

GIANT CONEFLOWER

Rudbeckia maxima



Characteristics

- Type: Perennial
- Zone: 4 to 9
- Height: 5.00 to 7.00 feet
- Spread: 3.00 to 4.00 feet
- Bloom Time: June to July
- Bloom Description: Yellow rays surround dark brown center cone
- Sun: Full sun
- Water: Dry to medium
- Maintenance: Low
- Suggested Use: Naturalize
- Flower: Showy, Good Cut, Good Dried
- Attracts: Butterflies, Birds
- Tolerate: Deer, Drought
- Texas native

Culture

This perennial coneflower is easily grown in average, moist, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerates light shade. Tolerates heat, some drought and a somewhat wide range of soils. Best in moist, organically rich soils. Let flower stocks remain after bloom to attract goldfinches—they love the seed. Pinching can produce more compact plants in taller varieties. Can be divided every 4 years in spring. Spent foliage can be cut back to 6" for a flush of new growth. May be grown from seed. In optimum growing conditions, the species will naturalize by self-seeding.

Noteworthy Characteristics

Rudbeckia maxima, commonly called large coneflower, features a basal clump of huge, glaucous, paddle-shaped, bluish-green leaves (to 24" long and 10" wide) from which rise in summer sturdy, sparsely-leaved flower stalks to 7' tall bearing yellow-rayed cone-flowers (to 3" across). Each coneflower has slightly drooping rays and tall dark brown central cones ranging from 2-6" high. Flowers bloom in summer. This coneflower is a coarse perennial that is native to open wooded areas, moist prairies, pastures and along roads and railroad tracks in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Texas, but has been introduced in several other states including Missouri and South Carolina. Basal foliage is evergreen in warm winter climates. Flower stalks may be left in place after bloom so goldfinches can enjoy the seed. Another common name for this plant is cabbage leaf coneflower in reference to the basal leaves. Genus name honors Olof Rudbeck (1630-1702) Swedish botanist and founder of the Uppsala Botanic Garden in Sweden where Carl Linnaeus was professor of botany. Specific epithet means largest in reference to the large size of this *Rudbeckia*.

Problems

No serious insect or disease problems. Susceptible to powdery mildew. Watch for slugs and snails on young plants.

Garden Uses

A native wildflower that is an excellent addition to naturalized areas, wildflower meadows, prairies, cottage gardens, native plant gardens and borders.