

## ***Silphium terebinthinaceum* – Prairie Dock**

COMMON NAME: Prairie Dock

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Silphium terebinthinaceum* – from Greek *silphion* for the resinous juice of an ancient plant, now probably extinct, and *terebinthaceum* meaning “like turpentine” in reference to the aromatic resin in the stems.

FLOWER: Bright yellow sunflower-like blossoms about 2 inches across. There may be several at the top of the tall stem.

BLOOMING PERIOD: July to September

SIZE: Very tall plant, up to 7 or even 8 feet tall

BEHAVIOR: Spreads easily by seed. Older plants may produce several flowering stems. Has very large “elephant ear” leaves at the base of the plant.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Grows on moderately wet to moderately dry soils. Grows best in full sun, but tolerates very light shade.

NATURAL RANGE: Southern Ontario south to Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, west to Iowa, Missouri and Arkansas. In Wisconsin it is mostly in the southeast quarter of the state.

SPECIAL FEATURES: A striking plant when in bloom because of its height. It takes several years to reach blooming age. Older plants are very deep-rooted. Goldfinches are fond of the seeds.

SUGGESTED CARE: Water well during the first season. In garden settings individual plants may need staking when in bloom.

COMPANION PLANTS: Leadplant, big bluestem, heath and smooth asters, coreopsis, shooting star, rattlesnake aster, flowering spurge, showy sunflower, alumroot, yellow star grass, ground-headed bushclover, hoary puccoon, purple prairie clover, downy phlox, yellow coneflower, rosinweed, compass plant, stiff goldenrod, prairie dropseed and spiderwort.