

Eco-Friendly Native Plant of the Month

SEPTEMBER 2017

NC NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

REEDY CREEK NATURE PRESERVE



Photos by Will Stuart

Solidago odora Licorice Goldenrod

Riches in the ditches

Goldenrod is a welcome sign of fall with those sweeps of gold along the side of the road. If you think about it, roadsides must be the poorest growing conditions imaginable, and yet the Goldenrods bloom summer to fall in a sea of yellow.

One Goldenrod that is truly worthy of featuring in your home garden is *Solidago odora*, Sweet, Anise or Licorice Goldenrod. Crush a few leaves in your hand, inhale, and you'll know you have the right one. In fact a 'Liberty tea' was brewed from the leaves. It has been used historically for digestive and cough medicines and the essential oil in the leaves used to make astringents and washes.

Think Meadow

Licorice Goldenrod is perfectly sized at 2-3 feet tall, and adaptable to dry to moist soils. The bloom season of

July-September mixes well with late summer purple standouts such as fall Asters or New York Ironweed. Plant in full sun as part of a pollinator meadow or partial sun at the sunny edges of a woodland garden.

Goldenrods in general are not appreciated in America, but are

No, not hay fever!

Goldenrods are often confused with Ragweed, because they bloom at the same time. But remember, Goldenrods are insect pollinated, whereas Ragweed is wind pollinated. Those airborne pollen grains (along with fall grasses) are the source of your hay fever. So celebrate Goldenrod each fall!

much loved and cultivated throughout the world. This is the perfect plant to stabilize a home meadow (no matter how small)

because some have a basal rosette which act as a ground cover over the winter. Licorice Goldenrod is not a spreader and the erect green clumps can provide structure all summer, serving as a backdrop for summer's more showy flowers. And thankfully, once established, Licorice Goldenrod is fairly drought tolerant.

Additionally, it does not appear to be a deer favorite, another plus.

Be a friend to birds

Finches, wrens, warblers, chickadees and tufted titmice enjoy the small seeds in the fall. And if your garden or meadow is casual in style, try to leave the herbaceous vegetation standing as a home to insects that feed over wintering birds. Goldenrod attracts butterflies, bees, ladybugs, lacewings and other friendly insects.

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