

# Sneezeweed: *Helenium autumnale*



**Cultivation:** The preference is full to partial sun, wet to moist conditions, and soil containing loam or silt that is relatively high in organic material. Common Sneezeweed can appear sloppy and unkempt, particularly if it is allowed to dry out. Habitats include moist black soil prairies, moist meadows in wooded areas, moist meadows along rivers, moist open woodlands, soggy thickets, fens, marshes, poorly drained pastures and abandoned fields, low areas along streams and ponds, and ditches. It is not uncommon to find this plant growing within a few feet of water in both disturbed areas and higher quality habitats. Recovery from fire is poor. Probably the most common visitors to the flowers are long-tongued bees, including honeybees, bumblebees, digger bees (*Melissodes spp.*), cuckoo bees (*Coelioxys spp.*, *Triepeolus spp.*), and leaf-cutting bees (*Megachile spp.*).

**Plant Structure:** This perennial plant is 3-5' tall, branching sparingly to occasionally. Each flowerhead has a slightly flattened to globoid head of yellow disk florets that is surrounded by yellow ray florets. The blooming period occurs during the autumn for 1-2 months. Afterwards, the florets are replaced by achenes that lack tufts of hair; they are distributed in part by water. The root system is shallow and fibrous. There have been reports of severe poisoning for livestock that have consumed this plant, producing such symptoms as congestion of the kidneys and liver, formation of necrotic areas in the lungs, and irritation of the digestive tract. Not surprisingly, Common Sneezeweed is considered an 'increaser' in gr grazed meadows.