

Common name: **Purple Coneflower**

Genus Species: ***Echinacea purpurea***



Photo credit: Elmer Verhasselt, Bugwood.org

Description: Eastern purple coneflower is an erect, perennial herb with showy purple petals and a cone-shaped center. It grows 1 to 5 feet tall. This plant is a member of the Aster family so the flowers are compound having both ray flowers (the purple petals) and disk flowers that form the brownish center.

Habitats: Eastern purple coneflower is most commonly associated with open, upland sites. It has low tolerance for drought conditions.

Phenology highlight: An assortment of insect pollinators, including honeybees, bumblebees, monarchs, fritillaries, painted ladies, and swallowtails visit the flowers of this species.

Species facts:

- Purple coneflower is pollinated by bees and butterflies.
- Goldfinches often feast on the seeds in the fall.
- Purple coneflower was and still is a widely used medicinal plant of the Plains Indians, used as a painkiller and for a variety of ailments including toothache, cough, cold, sore throat, and snake bite.
- Purple coneflower is the source for Echinacea, a very modern popular herbal remedy for the common cold and flu.

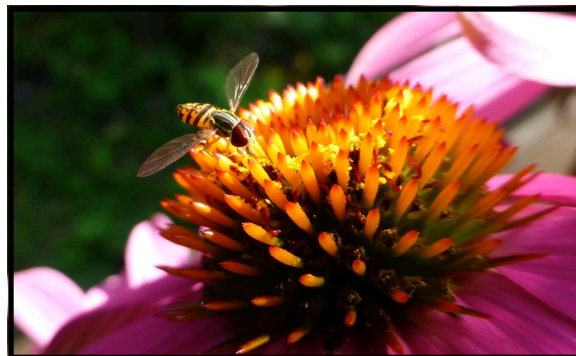
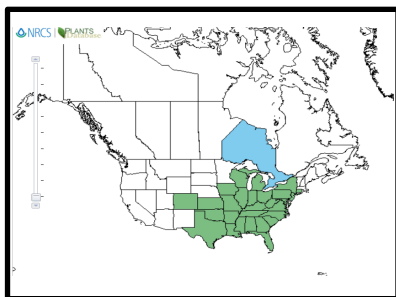


Photo credit: Celia Cuomo; communitygreenways.org



Why observe this species? Purple coneflower is one of the plant species observed by New York Phenology Project member organizations, and data gathered is contributed to the National Phenology Network database. The mission of this public participation in science research initiative is to educate and engage the public while collecting data that is useful for detecting broad scale patterns and changes in the natural world.

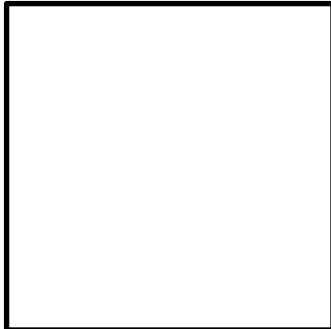
Tips for observing this species: Do not include empty seed heads in any of the seed phenophases.

Map credit: USDA, NRCS. 2014. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>, 10 December 2015). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA

For more information about phenology and the New York Phenology Project (NYPP), please visit the NYPP website (www.nyphenologyproject.org) and the USA-NPN website (www.usanpn.org).

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Note: flower and fruit phenophases are nested so you may need to record more than one phenophase in each group; for example, if you record **Y** for “open flowers” you should also record **Y** for “flowers or flower buds.”



Initial Growth New growth is visible after a period of no growth (winter or drought) as new shoots breaking through the soil surface. Growth is considered initial until the first leaf has fully unfolded.



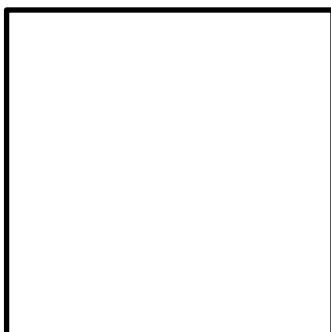
Leaves One or more live, fully unfolded leaves are visible. For seedlings, consider only true leaves, not the two small leaves (cotyledons) that are found on the stem immediately after the seedling germinates. Do not include dried or dead leaves.



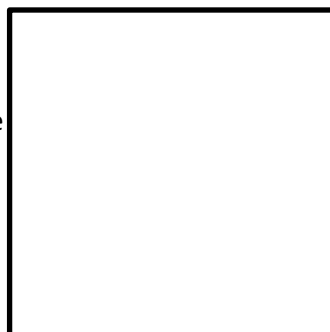
Flowers or flower buds One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds that are still developing, but do not include wilted or dried flowers.



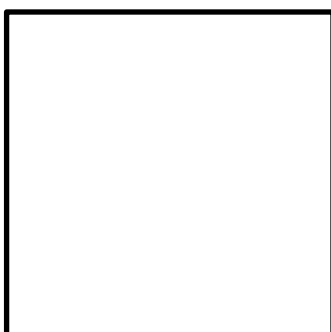
Open flowers One or more open, fresh flowers are visible. Flowers are open when reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between unfolded flower parts. Do not include wilted or dried flowers.



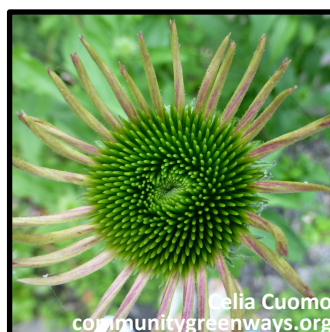
Fruits Coneflowers have tiny seed-like fruits crowded into a spent flower head. The seed-like fruit changes from whitish-yellow or yellow-green to grayish, tan or light brown. Do not include empty flower heads.



Ripe fruits Coneflower fruit is ripe when it has turned grayish, tan or light brown, or when it readily drops from the spent flower head when touched. Do not include empty flower heads that have dropped their fruit.



Recent fruit or seed drop One or more mature fruits or seeds have dropped or been removed from the plant since your last visit. Do not include immature fruits that fell before ripening or empty flower heads.



Common and Scientific Names Use of a scientific name can help prevent confusion when a species has many common names. Purple coneflower is also called echinacea, snakeroot, Kansas snakeroot, scurvy root, comb flower, hedge hog, and other common names.

All phenophases are pictured