

## ***Echinacea purpurea* Purple Coneflower<sup>1</sup>**

Edward F. Gilman<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

Formerly known as *Rudbeckia purpurea* Purple Coneflower displays wonderful daisy-like, pink flowers on top of strong, hairy stems that stand against the wind and rain (Fig. 1). Flowers stand 2- to 4-feet-tall, well above the medium-green foliage. The large flowers have a dark purple center with a variety of outer-flower colors from pink, lavender to purple. Flowers appear in spring and summer in central Florida and in the summer elsewhere in the eastern U.S. There is nothing quite like a Purple Coneflower in bloom.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Echinacea purpurea*

**Pronunciation:** eck-kin-NAY-see-uh  
 pur-PURE-ee-uh

**Common name(s):** Purple Coneflower

**Family:** *Compositae*

**Plant type:** herbaceous



**Figure 1.** Purple Coneflower.

**USDA hardiness zones:** 4 through 10 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** year round

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

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**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Uses:** naturalizing; cut flowers; edging; attracts butterflies; mass planting

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

**Leaf margin:** serrate

**Leaf shape:** lanceolate

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Description**

**Height:** 1 to 3 feet

**Spread:** 2 to 3 feet

**Plant habit:** oval; upright

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** coarse

**Flower**

**Flower color:** pink; lavender; purple

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; spring flowering

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** unknown

**Fruit length:** unknown

**Fruit cover:** unknown

**Fruit color:** unknown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

**Current year stem/twig color:** green

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

### Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade

**Soil tolerances:** well-drained; occasionally wet; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam; clay

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** poor

**Plant spacing:** 18 to 24 inches

### Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

### Use and Management

The stiff appearance of Purple Coneflower contrasts well with the softness of other perennials and other fine-textured plants. The plant attracts much attention due to the wonderful flower and makes a nice component in a mixed perennial border. It is especially useful in light shade in summer, where protection from afternoon sun enhances flower and foliage color. It is fairly tolerant of drought in the partial shade, less so in full sun.

Clumps of Purple Coneflower should be divided every few years to help keep plants blooming. Growers also propagate by root cuttings. Coneflowers with white flowers also exist.

Roots have been used to treat rabbies, snakebites, skin diseases and other ailments.

### Pests and Diseases

Purple Coneflower can be moderately to severely infested with Sweetpotato whitefly.

Japanese beetle in northern gardens eat foliage and disfigure plants. Leaf spots can be a problem any place the plant is grown.