**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](http://www.chattahoocheenature.org), Roswell, GA.

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**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

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**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

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**Curley Milkweed**

**Carolina Milkweed**

*Photo by J & J Balaban USF Herbarium Slide Collection*
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

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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, 3-5 cm 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.

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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
**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

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

**Plant Description:** Many stalks that are spreading away from crown as the 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

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**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
**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**: Savannas, swamps and marshes

**Range**: Coastal plain, common

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**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**: Savannas, low pinelands and bogs

**Range**: Coastal plain, uncommon

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**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**: Savannas and pinelands

**Range**: Coastal plain, common
**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

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**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

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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
**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 6 cm wide. The 1-3 umbels are on the upper portion of the stem. The umbels are large, up to 7 cm wide, purple. Seed pods are downy, 10 cm long and 2 cm wide.

**Bloom Period:** June and July

**Seeds:** August and September

**Habitat:** Swamp forests and alluvial woods

**Range:** Northwest Georgia, rare

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**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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**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.
**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

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**Asclepias tuberosa** (Linnaeus) Butterfly Weed

**Plant Description:** Multiple stout branching stalks that are 20-80 cm 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

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**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
**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 are 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

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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 4-8 cm 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

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**Asclepias viridis** (Walter) Green Antelope-horn

Plant Description: Stems un-branched, up to 95 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 are 9-13 cm long and 1-2 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