

drooping coneflower *Ratibida pinnata*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Asterales

Family: Asteraceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The drooping coneflower is also known as the gray-headed coneflower, yellow coneflower, weary Susan or yellow prairie coneflower. This perennial herb's leaves are deeply divided into lobes. The lower leaves are pinnately compound with three to seven leaflets. The upper leaves are sessile or nearly so. Leaves and stems are covered with hairlike structures. Both ray and disk flowers are present in the flower head. The yellow, ray flowers number four to 10. Ray flowers are oriented downward from the center. The dull-colored or gray-green disk in the center of the flower head is twice as tall as it is wide. The one-seeded fruit is dry and hard. The drooping coneflower may attain a height of two to four feet.

BEHAVIORS

The drooping coneflower may commonly be found in the northern three-fourths of Illinois. It sometimes is seen in the remainder of the state, too. This plant grows in moist prairies. Flowers are produced from July through August. In its early growth stages, the drooping coneflower is an important food source for grazing animals of the prairie. Insects are the primary pollination agent of the flowers.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie

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