

Black-Eyed Susan: *Rudbeckia hirta*



Cultivation: The preference is full sun, and slightly moist to moderately dry soil conditions. Any reasonably fertile soil will be satisfactory. This plant is fast to mature and easy to grow, although short-lived. Occasionally, there may be outbreaks of powdery mildew on the leaves in moist environments, particularly during the fall. In native habitats, it occurs in mesic to dry prairies, mesic to dry upland forests, particularly in open rocky areas, as well as savannas and limestone glades. In developed areas, it can be found in pastures and abandoned fields, areas along railroads and roadsides, on eroded clay slopes, and miscellaneous waste areas. Black-Eyed Susan colonizes disturbed areas readily, and recovers moderately well from fires. The composite flowers appeal to a wide range of insects, particularly bees and flies, as well as some wasps, butterflies, and beetles



Plant Structure: This is a native biennial or short-lived perennial plant that is about 1-2½' tall. It occasionally branches near the base, with each stem producing a single composite. This flower consists of many dark brown disk florets, forming a flattened cone, surrounded by 8-20 ray florets that are bright yellow (rarely with patches of maroon near the base). Black-Eyed Susan blooms primarily from early to mid-summer for about a month, although some plants will bloom during the late summer or fall. The achenes are black, oblong, finely nerved, and without tufts of hair. The root system consists of a central taproot and is without rhizomes – this plant reproduces entirely by seed.