



Lake County, Illinois, USA

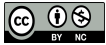
Lake County Seed Collection Guide

Fall Wetland Forbs

Kelly Schultz¹, Dale Shields²

¹Lake County Forest Preserve District, ²Volunteer Stewardship Network

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The pictures in this guide were assembled to help restoration volunteers identify ripe seeds of native species. The squares are 1” on a side in the indoor shots with white squares on the gray background. The seed shots are on a metric scale (mm divisions). Names used are those of Flora of the Chicago Region by Gerould Wilhelm and Laura Rericha. Our heartfelt thanks go to Laurie Ryan of the McHenry County Conservation District for her review.

Harvest notes

Successful collection of viable seed requires an understanding of when to collect, how to collect, how to store, how to process, and when to sow. Determine these criteria and have a plan before harvesting seeds, especially of uncommon species. The species are listed in order of the photo dates, so will give an approximate time for collection, but collection dates vary according to local weather effects on blooming and pollinators; proximity to Lake Michigan; slopes; sun vs shade, etc. Many seed harvest charts are available with collection dates, but it is best to scout each site rather than relying on historic dates.

Seeds collected before mid-June should be sown right away. They are intolerant of dry storage and most of them require both warm & cold treatments to stimulate germination. Late June seeds are more tolerant of dry storage; sow these seeds soon, but you can let them dry for a few weeks. Seeds ripening July and later can be held for fall/winter sowing, sow by Jan 1st for best results.

Collect ethically & sustainably. Everything is protected in forest preserves, including seeds. Collection is only allowed by staff and volunteers in our restoration programs. If you are collecting within those programs, it is important to avoid overharvesting wild populations. For perennials: **leave 50% behind.** For annuals, biennials, rare, threatened, or endangered species: **collect only 10% of the seed.**

Seed Groups

Time sensitive groups – seeds disperse in a few days or weeks due to wildlife, sensitivity to wind, etc.

Elaiosomes are “ant candy” attached to the seeds. Ants are strong and motivated, able to quickly carry the candy back to their home and tossing the heavy “candy wrapper” (seeds) into their compost piles. Check these species frequently; ants will rapidly collect all of the seeds. These seeds have higher germination when sown within a day or two.



Ballistic capsules catapult their babies away, up to 30 feet! Search YouTube for “exploding seeds” to see these in action. To harvest: learn the ripening sequence & harvest just before explosion; store in a *sealed* paper bag or mesh bag for a day or two. Another option is to cover the seed heads with mesh hoods (*after flowers wilt*) to contain the seeds. Snip the entire stem after the seeds have popped, and carefully open the hoods indoors.



Fluffy seeds are quite common, allowing for wind to efficiently move seeds over long distances. Collect when fluffy. It is ok to collect these seeds *slightly* early, by collecting entire stems with seeds that are either fully poofed or have dropped their ray florets (the colorful “petals”); snip the stems and let them poof in a paper or mesh bag. Spring fluffy seeds are typically more sensitive to strong weather.



Milkweed seeds are ripe when pods are split open & seeds are brown. Ignore the pod color. Pro tip: rubber band the unripe pods, to prevent seeds from flying away.



Berries turn a vibrant color when ripe, as an advertisement to the wildlife to EAT ME and disperse the seed. Collection window is small for some of these seeds. These species need to be sown fresh in damp soil OR cleaned & stored in plastic in the refrigerator (which maintains a higher level of humidity). The natural process of a seed stored in a juicy berry, followed by chewing, digestion, and dispersal in a pile of “fertilizer” means these seeds are not used to completely drying out.





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Mama's Boys will remain on the stem for a while. Ideal for forecasting future workdays.

Shakers drop seeds very close to the mother plant, when shaken loose by the wind or a passing critter. Usually a Mama's Boy, unless strong weather occurs.

Beaks are a subset of the shaker group, with seed capsules that split open like a beak when the seeds are ripe. Collect when beaks are open.

Coneheads are flowers with a cone-shaped center. Imagine these flowers without their colorful parts, and you know exactly what they look like when seeds are ripe. Seeds are inside the hard cone.

Crumbly Coneheads are cone-shaped or thimble-shaped. Softer than standard coneheads, they crumble when ripe and are easily stripped by hand.

Shattering seeds can be tough to visually judge for ripeness. Use a *gentle* touch test to see if the seeds easily loosen. Spring seeds remain green (perhaps for camouflage) and swell slightly. Fall seeds typically turn brown or beige when ripe. Often found in colonies, these seeds do not travel far on their own. Some of these species drop quickly & are not Mama's Boys.

Hitchhikers are easy to tell when ripe – they hitch a ride on your pants! Color can be an indicator, but not always.

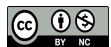


Do Not Collect. This symbol is placed on images of non-native & invasive native seeds, which have been included as comparisons for similar native species. Do not collect these species, unless you are collecting for removal.

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Spotted
Touch-me-not
aka
Orange Jewelweed

Impatiens capensis

BALSAMINACEAE



Photo: 9-4-18

Ballistic. These plants are named for their explosive seeds. Fun to play with! Plump pods burst from the slightest touch, startling even when you expect it. Collect carefully – grab pods with a firm grip or snip stalks and bag immediately. This is the more common species. Annual.

Pale
Touch-me-not
aka
Yellow Jewelweed

Impatiens pallida

BALSAMINACEAE



Photo: 9-5-19

Ballistic. Easiest to ID *Impatiens* by flower color. This species is larger overall; largest leaves are typically 8+ cm long. Can grow in sunny moist places like *I. capensis*, but also mesic woodlands. The sap is reportedly useful in washing off poison ivy oils. Annual, collect 10%

Skunk Cabbage

Symplocarpus foetidus

ARACEAE

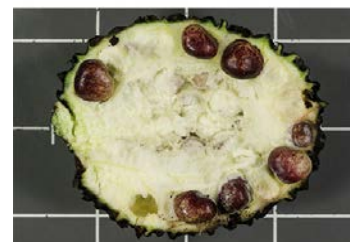


Photo: 9-5-19

Berries. This awesomely weird plant blooms around February but doesn't ripen until August. Look for chunky fruit, looks more like a mushroom or a meteorite. Collect soft, dark fruits. Fruits naturally degrade and release brownish nuts that can float. Seeds may germinate right away. Also known for its contractile roots that pull the plant deep into the muck, flowers that can melt snow, and an odor flies love.



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Green Dragon

Arisaema dracontium

ARACEAE



Photo: 9-10-19

Berries. Grows a “dragon’s wing” of leaves; the flower is a green head with a long yellow tongue of “flame”! In fruit, it looks like its brother Jack-in-the-Pulpit (see Fall Woodland Forbs) and they can grow next to each other in wetter woodlands. Look for remnants of leaves or flag one species earlier in the season. Fruits are a bright tomato-red when ripe. Process these seeds with gloves; skin irritation is possible.

Northern Rose Mallow

Hibiscus palustris

MALVACEAE

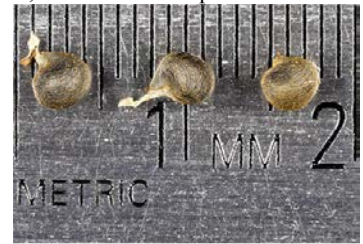


Photo: 9-12-17

Beaks. Mallows are our own little piece of Hawaii, except native to IL! Stunning big flowers in shades of white & pink. This species has ovate leaves (broader at the base tapering to a pointed tip). Seeds are hairless, chocolate brown. Collect open pods.

Halberd-leaved Rose Mallow

Hibiscus laevis

MALVACEAE



Photo: 10-16-17

Beaks. This species has triangular pointed leaves with lobes at the base like a cross-guard of a weapon. (Whether this resembles a halberd is debatable.) Seeds are rusty & fuzzy. Both species have large capsules that split open like a brown orange, 5 segments. Collect open pods.

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Fringed Loosestrife

Lysimachia ciliata

MYRSINACEAE



Photo: 9-12-17

Beaks. This yellow loosestrife has cilia (fringes) on the leaf petiole. Leaves are broad, round bases. Globe-shaped capsules turn brown & split open at the top. Seeds are small rounded wedges. Seed quality can vary; bigger globes tend to have better quality (fewer aborted) seeds.

Wild Senna

Senna hebecarpa

CAESALPINIACEAE



Photo: 9-20-17

Beaks. The 2 native *Senna* species have bright yellow flowers that pollinators love. The differences are subtle: the gland on the petiole (leaf stem) and hairs on the pod can assist with ID. Easiest way is to look at the seeds: this species has broad seeds with wide wings (kind of like a stingray). *S. marilandica* has pointed oval seeds, like small watermelon seeds. The legumes don't always split open, collect brown pods.

Maryland Senna

Senna marilandica

CAESALPINIACEAE

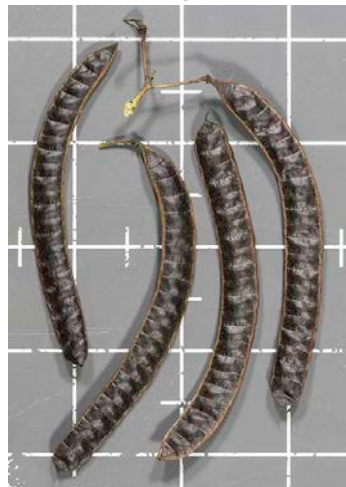


Photo: 10-15-20

Beaks. Seeds of this species are more oval shaped, compared to its sister *S. hebecarpa*. The gland on the petiole (leaf stalk) is cylindrical (versus club-shaped and widest beyond the middle). Pods - legumes - can be hairy or hairless for both species, although this species is at best thinly hairy. If present, hairs on the ovary and fruit are shorter on this species (*S. hebecarpa* hairs are "longer," more than 1.3 mm long).



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Wood Nettle

Laportea canadensis

URTICACEAE

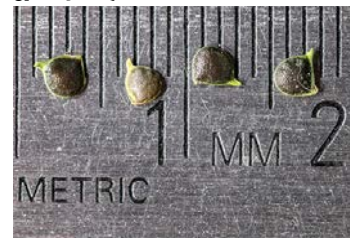


Photo: 9-21-18

Shattering. One of several nettle species that stings, don't touch without gloves! This plant is important for butterflies, including the Question Mark, Comma, and Red Admiral. Leaves are wide. Fruit are terminal (at the top of the plant). Self-sows readily. Rarely collected.

Knotweed Dodder

Cuscuta polygonorum

CUSCUTACEAE



Photo: 9-23-19

Beaks. Mama's Boy. Dodders are parasitic annuals, most noticeable in summer when the orange "silly string" vines start crawling over host plants. The dodder spirals around a host, attaches, and the viny bits disappear. Check dark brown/black capsules to see if the seed has ripened to brown. Collect 10%. Dodders can be helpful to keep their hosts - typically common (aggressive) native plants - in check.

Marsh Skullcap

Scutellaria galericulata

LAMIACEAE

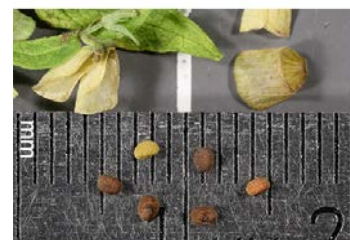


Photo: 9-25-20

Shakers. Like other skullcaps, seeds are loosely sitting on a scoop shovel, with a funny little cap on top that readily falls off. Individual flowers often tucked in at leaf axils (where leaf & stems meet) although there can be a cluster at the end of a branch. Leaves have petioles and are at least 2x long as wide. Leaf surface is hairless on top and hairy underneath.

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Water Hemlock

Cicuta maculata

APIACEAE



Photo: 9-23-19

Shattering. Mama's Boy. White flowers, reminiscent of its cousin, Queen Anne's lace. Seeds are small, chunky, and striped, 3-4 mm long. Leaves are double compound (branches of leaves are subdivided with their own branches of leaves). Toxic to humans (don't eat!) but good for swallowtail butterflies & other wildlife.

Wispy
Water Hemlock

Cicuta bulbifera

APIACEAE

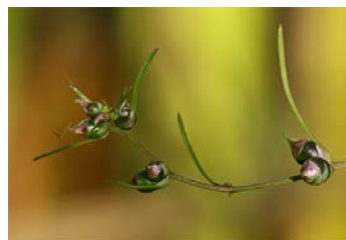


Photo: 9-25-20

Shattering. Wispy indeed! Similar, but far more delicate than the common water hemlock. The stems lean on surrounding plants for support, the leaves are skinnier and bulbets are tucked into the leaf axils in the upper part of the plant. Very poisonous - don't eat! This rare plant grows from seed and from bulbets (vegetative reproduction). The white umbel flowers rarely make seed.

Cowbane

Oxypolis rigidior

APIACEAE



Photo: 10-21-18

Shattering. Mama's Boy. Another cousin of *Cicuta*, this species has larger seeds (5-6 mm long) that are papery and almost flat. Leaves are compound (divided only once). Ripe seeds are beige with black stripes in the center, and easily plucked by hand. Wet habitats, sun & shade.

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Northern
Willowherb

Epilobium ciliatum

ONAGRACEAE



Photo: 9-26-18

Fluffy. Willowherbs have delicate white or pink flowers. A long skinny capsule splits to release tiny seeds on long hairs. *E. ciliatum* & *E. coloratum* both have leaves with serrated edges; *E. ciliatum* has little nubs instead of full teeth and the leaf margin between the nubs is relatively straight (*E. coloratum* margins curve between teeth). Collect open capsules. Annual or short-lived perennial, collect 10%

Cinnamon
Willowherb

Epilobium coloratum

ONAGRACEAE

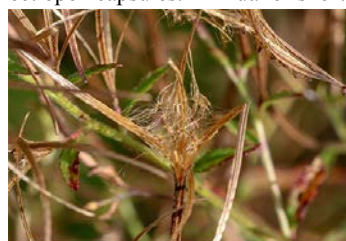


Photo: 10-9-18

Fluffy. Fluffy seeds are contained within a 4-parted capsule. Cinnamon gets its name from the cinnamon-colored fluff; *E. ciliatum* has white fluff. Both species have stems that are hairless or may have lines of hairs. Annual or short-lived perennial, collect 10%.

Tall Swamp Marigold

Bidens trichosperma

ASTERACEAE

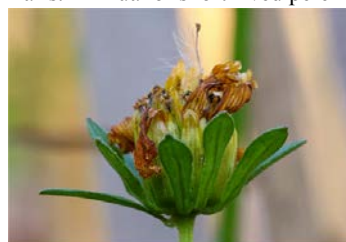


Photo: 9-25-20

Crumbly Coneheads. Many of the *Bidens* species are common, pioneering species that quickly fill openings in wet habitats. This one has the distinction of a high conservative value (C = 8). Leaves are divided, blooms with yellow rays. Seeds are elongated triangles, with bristly-hairy edges ("trichosperma" means hairy seed). Seed awns lack the barbs of its hitchhiking sisters. Compare outer phyllaries to confirm ID.

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False Aster

Boltonia asteroides

ASTERACEAE

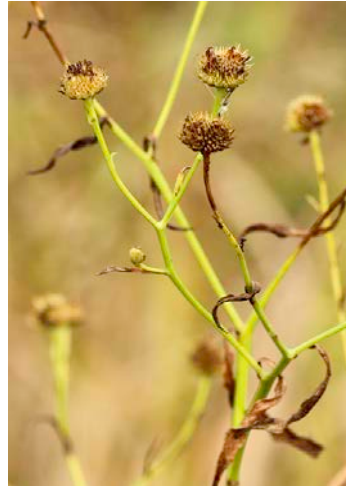


Photo: 9-27-17

Coneheads. In flower, this looks like an aster or a tall fleabane, but the seeds are clearly very different. Collect when easily crumbles by hand. Rhizomatous, can be locally aggressive; best used in wetlands with other aggressive species. Great for insects & pollinators.

Cardinal Flower

Lobelia cardinalis

LOBELIACEAE



Photo: 9-27-17

Beaks. The bold red flowers make this species a favorite of hummingbirds & humans alike. Far more subtle in seed, look for light brown capsules that open with 2 chambers (like a pig nose). All *Lobelia* species have tiny seeds: 500,000 - 900,000 seeds/ounce.

Great Blue Lobelia

Lobelia siphilitica

LOBELIACEAE



Photo: 10-3-17

Beaks. *L. siphilitica* & *L. cardinalis* are tough to tell apart after flowering, and they can grow side by side. Examine the calyx (green bracts behind the flower): *L. cardinalis* has skinny, needle-like spikes that abruptly stop, making almost a right angle. *L. siphilitica* bracts widen at the base like shoulders, and are hairier; hairs on pedicels (flower stalks) are longer. This species was once thought to cure syphilis (it doesn't).



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Monkey Flower

Mimulus ringens

SCROPHULARIACEAE



Photo: 9-27-17

Beaks. Royal purple flowers that look like a monkey's face (if you squint. Really hard). Oval capsules form inside the pointed calyx. Collect brown capsules, the teeny tiny seeds (2,300,000 seeds per ounce!) will easily fall out when ripe.

Ditch Stonecrop

Penthorum sedoides

PENTHORACEAE

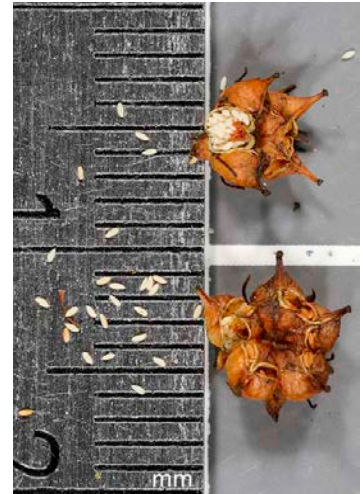


Photo: 9-27-17

Beaks. This short wetland plant with an unattractive name has cute little white flowers on branching octopus arms, followed by capsules full of teeny tiny seed (1,300,000/oz). Collect crumbly capsules, which can be pink or brown. Only member of the genus.

Showy Obedient Plant

Physostegia speciosa

LAMIACEAE

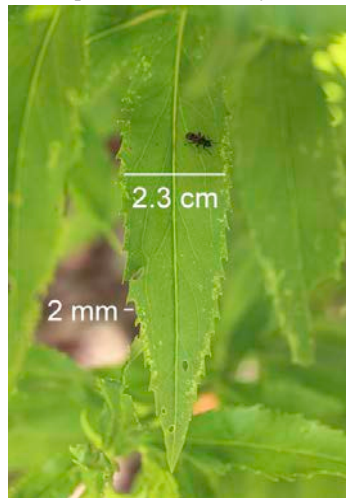


Photo: 9-27-17

Shakers. Mama's Boy. Similar to the other obedient plant species, but leaves are bigger & broader (usually 2.3cm or wider) and the teeth are more coarse (more than 2 mm deep on the short side). This species is more likely in shady places than its sisters.

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Mermaid Weed

*Proserpinaca
palustris*

HALORAGIDACEAE



Photo: 9-27-17

Shattering. This species likes marshes and is often found in the muddy flats after the water recedes. Upper leaves are linear with serrated edges; submersed leaves are feathery, resembling seaweeds. Seeds are chunky and are easily plucked when ripe.

Common
Mountain Mint

*Pycnanthemum
virginianum*

LAMIACEAE



Photo: 9-27-17

Shakers. The first *Pycnanthemum* species was named in the mountains; our species carry over the English name despite our flatlander habitats. This common species happily lives from dry-mesic to wet conditions & supports a wide variety of pollinators. Look for grayish heads; tip them into your hand & seeds will easily spill out of the clustered tubes when ripe. Smells lovely!

Cup Plant

Silphium perfoliatum

ASTERACEAE

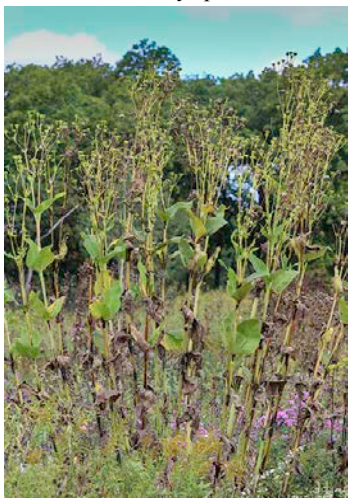


Photo: 9-27-17

Coneheads. *S. perfoliatum* is well named, with its perfoliate leaves (stem perforates the leaves) that cup & hold water. Like all *Silphium*, collect brown heads. Note the seeds are sandwiched between the outer sandpapery bracts & the skinny inner florets.

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Short-beaked
Arrowhead

Sagittaria brevirostra

ALISMATACEAE



Photo: 9-27-17

Crumbly Coneheads. Arrow-shaped leaves. Contrary to the name, the beak is longer than many in the region. Bright white flowers. Seeds are ripe when brown & easily crumble by hand. This species has a long, curved beak on the seed (longer than 0.3 mm long, up to 1.5 mm long); the opposite side of the seed is rounded with subtle, broad teeth and/or waviness.

Common Arrowhead

Sagittaria latifolia

ALISMATACEAE



Photo: 10-4-20

Crumbly coneheads. The most common of the arrowhead species. The leaves are arrow-shaped, with variation in their width and angles. Leafy bracts, located where flowering petioles meet the stem, are 1 cm or shorter. Seed beaks form a strong right angle. Collect when crumbles easily by hand.

Common Ironweed

Vernonia fasciculata

ASTERACEAE

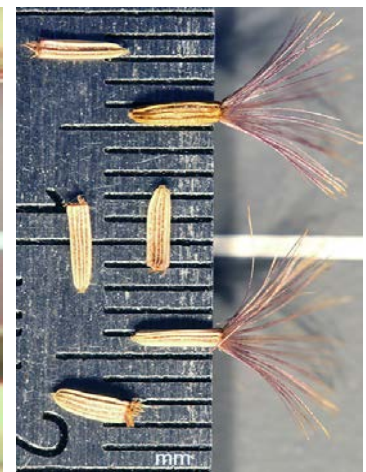


Photo: 9-27-17

Fluffy. Found throughout the region, this species has hairless leaves; stems are hairless (glabrous) or nearly so. Bright hot purple-pink flowers turn to rusty-brown poofs. Collect when fluffy. It has been given a boost in Flora, C = 8 (formerly 5). Possibly named for the iron-tough stem, or for the rusty pappus color.

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Tall Nettle

Urtica gracilis

URTICACEAE



Photo: 9-28-18



Beaks. This species has opposite leaves, with a lance-like shape (usually 3x long as wide, or longer). Other nettles in the region have fatter leaves or alternate leaves. Butterflies, moths, and other insects like it. Common in moist areas and one of the stinging species. The sting eases in hours, faster if you wash up. The sap of jewelweed, which often grows nearby, can also be used to ease the sting. Rarely needs collecting.

Closed Gentian
aka
Bottle Gentian

Gentiana andrewsii

GENTIANACEAE



Photos: 9-28-18, 10-14-18

Beaks. These late season blooms go from bright blue, to plum purple, to paper bag brown. Plump duck bills are full of tiny “fried egg” seeds. Collect open beaks. Hard to ID from *G. alba* at harvest time; this species has small ragged serrations at the top of the papery shell; *G. alba* has chunkier teeth. This species is slightly more likely in wetter habitats, but they can grow together. See the Fall Prairie Forbs Guide.

Fringed Gentian

Gentianopsis crinita

GENTIANACEAE

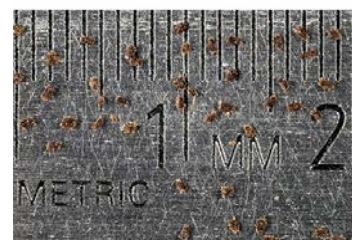
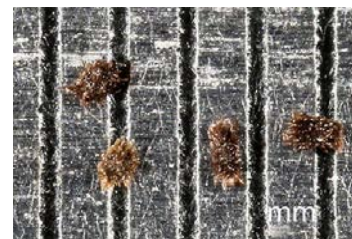


Photo: 10-9-19

Beaks. Like its *Gentiana* & *Gentianella* cousins, this species forms a long duck billed capsule full of tiny seeds. Lives as an annual/biennial, collect 10%. Seeds are bristly. Flowers are pretty, fringed blue-purple. *G. virgata* is a smaller species; upper leaves are slender & linear.

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Wild Cucumber

Echinocystis lobata

CUCURBITACEAE

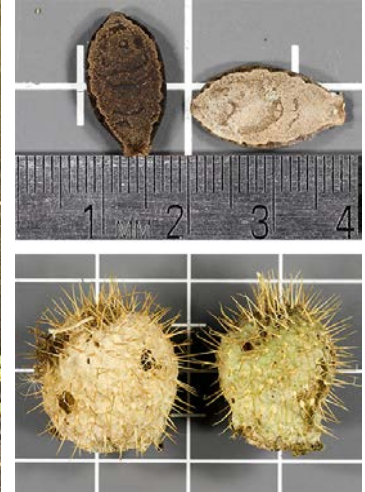


Photo: 9-30-17

Beaks. *Echinocystis* means “spiny bladder” an appropriate name for the fruit! A non-edible green fruit that dries to an airy shell and opens at the base to release seeds. Annual, collect 10%. Likes wet communities with partial to full sun, and something to climb.

Spotted Joe Pye Weed

Eutrochium maculatum

ASTERACEAE



Photo: 9-30-19

Fluffy. Mama’s Boy. This perennial has big heads of brown fluffy seeds. Flat-topped heads. Stems are purple or purple-spotted throughout; *E. purpureum* (its woodland sister) has stems that are purple at the axils only, or all green. When in doubt: label seed with the habitat.

Michigan Lily

Lilium michiganense

LILIACEAE

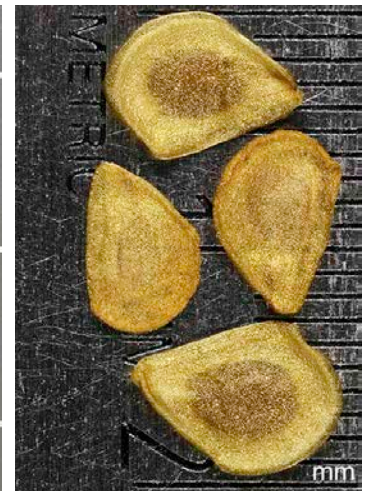
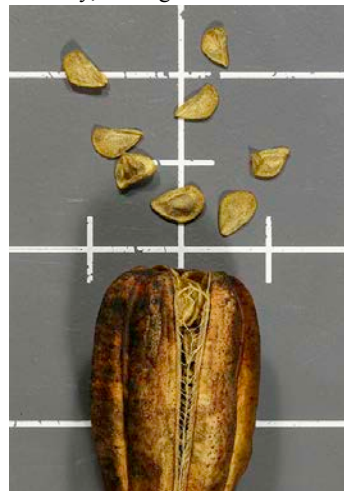


Photo: 9-30-20

Beaks. Stunning orange lily, 6 reflexed petals resemble a turban. Sometimes called Turks Cap, but technically refers to *L. superbum*; most publications define that species a southern native. Leaves arranged in a whorl around the stem. Bronze capsule opens in 3 parts, revealing 6 columns of delicate papery seeds. 2 years for seeds to germinate in the wild, and can be another 5 years before flowering. Deer candy.

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Pale
False Foxglove

Agalinis skinneriana

OROBANCHACEAE

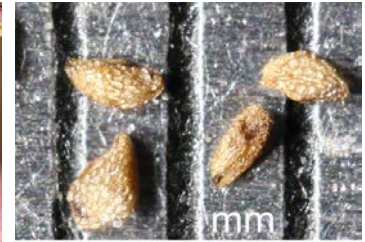
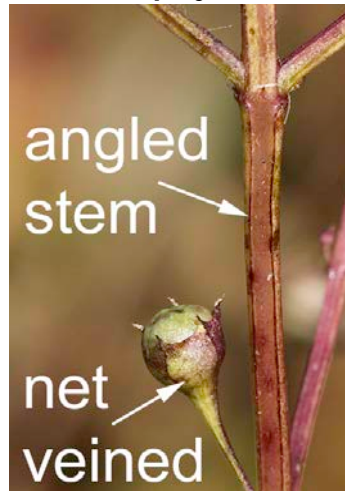


Photo: 10-3-18

Beaks. *Agalinis* species are hemi-parasitic with graminoid hosts. Hot pink flowers. Pedicels (flower stems) are typically more than 6 mm long. Plant specimens remain light colored after drying (does not blacken), seeds are light brown, calyx is net veined. Annual, collect 10%

Pauper
False Foxglove

Agalinis paupercula

OROBANCHACEAE



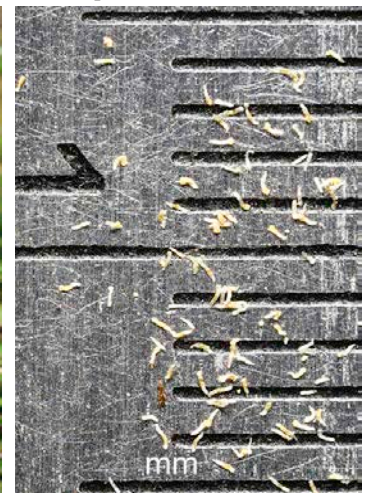
Photo: 9-17-20, 10-3-20

Beaks. Fuchsia flowers are less than 2 cm long, leaves are linear. Calyx (greenery behind the flower/brown cup around seed pod) is about the same length as the pedicel (flower stalk). Calyx is papery and slowly turns black as the specimen dries. Collect open beaks.

Nodding
Lady's Tresses

Spiranthes cernua

ORCHIDACEAE



Photos: 9-12-18, 10-3-18

Beaks. Lady's tresses are 'common' native orchids. Blooms are arranged in double spirals up the short stalk, popping up to bloom in fall. *Spiranthes* are tough to ID; examine flower lips, sepals, sheaths, and presence/absence of leaves at flowering time. Orchids will not germinate without a specific fungus; collect & sow thoughtfully. Seeds are dust-like, note the image above shows mm markings!

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Winged Loosestrife

Lythrum alatum

LYTHRACEAE

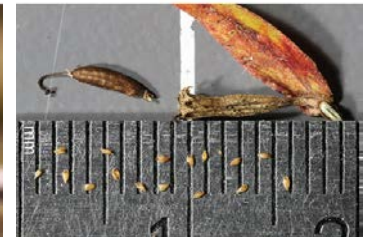


Photo: 10-3-20

Shakers. Aka “good purple loosestrife.” Like many native species with non-native bullies for sisters, this species is more subtle, with fewer flowers, fewer seeds, and is less common. This species has ridged (“winged”) stems, smaller leaves (often 1-2 cm long, up to 4 cm), alternate or subopposite. 1-2 flowers per axil (1-2 seed tubes). Collect when calyx is brown/burgundy; capsule inside holds dust-like seeds.

Purple Loosestrife

Lythrum salicaria

LYTHRACEAE

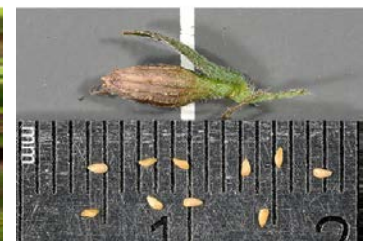


Photo: 10-18-19

Shakers. This pretty devil is invasive in wetlands across most of the county. A single mature plant annually produces 1-2 million seeds. The good winged loosestrife (*L. alatum*) is much smaller, fewer blossoms and fewer tubes of seed. *L. salicaria* has large leaves in opposite pairs or (rarely) whorls of 3. Leaves have unique veins: parallel to the edge and feather veins inside. Illegal to sell in IL, yet gardeners still plant it.

Marsh Hedge Nettle

Stachys hispida

LAMIACEAE



Photo: 10-6-20

Shakers. Serrated paired leaves. Square stems have hairs on the angles, not the faces. Calyx is bristly-hairy on the angles, with wispiest hairs on the lobes. Flowers are pink to lavender with white. Formerly a variety, now elevated to its own species.

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Swamp Milkweed

Asclepias incarnata

ASCLEPIADACEAE



Photo: 10-9-18

Milkweed. The bright pink flowers become finger-wide pods. The primary milkweed in wetlands. It is hard to mistake this species, unless handed a bag of pods. Similar sized pods to *A. tuberosa*, but those pods have peach fuzz and *A. incarnata* has smooth pods.

Fen Thistle
aka
Swamp Thistle

Cirsium muticum

ASTERACEAE

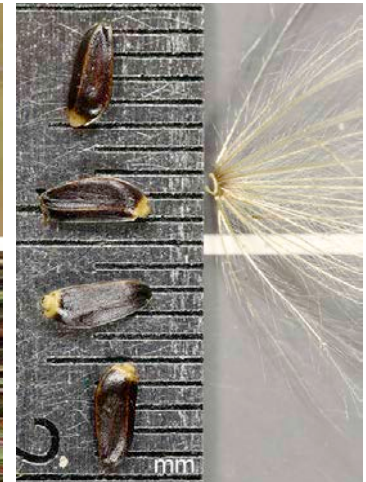


Photo: 10-9-19

Fluffy. A tall native thistle. Mature leaves are green above & below. Vibrant purple-pink flowers, loves moist prairies & fens. Lacks the painful spikes on the phyllaries (the bracts forming the cup under the fluff). Biennial, collect 10%. Native thistles are loved by insects & birds, without the obnoxious behavior of their invasive siblings.

Yellow Pond Lily

Nuphar advena

NYMPHAEACEAE

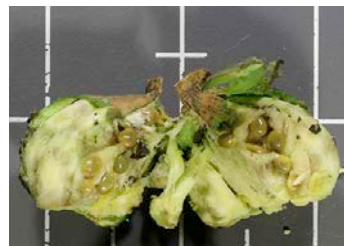


Photo: 10-9-20

Berries. Found in ponds and muddy edges, these yellow-flowering pond lilies generally keep their leaves and flowers above the water. Leaves are elliptical (rather than perfectly round, like white lilies, *Nymphaea*). The Pac-Man mouth of the lily pad opens wide. Pods are similar to *Podophyllum*; starting green & firm, but softening and becoming green-yellow as they ripen. Also called Spatterdock.



Lake County, Illinois, USA

Lake County Seed Collection Guide

Fall Wetland Forbs

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Swamp False Nettle

Boehmeria cylindrica

URTICACEAE



Photo: 8-14-20, 10-11-20

Shattering. Related to the stinging nettles, but without the sting! Found in many wet to wet-mesic habitats. Opposite, ovate leaves; stems are not translucent. Food for caterpillars of several native butterflies. Var. *drummondiana* has shorter petioles and leaves typically folded in half along the main vein.

Mild Water Pepper

Persicaria hydropiperoides

POLYGONACEAE

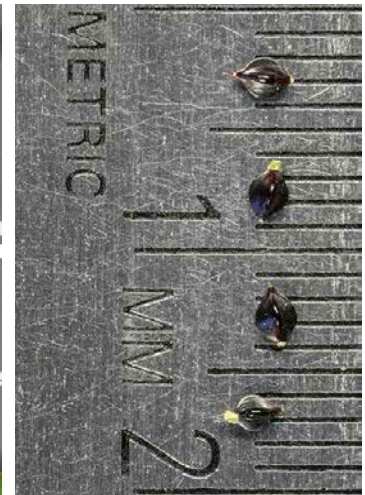


Photo: 10-11-18

Shattering. Mama's Boy. The water pepper/smart weed group is challenging to ID. Look at the broad sheaths wrapping the stem joints (ocrea) and similar sheaths in the floral spikes (ocreola). Narrow down the ID with flower color & arrangement, cilia (fringes on edges), and hairs.

Water Pepper

Persicaria punctata

POLYGONACEAE



Photo: 10-21-18

Shattering. Mama's Boy. The green calyx surrounding the seeds (and the base of the flower) is dotted ("punctate"). Common in wetlands. Collect *Persicaria* when the seeds are dark. Removing the green calyx is not necessary for sowing, but it's a good check for ripeness.

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Common Boneset

*Eupatorium
perfoliatum*

ASTERACEAE

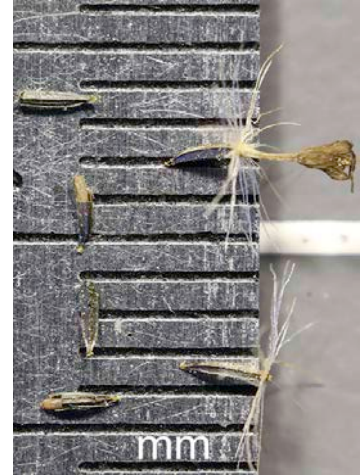


Photo: 10-11-18

Fluffy. The perfoliate leaves encasing the stem were historically taken as a divine sign that this plant could set bones. White flowers ripen to dark seeds with white pappus (fluff); sometimes brown dried florets remain attached. Collect when poofy. Great for pollinators.

Fog Fruit
aka
Frog Fruit
(‘cause it’s more fun)

Phyla lanceolata

VERBENACEAE



Photo: 10-13-20

Shakers. Found in muddy edges of ponds & streams, this plant likes low-competition areas. Flowers resemble its *Verbena* cousins, but typically in shades of pink and white. Leaves are lance-like (“*lanceolata*”). Flora notes a western species that was spotted once in Porter Co, IN, with leaves less than 1cm wide and teeth only at the tip.

Smooth
Prairie Lettuce

Prenanthes racemosa

ASTERACEAE



Photo: 10-13-18

Fluffy. One of two *Prenanthes* found in prairies, this species has smooth lower stems. Blooms are pinkish (*P. aspera* has creamy flowers). Both species have honey colored pappus (seed fluff). This species prefers moist prairies & fens. Collect 10% (biennial/short-lived perennial).

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Northern Bugleweed

Lycopus uniflorus

LAMIACEAE



Photo: 10-21-17

Shattering. The bugleweed/horehound species can be tricky to ID. They resemble wild mint (*Mentha*) but without the minty odor. In seed: look at the length of the spiky calyx lobes relative to seed; this species has lobes shorter than the seed. Four nutlets sit together in each cup, the combined surface of the 4 is warty but the outer ridge is slightly higher. Collect when brown. Seeds often have shiny oil droplets.

Stalked Water Horehound

Lycopus rubellus

LAMIACEAE



Photo: 10-16-17

Shattering. This rare species has calyx lobes longer than the seed, and the surface of the 4 combined seeds is wavy and uneven. Both *L. rubellus* & *L. uniflorus* can also spread by stolons, which may be visible aboveground. The other species have underground rhizomes.

Common Water Horehound

Lycopus americanus

LAMIACEAE



Photo: 11-2-17

Shattering. This common species has skinnier leaves and the lobes are deeper fingers (more than just teeth). The 4 seeds create a flat surface with a ridged outer margin, and calyx lobes are longer than the seeds. Water horehounds were used for coughs, much like the similar looking Common Horehound (from Europe, Asia, & Africa). Old fashioned horehound candies made from the non-native species are still sold today.

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Wild Mint

Mentha canadensis

LAMIACEAE



Photo: 10-21-18

Shakers. Similar to *Lycopus*, but leaves have a lovely minty smell. White flowers are clustered around the leaf axils, calyx (the cup) turns from green to brown, and seeds easily fall out when ripe. A refreshing wetland native.

Pickerelweed

Pontederia cordata

PONTEDERIACEAE



Photo: 10-21-20

Shattering. Spikes of royal purple flowers and leaves that are heart-shaped (“cordata”). Grows on pond edges. Seeds are arranged like tiny banana trees, green to brown. Seeds have a papery membrane (possibly to help dispersal by floating). Native Plants Journal indicates germination is best when sown in water, sown relatively fresh (0-3 months), and with the papery membrane removed. Spreads by rhizomes.

Great Water Dock

Rumex orbiculatus

POLYGONACEAE



Photo: 10-21-20

Shattering. Most people know the weedy curly dock, but fewer people are aware there are several native *Rumex*. This is the biggest (“Great”) of the native species, with leaves 8-15 cm wide, 50-100 cm long. Identify *Rumex* by looking at the seed “tubercle” (grain) and “valve” (the papery wings around it). Some species have tubercles on every valve, some do not. Shape of the valve can be an indicator too.

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Marsh
St. John's Wort

Triadenum fraseri

HYPERICACEAE



Photo: 10-21-17

Beaks. Mama's Boy. The pink-flowered St. John's worts have been split from the yellow-flowering *Hypericum*. Both *Triadenum* species can be found in Lake Co. *T. fraseri* has shorter sepals (less than 5 mm long). *T. virginicum* has sepals about half the length of the capsule.

Great
St. John's Wort

Hypericum ascyron

HYPERICACEAE



Photo: 10-24-19

Beaks. Mama's Boy. Great big flowers (3+ cm across) and great big capsules (1+ cm long)! This plant is herbaceous, not woody. Grows in wet prairies, sedge meadows, and fens. Collect open capsules.

Blue Vervain

Verbena hastata

VERBENACEAE



Photo: 10-21-18

Shakers. Mama's Boy. The purple-blue flowers are fantastic for pollinators. The closely spaced, slender brown spikes are hard to mistake, often a dozen per stalk. Calyces (cups) are tightly packed & overlap. Prefers wet prairies & sedge meadows.

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Wild Golden Glow
aka
Green Coneflower

Rudbeckia laciniata

ASTERACEAE

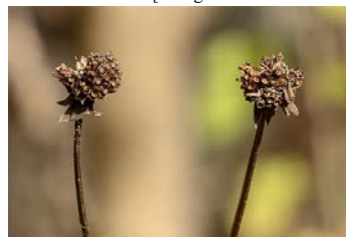


Photo: 10-26-17

Coneheads. Mama's Boy. This *Rudbeckia* is drastically different from its Susan sisters – much taller (up to 3m) with a green eye instead of black. Leaves have 3-7 deeply cut lobes; *laciniata* means cut, or lacerated. Snip brown heads.

Turtlehead

Chelone glabra

SCROPHULARIACEAE



Photo: 10-29-17

Beaks. Reportedly named for the flower's resemblance to a turtle's head, but the seed capsule is arguably a better inspiration for the name. Capsules are initially green with a distinct closed mouth (seam), which splits and opens up. Seeds are small papery "fried eggs" and shake out on windy days. Important host plant for Baltimore Checkerspot butterflies.

Sneezeweed

Helenium autumnale

ASTERACEAE

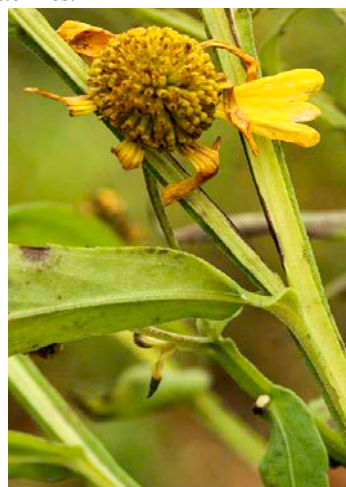


Photo: 11-2-17

Crumbly Coneheads. Ripe chocolate brown heads easily crumble by hand. Stems are winged. Common to see yellow (unripe) and ripe heads on the same plant. *H. flexuosum* (non-native) has brown "eyes." Rare var. *canaliculatum* has extra-long leaves without any serrations. The straight species has serrations; leaves are less than 7 times as long as wide. This plant was used as snuff, to sneeze out evil spirits.

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Prairie Gay Feather
aka
Prairie Blazing Star

Liatis pycnostachya

ASTERACEAE

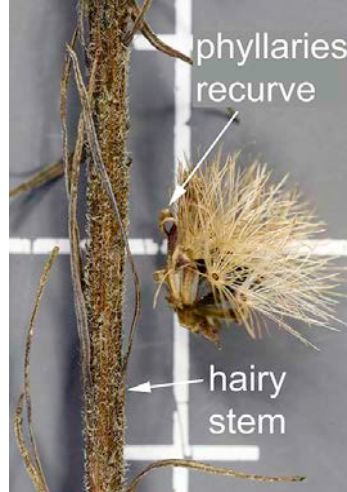


Photo: 10-29-19

Fluffy. Easily confused with *L. spicata*: both species pack their flowers densely on a spike, both can grow in mesic & wet prairies. *L. pycnostachya* has hairy stems. Phyllaries (bracts behind the flower) are bent backwards during flowering; hard to judge at harvest time. Flora labels this species FACW.

Marsh Gay Feather
aka
Marsh Blazing Star

Liatis spicata

ASTERACEAE



Photo: 11-4-19

Fluffy. Primarily in wetlands, but can also be found in mesic prairies and even dry-mesic prairies. Flora reclassified this species as FAC. Stems are hairless or a few sparse hairs. Check the phyllaries; during flowering time, these green floral bracts are pressed flat to the head.

Liatis pycnostachya

vs.

Liatis spicata



Stem hairiness can be the most useful indicator at harvest time. Bracts are tougher to view at harvest time: they relax, the open poof obscures them, and the head readily crumbles to release the seed. *L. pycnostachya* bracts taper; *L. spicata* abruptly contracts to a point.

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Wingstem

Verbesina alternifolia

ASTERACEAE



Photo: 11-2-17

Crumbly Coneheads. This tall wildflower can be very aggressive – use only in areas where other natives are equally aggressive! Stems have wings and are fuzzy. Seeds look like little butterflies. Great for pollinators, reportedly attractive to the rusty patched bumblebee (but so are other native flowers).