

## PALE PURPLE CONEFLOWER

*Echinacea pallida* (Nutt.)  
Nutt.  
Plant Symbol = ECPA

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Elsberry Plant  
Materials Center



Britton and Brown 1913  
Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada

### Uses

Pale purple coneflower can be used for roadside plantings, prairie restoration, wildlife food and cover, prairie landscaping and native gardens.

### 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). This plant is considered threatened in a couple of states.

### Description

Pale purple coneflower is a native perennial forb growing to a height of 3 feet with coarse bristly hairs on the stout stems and leaves. The leaves are rough-

surfaced, up to 10 inches long and 1 ½ inches wide, and tapering at either end, with several parallel veins running along their lengths. The basal leaves are on long stalks, while the stem leaves are few, and usually lack long stalks. There is a single showy flower head at the top of each stem, with many drooping, pale purple petal-like ray flowers, each up to 3 ½ inches long, surrounding a broad, purplish brown, cone-shaped central disk. Pale purple coneflower flowers in late spring to midsummer.

### Adaptation and Distribution

Pale purple coneflower is widely distributed in dry and mesic prairies and open savannas from southeastern Nebraska and north central Iowa south and east to southwestern Arkansas and northwestern Indiana.

For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

### Establishment

Prepare a clean weed free seedbed by disking and harrowing or using chemical weed control. Firm the seedbed by cultipacking. Seedbed should be firm enough to allow seed to be planted 1/8 inch deep. The seed of pale purple coneflower should be dormant seeded for best results, because the seed needs cold moist stratification for two months (60 days) in cold, moist environment (35 - 40 degrees Fahrenheit). This is the usual time required to break dormancy; however, a few require only one month or up to three months.

Pale purple coneflower has 80,000 – 85,000 seeds per pound. Seeding rates for seed production should be about 3 - 5 pounds of pure live seed (PLS) per acre in 36-inch rows (20 - 30 seeds per row foot). For a solid stand, the seeding rate would be 15 - 20 pounds PLS per acre (30 – 40 seeds per square foot).

For a prairie planting, pale purple coneflower would be a small component of a mixture ranging from 0.1 – 1.0 PLS pound per acre (0.2 – 2 PLS per square foot).

Use no fertilizer the establishment year unless soil test indicates a low deficiency of less than 15 PPM of phosphorus and or less than 90 PPM of potassium.

Use no nitrogen during the establishment year as this can encourage weed competition.

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### **Management**

Reduce weed competition by mowing over the height of the pale purple coneflower plants or cultivating between the rows. For grassy weed control usage of a post emergence grass herbicide can provide control and will encourage a good stand. Remove dead plant material in the spring for faster green-up by shredding. Burning of dead plant refuge can weaken the plants unless done before it has broken dormancy.

*Read about [Civil Rights at the Natural Resources Conservation Service](#).*

### **Pests and Potential Problems**

This species was grown at the Elsberry Plant Materials Center for several years, and during this time there were no apparent pests or potential problems in growing.

### **Environmental Concerns**

Pale purple coneflower is not known to invade where this species does not naturally occur.

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

According to the publication entitled 'Improved Conservation Plants Materials Released by NRCS and Cooperators through September 2001', there are no cultivars, source identified, selected or tested releases of pale purple coneflower from the Plant Materials Program. The origin for these releases was northern, central and southern counties in the state of Iowa.

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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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