Golden Alexanders may be uncommon to home gardeners, but are quickly becoming a plant you must have. They are quite easy to grow and have the benefit of having a basal clump of divided evergreen leaves during mild winters that are attractive all year round. This native plant appears to be one of the more deer resistant species for the Piedmont and is often one of the first wildflowers to bloom.

**Landscape Uses**
Because the yellow flowers are tiny, it is best to plant several *Zizia aurea* in a group or mass. Golden Alexanders are similar to their more commonly known European cousins used as herbs, namely dill and fennel. They are happy in full sun or part shade and tolerate drought once established. Typically 1-2 feet tall, Golden Alexanders mix well on the meadow’s edge with Robin’s-plantain (*Erigeron pulchellus*), Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), Downy Phlox (*Phlox pilosa*), Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) and Indian-pink (*Spigelia marilandica*).

**Eco-benefits**
Golden Alexanders are a larval host plant of Black Swallowtail butterflies. Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation notes that *Zizia aurea* has special value as a plant that attracts a large number of native bees, and hosts beneficial insects that prey upon pest insects. Because Golden Alexanders are in the carrot family (think dill, parsley, parsnips) they are nice to have in the garden when you see the swallowtail caterpillars devouring your herbs. Simply relocate the very hungry caterpillar to your *Zizia aurea* patch. To learn more about the life cycle of swallowtail butterflies visit xerces.org or Butterflies and Moths of North America (butterfliesandmoths.org).

**Native uses and history**
Traditionally both Native Americans and early colonists used Golden Alexanders for medicinal purposes including treating fever and healing wounds. However, like many members of this family, parts of the roots and leaves are toxic and should be treated with caution.

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