

Green Comet Milkweed

Asclepias viridiflora Raf.

Green Milkweed, Short Green Milkweed

A subtle, wide-ranging prairie milkweed with tight ball-shaped clusters of purely green flowers pressed against the stem. Enormously variable in leaf shape across its range, from broad and wavy to narrow and folded, which makes it one of the most confusing milkweeds to key out.



wackybadger. CC BY-SA 2.0. Wikimedia Commons.

Key facts

Field	Value	Field	Value
Status	Native	Height	1ft-3ft
Flowers	green	Bloom	May to August
Light	Full sun	Soil	Dry
USDA zones	3-9	Leaves	opposite, elliptic
Sap	Milky latex	Roots	Deep taproot, resents transplanting
Stratification	30 days cold-moist	States	38

How to identify it

- Flowers entirely green with no purple or white, in dense sessile or short-stalked clusters.
- Leaves thick and often with wavy margins; shape varies wildly between populations.
- Stems usually single, sometimes leaning; the whole plant is understated and easy to walk past.

Ecology

Found on dry prairie, glades, sand and thin rocky soil across most of the continent. Used by monarchs, though its scattered distribution means it is rarely a major host. Wasps and small bees dominate the flowers.

Growing

A collector's plant rather than a landscape one. Needs perfect drainage and lean soil, and the taproot makes container-raised plants tricky to establish. Slow but very long-lived.

Cautions

Standard milkweed cautions apply; not a significant livestock risk given its scattered occurrence.

Where it grows

Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Wyoming

More photographs



wackybadger. CC BY-SA 2.0. Wikimedia Commons.



wackybadger. CC BY-SA 2.0. Wikimedia Commons.



wackybadger. CC BY-SA 2.0. Wikimedia Commons.

References

- Plants of the World Online: <https://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:1167930-2>
- GBIF: <https://www.gbif.org/species/3170313>
- iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/158763>
- BONAP county map: <https://bonap.net/MapGallery/County/Asclepias%20viridiflora.png>

<https://milkweedusa.com/species/green-comet-milkweed/>