water parsnip

Sium sauve

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta - flowering plants

Features

Water parsnip is a perennial herb. The stems are erect, branched, smooth, hollow, and up to six feet tall. The leaves are arranged alternately along the stem and divided into seven to 17 leaflets. Leaflets are lance-shaped, toothed, smooth, and up to five inches long and two inches across. Leaves under the water's surface are divided into thread-like segments. The five-petaled, white flowers are clustered together. The fruits are ellipsoid (oval) with ribs and one-sixth inch long.

Natural History

Water parsnip grows in wet roadside ditches, wet bottomland woods, and wet prairies. It flowers from July through September. It is common in the natural lakes area in northwest Iowa and the south half of the state and rare elsewhere.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; bottomland forests; wet prairies and fens

Iowa Status

common, native

Iowa Range

scattered throughout Iowa in suitable habitats

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001. *Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.