

Echinacea purpurea Purple Coneflower¹

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Introduction

Formerly known as *Rudbeckia purpurea*, purple coneflower displays wonderful daisy-like, pink flowers on top of strong, hairy stems that stand against the wind and rain. Flowers stand 2 to 4feettall, well above the medium-green foliage. The large flowers have a dark purple center with a variety of outer-flower colors from pink and lavender to purple. Flowers appear in spring and summer in central Florida and in the summer elsewhere in the eastern U.S. There is nothing quite like a purple coneflower in bloom.



Figure 1. Full Form - *Echinacea purpurea*: Purple Coneflower
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Flower - *Echinacea purpurea*: Purple Coneflower
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Echinacea purpurea*

Pronunciation: eck-kin-NAY-see-uh pur-PURE-ee-uh

Common name(s): purple coneflower, eastern purple coneflower

Family: *Asteraceae*

Plant type: herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 4 through 10 (Figure 3)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

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Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

Uses: naturalizing; cut flowers; edging; attracts butterflies; mass planting

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant



Figure 3. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 1 to 3 feet

Spread: 2 to 3 feet

Plant habit: oval; upright

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: lanceolate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink; lavender; purple

Flower characteristic: summer flowering; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: unknown

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: well-drained; occasionally wet; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

The stiff appearance of purple coneflower contrasts well with the softness of other perennials and other fine-textured plants. The plant attracts much attention due to the wonderful flower and makes a nice component in a mixed perennial border. It is especially useful in light shade in summer, where protection from afternoon sun enhances flower and foliage color. It is fairly tolerant of drought in the partial shade, less so in full sun.

Clumps of purple coneflower should be divided every few years to help keep plants blooming. Growers also propagate by root cuttings. Coneflowers with white flowers also exist.

Roots have been used to treat rabies, snakebites, skin diseases, and other ailments.

Pests and Diseases

Purple coneflower can be moderately to severely infested with sweet potato whitefly.

Japanese beetle in northern gardens eat foliage and disfigure plants. Leaf spots can be a problem any place the plant is grown.