

Kentucky Garden Flowers **Coneflowers, Black-eyed Susans**

Robert Anderson, Extension Floriculture Specialist

Coneflowers and black-eyed Susans are great plants for Kentucky gardens. Many are used in home and commercial landscapes across the state. ‘Goldsturm’ is probably the most common perennial in commercial landscapes.

Purple Cone Flower – *Echinacea*

Flower Color	Height	Season	Pests	Uses	Propagation
yellow, lavender, dark pink, white	18"- 36"	summer	few	border, cut flowers, wild flower gardens	seeds, division

Performance – Cone flowers are reliable perennials in Kentucky gardens. They have excellent summer performance and some are native to the state. They will grow in less fertile soils, need excellent drainage and tolerate our dry summers well. The purple cone flowers (*E. purpurea*) are most common; ‘Magnus’ was the 1998 Perennial Plant of the Year from the national Perennial Plant Association.

Comments – Plants may require 2 years to become established, especially when the seed is direct sown in the garden. The plants may self-sow and spread in the garden, but they are usually not invasive. Removal of old flowers promotes bloom production and prevents reseeding. Coneflower seed germination can be a challenge. It is best to place seed on a moist paper towel, roll the paper towel and store in a zip lock plastic bag. Place the bag in a refrigerator for 6-8 weeks before the seed are sown to improve germination.

***Echinacea pallida* - Coneflower** – *E. pallida* is an uncommon native wildflower.

***Echinacea paradoxa* - Yellow Coneflower** – *E. paradoxa* is a unique, uncommon native wildflower.

***Echinacea purpurea* - Purple Coneflower** – Purple coneflowers are one of the best plants for Kentucky landscapes. This plant blooms in early summer and continues for an extended period in the garden. Individual plants may not be perennial, but the plant will self-sow sufficiently to keep these plants in your garden for many years. ‘Bright Star’ has brilliant rose flowers, and petals extend horizontally. ‘Alba’ or ‘White Swan’ has white flowers with bronzy orange, domed cones in the center. All are excellent cut flowers. ‘Bravado’, ‘Bright Star’, ‘Clio’, ‘Magnus’, ‘Robert Bloom’, ‘White Swan’.

***Echinacea simulata* - Coneflower** – This coneflower is native to Kentucky.

***Echinacea tennesseensis* - Purple Coneflower** - This plant is on the endangered species list and is considered rare but seed is now available commercially. This is an excellent cone flower in Kentucky.



E. pallida



E. paradoxa



E. purpurea 'Magnus'



E. purpurea 'White Swan'



E. simulata



E. tennesseensis

Black-eyed Susan, Coneflower – Rudbeckia

Flower Color	Height	Season	Pests	Uses	Propagation
yellow	2-6 ft.	summer	powdery mildew	border, cut, meadow	seed, division

Performance – Black-eyed Susans and coneflowers can be annual or perennial in Kentucky gardens, depending on the species and the cultivars. Rudbeckias should be planted in good garden soils in full sun gardens. They are relatively drought tolerant because all are native to the state.

***Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivanti* 'Goldsturm'** – **Orange Coneflower, Black-eyed Susan** – This is an excellent cultivar developed by Jellito Seed in Germany from plants collected in the U.S. 'Goldsturm' is grown from seed and can be grown from cuttings as well. Plants can produce large clumps from lateral rhizomes and they will self-sow; they are not invasive. Plants may be considered as short-lived perennials, but usually they remain in the garden for many years. 'Goldsturm' is affected by powdery

mildew in some years, but usually less than other rudbeckias. This was the 1999 Perennial Plant of the Year from the Perennial Plant Association and an excellent plant for Kentucky gardens.

***Rudbeckia hirta* – Black-eyed Susan, Gloriosa Daisy** – A native Kentucky wildflower, commonly seen in mid summer along roadsides and in the medians of the interstate highways. This annual will self-sow quite easily in gardens and is a common plant used for wildflower garden mixes. Excellent cultivars have been developed from this species and others. They are generally considered annuals, but may perform as perennials for a few years. ‘Becky’, ‘Goldilocks’, ‘Indian Summer’, ‘Irish Eyes’, ‘Marmalade’, ‘Prairie Sun’, ‘Rustic Colors’, ‘Sonora’, ‘Toto’. ‘Indian Summer’ and ‘Prairie Sun’ are outstanding varieties.

***Rudbeckia lacinata* – Cutleaf Coneflower** – A native Kentucky wildflower, which grows to 6’ tall, is a reliable perennial in Kentucky gardens. ‘Herbstonne’ has performed well in trials at the UK Horticulture Research Farm from 2003 to 2006. ‘Golden Glow’, ‘Goldquelle’, ‘Herbstonne’ (‘Autumn Sun’).

***Rudbeckia maxima* – Giant Coneflower** – A large reliable perennial that will grow well in Kentucky gardens; some may consider that it is too big for a typical landscape.

***Rudbeckia subtomentosa* – Sweet Black-eyed Susan, Sweet Coneflower** – Sweet coneflower is a great native plant for Kentucky landscapes. It is a reliable perennial and flowers around the first of August. Plants are 3’ to 4’ tall; some may consider them too large for their garden. Plants may spread from seed, but they are not invasive. Sweet coneflower performed well in trials at the UK Horticulture Research Farm and UK Arboretum from 2000 to 2006.

***Rudbeckia triloba* – Brown-eyed Susan, Three-Lobed Coneflower** – Brown-eyed Susan produces hundreds of small brown-eyed daisy flowers in a loose arrangement. It is a good Kentucky native plant for our landscapes, however not as good as sweet coneflower, cut leaf coneflower, black-eyed Susan or ‘Goldsturm’. Brown-eyed Susan is quite susceptible to powdery mildew each year. In addition, plants are not perennial, they are typically biennial; so plants disappear then reappear elsewhere in the garden. Some years seed germination is excellent and plants appear invasive. This plant performed well some years and poorly other years in trials at the UK Horticulture Research Farm and UK Arboretum from 2000 to 2006.



‘Goldsturm’ black-eyed Susan



Rudbeckia fulgida var. *fulgida*



Rudbeckia hirta 'Prairie Sun' from Benary Seed Co.



Rudbeckia lacinata 'Herbstsonne'



Rudbeckia triloba



Rudbeckia subtomentosa

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