



Spiraea alba

white meadowsweet

Family Rosaceae

Origin Native

WIS Code FACW CoC 5

DESCRIPTION

Shrub (to 2 m tall) with smooth brown stems, yellow-brown twigs and lenticels (pores) on the twigs. Leaves are simple, alternate, smooth, narrow, lance-shaped to elliptic (3 to 7 cm long) with sharply toothed margins, a pointed tip and short stalk (petiole).

FLOWERS AND FRUITS

June to September, August to October. Compact, branched flower clusters are on an elongated inverted cone-like flower head. Corollas (4 to 8 mm wide) are white to pale pink with five petals joining below into a cup-shaped base. Fruits (2 to 3 mm) are follicles (tiny dry capsules containing seeds).

HABITAT

Seeps, seepage swamps, bogs, wet meadows, stream banks.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Spiraea tomentosa, steeplebush, has woolly reddish branches and twigs and woolly white or reddish lower leaf surfaces (not mostly smooth as in *S. alba*). Also this species has pink flowers (rarely white).

Spiraea japonica, Japanese meadowsweet, has pink to rose pink flowers held on flower heads wider than tall with a flattened appearance (not cone-like as in *S. alba*), and the leaves are 8–15 cm long (not 3 to 7 cm).



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Spiraea tomentosa

Spiraea japonica