

Bird Friendly Native Plant of the Month

AUGUST 2015

NC NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

REEDY CREEK NATURE PRESERVE



Female Tiger Swallowtail



Goldfinch

**Bird
Friendly**
NATIVE PLANTS

Photos by Will Stuart

Echinacea purpurea Purple Coneflower

Summer Flower Power

Every bird friendly sunny border should have a grouping of *Echinacea purpurea*. Purple Coneflower attracts goldfinches to its seed heads and butterflies and bees to flowers in search of nectar. As a powerhouse bloomer the lovely purple ray petals are a standout in the garden.

Food for birds and bees and butterflies too!

Purple coneflower is an excellent source of midsummer pollen and nectar and attracts:

- Eastern tiger swallowtail
- Monarch butterfly
- Red admiral butterfly
- Sulphur butterfly
- Fritillary butterfly
- Bumble bee
- Banded long-horn beetle

Vivid yellow goldfinch can be found feasting on the dried seed heads throughout the summer if you refrain from keeping too tidy a garden and leave the seed heads after the petals have dropped.

The rhizomes of purple coneflower have a history of being used by Native Americans medicinally, and by the herbal supplement industry in the US and Europe.

Landscape Uses

Ranging from 26-40" tall, Coneflowers prefer well-drained soil, to prevent the roots from being

too moist. These perennial plants are short lived, but will reseed if you leave the seed heads, (enough for both the goldfinches and for seedlings!) Coneflowers are tolerant of poor soils and drier conditions once established. The more eastern cousin, *Echinacea laevigata*, Smooth Purple Coneflower is also a good choice and may be longer lived.

Plant Purple Coneflower in a sunny border with Beebalm, Penstemon, Blackeyed Susan, Butterflyweed, Phlox, Indiangrass and Switchgrass for a long lasting show that will attract a variety of birds and butterflies.

Bird Friendly Native Plant of the Month is a joint effort of the NC Native Plant Society and Audubon North Carolina

Find out More!

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ncwildflower.org
ncaudubonblog.org/tag/native-plant-profile
wildflower.org/plants