seed pods 9-13 cm long and 1-2 cm wide.

Bloom Period: June through August

Seeds: August and September

Habitat: Fields, roadsides and waste ground

Range: Piedmont, unusual



Green Antelope-horn

Asclepias viridis (Walter) Green Antelope-horn

Plant Description: Stems un-branched, up to 95 cm tall. Leaves are opposite, 8-12 cm long and 4-6 cm wide. Flowers are green. Umbels 1-5 from the upper nodes. Umbels 4-6 cm broad. Seed pods are 10-12 cm long and 1-3 cm wide.

Bloom Period: June through August

Seeds: August through October

Habitat: Dry pinelands, cedar glades and prairies

Range: Coastal plain and extreme NW Georgia, rare