Yellow Cone Flower
Ratibida pinnata

Alternative Names:
gray-head prairie coneflower, drooping coneflower, pinnate
prairie coneflower

Uses:
Ethnobotanic: Ratibida pinnata root was used to cure toothache

Landscaping & Wildlife:
Yellow coneflower is a strong survivor of former prairies where the majority of the
original plants have perished. This is a long live species and is best to plant where there is
competition from other plants. The seed heads are eaten by birds in the late fall. The
flowers attract several different butterfly species.

Description
General: Sunflower family (Asteraceae). Yellow coneflower is a native perennial herb
growing from a woody caudex up to one meter or taller. The leaves are pinnately
compound, mostly with five to seven lanceolate segments, with harsh and scurfy
surfaces. The disk flowers are usually gray at first becoming brown with age. When the
disk heads are crushed, an odor of anise is emitted. Each flower has its own stalk and five
to eight yellow, drooping petals arranged in a cone shape.

Distribution:
Yellow coneflower ranges from Ontario and New York to Minnesota, South Dakota, and
Nebraska, south to Georgia, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Adaptation
This species occurs in prairies, thickets, and borders of woods. It is often found along
roadsides and railroad right-of-ways. Yellow coneflower grows best on loam, clay, and
sandy soil types that are from medium moisture to dry. It prefers calcareous soils that are
neutral pH 6-7, but will grow in sunny locations with well-drained soils, and is often
found in wet mesic, mesic and dry mesic sites.

Establishment
Propagation by Seed: Ratibida pinnata seeds are best planted in the spring or fall.
Generally the seeds does not need any pre-treatment. They can be stratified at 33 to 38°F
for thirty days.

Management
Harvesting of seeds should be done from October through November. The cones should
be clipped from the stem and placed into a bucket to rub the seeds off the cone to be used
for propagation.
Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)
Somewhat available through native plant seed sources within its range.

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