

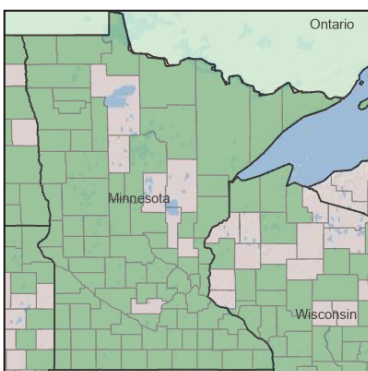
Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*)

Family: Carrot (*Apiaceae*)

DESCRIPTION: Widespread and long-blooming, golden Alexanders' ability to thrive in a range of moisture and light conditions makes it a popular seed-mix species. Blooming from May into June, it's an important nectar source for pollinators. *Zizia* was named for German botanist Johann Baptist Ziz; "*aurea*" is Latin for "golden."

USES: Short-tongued bees, bumblebees, wasps, butterflies and beetles are among the many pollinators that visit the plant early in the season when few other flowers bloom. The black swallowtail butterfly feeds on its leaves and flowers. Flowers provide early season color in partly shaded perennial gardens and rain gardens, and are used in flower arrangements. Historically, roots made a tea to treat fevers and headaches.

REFERENCES:
[Minnesota Wildflowers](#)
[USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)



Range Map Credit: NRCS Plants Database



BWSR Provided Photo

STATEWIDE WETLAND INDICATOR STATUS: FAC

ID: Flowers form a compound umbel atop a plant that grows 1 to 3 feet tall. Each single yellow flower is less than 3 millimeters wide with tiny petals. The dry fruit splits into two seeds. The stalked, alternate, compound leaves are divided into three parts, which are divided into three leaflets growing up to 3 inches long and 1 inch wide with evenly toothed edges. Leaves turn reddish in the fall. The main stem is smooth and ridged.

Planting Recommendations

Golden Alexanders prefers full to part-sun and moist, loamy soil, but can grow in light shade and rocky soils. It's common in mesic prairies, open woodlands, forest edges, bluff prairies, savannas, old fields and roadsides. Seeds can be collected when seedheads turn from green to reddish-brown. The capsules release dark brown seeds when crushed. Seeds will germinate after 90 days of cold, moist stratification.

Seeds are often grown in flats or containers. Planting from containers usually occurs in late May or June when plants are fully rooted. Newly planted seedlings require sufficient moisture throughout the growing season. Mulch will help plants establish and grow. In restorations, seeding is often conducted in late fall or mid to late spring; seeds are broadcast to avoid planting too deeply.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The flower heads look a bit like the invasive wild parsnip, but the leaves of wild parsnip are once-compound with eight to 15 leaflets, and lack the evenly toothed edges of golden Alexanders. The closely related heart-leaved golden Alexanders is widely distributed but not common across Minnesota and is most often found in higher quality dry prairies.