

Aquatic Milkweed

Asclepias perennis Walter

Swamp White Milkweed, Thin-leaved Milkweed

A small, soft, white-flowered milkweed of southern swamps and river floodplains that will grow in standing water and in shade, two things no other milkweed manages. Its seeds are unique in the genus: they have no silky floss.



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Key facts

Field	Value	Field	Value
Status	Native	Height	1ft-3ft
Flowers	white, pink	Bloom	May to September
Light	Part shade, Shade, Full sun	Soil	Wet
USDA zones	6-9	Leaves	opposite, lanceolate
Sap	Milky latex	Roots	Fibrous, clump-forming and easy to move
Stratification	None needed	States	17

How to identify it

- Grows in genuinely wet ground, often with its feet in water.
- Small white flowers, sometimes pink-flushed, in delicate clusters.
- Thin, soft, pointed leaves; the whole plant is fine-textured.
- Seeds lack the parachute of silk found in every other milkweed.

Ecology

The key monarch host in southeastern floodplain forest and cypress swamp, and one of the few milkweeds that stays soft and edible through the humid southern summer.

Growing

Superb for rain gardens, pond edges and shaded wet spots in the Southeast. Needs no stratification: sow fresh seed and it germinates in days. Blooms the first year.

Cautions

Standard milkweed cautions.

Where it grows

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia

More photographs



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References

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- GBIF: <https://www.gbif.org/species/3170346>
- iNaturalist: <https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/120152>
- BONAP county map: <https://bonap.net/MapGallery/County/Asclepias%20perennis.png>

<https://milkweedusa.com/species/aquatic-milkweed/>