

Echinacea purpurea

Purple Coneflower

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Purple Coneflower has a rich history of medicinal use that has resulted in its over harvesting and decline in its natural habitat, centered in Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas. The few established populations in the Mid-Atlantic Region¹ appear to be escapes from cultivation, where it is commonly grown in residential and public gardens and visited by many beneficial insects and goldfinches.



Perennial	En Masse, ² with Visitors, ³ in Late Winter
Height: 2–4 feet	
Spread: 1½–2 feet	
Bloom Color: Mauve, lavender	
Characteristics	
Tallish perennial with alternate , lanceolate to ovate , ciliate -margined leaves; toothed basal leaves w/ alate petioles ; nearly entire stem leaves reduced in size	
Single composite flowers atop hirsute stems ⁴ with deep orange disks & mauve rays that droop with age; bloom one month early summer, may rebloom early fall	
Brown/black disks of crowned pappi w/ cypselae	
Attributes	
Tolerates poor soil , heat, humidity; intolerant of water logging; susceptible to leaf spot (when watering do not get moisture on leaves/stems); deer seldom to occasionally severely damage	
Blooms last well as cut flowers	
Winter interest if not deadheaded & cones remain	  
Ethnobotanic , therapeutic, and herbal uses	
Attracts beneficial insects and goldfinches	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements : Slightly acid, well-drained	<i>Aster</i> species (including Michaelmas Daisy)
Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade	Lythrum salicaria - Purple Loosestrife
Water Requirements : Dry, Moist	<i>Melilotus officinalis</i> - Sweetclover
Prefers full sun but will wilt if soil is too dry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is not native to NoVA, but has been introduced to Loudoun County. 2. In the background are grasses of <i>Panicum virgatum</i>. 3. <i>Echinacea</i> attracts pollinators like bees, wasps, syrphid flies, skippers, and butterflies (eastern tiger swallowtail pictured). 4. Learn more about Garden Cleanup for Pollinators: Trim Perennial Stems in Their First Winter. 5. Seeds might be controlled naturally by American goldfinches (a male perched on a flower above). They so relish the seeds that they can eat a crop in a few days.
Deadhead to control seeds ⁵ —won't affect rebloom	
Divide clumps when crowded, every four years	
Use in borders; butterfly, cutting, or meadow gardens	
Hardiness : USDA Zones 3a–8b	
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria	

Images by Elaine Mills (top), landscaping at Adventist HealthCare, Rockville, MD and by Mary Free, Glencarlyn Garden and (goldfinch) private garden, Arlington, VA