

School-to-Nature



Coneflower

Coneflowers are native to prairies and other wild areas in the central and eastern U.S. The name refers to the center of the flower, which is raised above the outer petals and may even have a tall cone shape, though that center shape differs among the varieties and even from flower to flower (see photos). Coneflower varieties can be found at King's Corner, Trout Ponds Prairie, and Short Road Trailhead. They are also being seeded as part of the prairie restoration at King's Corner; and some Coneflower plants can be found in the memorial garden there.

The lavender and yellow varieties of Coneflower are most common in the wild. The photos at the top represent those most common on Conservancy properties, as follows: to the left is Grey-headed Coneflower (*Ratibida*), with its downward-tending yellow petals; at the center is Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea*), whose petals tend downward as the flower matures; and to the right is Cutleaf Coneflower (*Rudbeckia*), with greenish centers and yellow petals that fan out gracefully.

Coneflower is a sun-loving and drought-resistant perennial that grows 2-4 ft. in height, blooming mid-summer until frost. It attracts all pollinators including: butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, and bees. After blooming, the dry seed heads attract songbirds such as goldfinches. Note: there are many daisy-like yellow flowers that bloom on Conservancy lands; but Coneflowers (of all colors) will have the raised, curved-sided center that is the identifier.



Fun Fact: *Echinacea* comes from the Latin name for hedgehog, *echinus*, referring to the prickly seed heads and lower stems of the plant. This makes these native plants more deer-resistant and so they are hardy survivors. Coneflower roots, leaves, and flowers have all been used to brew medicinal tea, to relieve cold symptoms. Wild Coneflower varieties, just like some other wildflowers, can now be purchased for garden planting, at local garden centers.

January 2023 DL MW KM

Caledonia Conservancy | P.O. Box 044714 | Racine, WI | 53404
262-498-4993 | www.CaledoniaConservancy.org