

Prairie coneflower

(*Ratibida pinnata*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

While Prairie coneflower is most common in the prairies and limestone glades of the midwestern US, its southernmost range dips into Florida's Panhandle. Abundant yellow flowers bloom summer through fall, attracting numerous pollinators. Songbirds also enjoy their seeds.

The Prairie coneflower inflorescence is comprised of numerous drooping yellow ray florets surrounding a dome of greyish green or brown disk florets. Leaves are alternate and pinnately divided into as few as three to more than seven segments. Leaf margins have stiff white hairs and may be slightly toothed or entire. The leaves are largest (up to eight inches long) at the base and become smaller and sparse as they ascend the stem.



Photo by Eleanor Dietrich

Family: Asteraceae (Aster or Composite family)

Native range: Jackson, Gadsden and Madison counties

To see where natural populations of Prairie coneflower have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Moist to dry clay or sandy loam

Exposure: Full sun to part shade

Growth habit: 3 to 5 feet tall

Propagation: Seeds, division

Florida regions of landscape suitability: North

Garden tips: Prairie coneflower is adaptable to moderately dry to wet conditions and a variety of soil types. It can be a nice addition to a pollinator garden or wildflower meadow and should be planted among other wildflowers and grasses to support it and keep it from flopping to the ground.

Prairie coneflower is occasionally available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery in your area.

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