

YELLOW CONEFLOWER

Ratibida pinnata (Vent.)
Barnh.

Plant Symbol = RAPI

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Manhattan Plant
Material Center



Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Alternate Names

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

Uses

Ethnobotanic: American Indians used the flower
cones and leaves to make a tea, and the root was used
as a cure for toothache (Runkel and Roosa 1989).

Landscaping and Wildlife: Yellow coneflower
produces an attractive and distinct flower that is
easily grown in gardens. The flowers attract

butterflies throughout the summer, and its seeds are
sought by birds in the late fall.

Forage: When young, it provides good grazing for
livestock (Runkal and Roosa 1989). However, the
stems become woody with age, and less palatable.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State
Department of Natural Resources for this plant's
current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species,
state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description and Adaptation

Yellow coneflower is a member of the daisy family,
Asteraceae, and is a summer perennial. It grows up
right and may be a meter or more in height. The
slender, grooved stems have fine, upward pointing
hairs, and may branch with a flower on top of each
stem. The flowers may have between 5 to 10 petals
that droop down toward the stem with a distinct
“cone” in the center.

Distribution: This species is widely distributed across
the United States. It can be found up and down the
east coast from Vermont to Florida and westward to
Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska. It is most
commonly associated with the prairie regions of the
central United States, and is often seen along
roadsides.

Establishment

Stands of this species can be readily established from
seed. Plantings can be made in either the spring or
fall. Spring plantings may require the seed to be
stored slightly above freezing for at least 30 days to
ensure good germination. The seed requires a clean,
firm seed bed, and may be drilled or broadcast.
Stands have been established using 12-24 inch row
spacing at a seeding rate of 20-40 seeds per foot, and
by broadcasting 5 pounds of seed per acre. Four
ounces per acre is recommended when mixed with
other species.

Management

Yellow coneflower is not inhibited by competition,
and does well when used in conjunction with other
species. It has an open structure and should be
planted in relatively dense stands to inhibit weed
growth if a monoculture is desired.

Pests and Potential Problems

Birds will feed heavily on the seed heads of this flower in the fall of the year. This is advantageous for the wildlife watcher, but maybe a potential problem for those growing this species for seed production.

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

‘**Sunglow**’ – (Kansas) Sunglow was released in 1978, and has shown to have excellent vigor. This cultivar is especially adapted to the central United States. Its range includes portions of South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. This plant material is readily available from commercial sources.

Prepared By & Species Coordinator:

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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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