

***Silphium perfoliate* – Cup Plant**

COMMON NAME: Cup Plant

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Silphium perfoliate* - Comes from a Greek plant *silphion*, a resinous plant that is probably extinct now, and *perfoliate* meaning a leaf that wraps around the stem.

FLOWER: Several yellow flowers at the top of the stem, each 2-3 inches across

BLOOMING PERIOD: Late July to early September

SIZE: 3-8 feet tall

BEHAVIOR: Has a central taproot with rhizome-like roots near the base of the stem. Reseeds easily and may form dense clumps.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Full sun, but tolerant of light shade, in sandy loamy soil with wet to moderate moisture. Prairies, stream banks, woods.

NATURAL RANGE: Ontario west to South Dakota, south to Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri and Oklahoma. In Wisconsin it is found mostly in the southern and western parts of the state.

SPECIAL FEATURES: The square stem is one distinguishing feature as well as the pairs of large opposite leaves that “cup” the stem. The cupped leaves hold rainwater and attract birds and insects seeking a drink. Various birds, especially goldfinches, are very fond of the seeds. Native Americans made a medical extract from the roots and the resin was also used as a chewing gum.

SUGGESTED CARE: Water well when planting. A seedling may take several years to mature. Single plants may flop over.

COMPANION PLANTS: Tall bellflower, Virginia waterleaf, sweet cicely, swamp buttercup, hairy wood violet, golden Alexanders, Canada anemone, angelica, spotted joe-pye weed, jewelweed, swamp goldenrod, big bluestem and skunk cabbage.