



Devil's walking-stick

Aralia spinosa

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta
Class:
Order:
Family:

FEATURES

The Devil's walking stick, or Hercules-club, is a shrub or small tree that may grow to 30 feet tall with a trunk diameter of six inches. It has a widely spreading crown. The dark brown bark has shallow furrows and short, hard prickles. The buds are cone-shaped, up to one-half inch long. The doubly or triply pinnately compound leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. Each leaf may be four feet long, and there are many leaflets per leaf. Each leaflet may be three inches long and about one and one-half inches wide. The leaflet is toothed along the edges, green and smooth on the upper surface and pale and smooth on the lower surface except for a few prickles along the veins. Many flowers are produced in umbrella-shaped clusters that may be four feet wide. Each flower has five small, white petals and a purple stalk. The fruit is a black, spherical berry up to one-eighth inch in diameter. Each berry contains two to five seeds.

BEHAVIORS

Devil's walking stick may be found in the southern one-third of Illinois. It grows in rich woods. Flowers are produced from late June through July. Devil's walking stick is sometimes grown as an ornamental plant.

HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: southern 1/3

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.