

## YELLOW CONEFLOWER

*Ratibida pinnata* (Vent.)  
Barnh.  
Plant Symbol = RAPI

Contributed by: USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center



Division of Natural Areas and Preserves  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

### Alternative Names

gray-head prairie coneflower, drooping coneflower, pinnate prairie coneflower

### Uses

*Ethnobotanic:* *Ratibida pinnata* root was used to cure toothache (Fielder 1975).

*Landscaping & Wildlife:* Yellow coneflower is a strong survivor of former prairies where the majority of the original plants have perished. This is a long live species and is best to plant where there is

competition from other plants. The seed heads are eaten by birds in the late fall. The flowers attract several different butterfly species.

### Status

Please consult the Plants Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

### Description

*General:* Sunflower family (Asteraceae). Yellow coneflower is a native perennial herb growing from a woody caudex up to one meter or taller. The leaves are pinnately compound, mostly with five to seven lanceolate segments, with harsh and scurfy surfaces (Bruggen 1976). The disk flowers are usually gray at first becoming brown with age. When the disk heads are crushed, an odor of anise is emitted. Each flower has its own stalk and five to eight yellow, drooping petals arranged in a cone shape.

*Distribution:* Yellow coneflower ranges from Ontario and New York to Minnesota, South Dakota, and Nebraska, south to Georgia, Arkansas and Oklahoma (Steyermark 1963). For current distribution, please consult the Plant profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

### Adaptation

This species occurs in prairies, thickets, and borders of woods. It is often found along roadsides and railroad right-of-ways. Yellow coneflower grows best on loam, clay, and sandy soil types that are from medium moisture to dry. It prefers calcareous soils that are neutral pH 6-7, but will grow in sunny locations with well-drained soils, and is often found in wet mesic, mesic and dry mesic sites.

### Establishment

*Propagation by Seed:* *Ratibida pinnata* seeds are best planted in the spring or fall. Generally the seeds does not need any pre-treatment. They can be stratified at 33 to 38°F for thirty days.

### Management

Harvesting of seeds should be done from October through November. The cones should be clipped from the stem and placed into a bucket to rub the seeds off the cone to be used for propagation.

Plant Materials <<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/>>

Plant Fact Sheet/Guide Coordination Page <<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/pfs.html>>

National Plant Data Center <<http://npdc.usda.gov>>

### **Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)**

Somewhat available through native plant seed sources within its range. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the phone book under "United States Government." The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture."

### **References**

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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