BWSR Featured Plant

Name: Prairie Coreopsis (Coreopsis palmata)
Also called: Stiff Tickseed, Finger Coreopsis

Identification

Prairie Coreopsis grows up to two and a half feet tall and has green stems that are smooth except for tufts of hair at the leaf-nodes. Its opposite leaves lack teeth and are smooth, and are either lobed or unlobed in the uppermost part of the plant. Lobed leaves have light green veins that run centrally down each of the three lobes, diverging at approximately 60 degree angles. Like other species in the Aster Family the flowers are made up of ray and disk flowers. Eight to twelve yellow, petal-like ray flowers surround a yellow center of disc florets that turn brownish-yellow as the flower ages. Overall, flower heads are typically between 1 ½ to two inches across.

Range

Prairie Coreopsis is native to the central United States and is found in most counties of Minnesota in the lower half of the state. It is found in well drained prairies, woodland savannas, and open fields.
Uses
Due to their upright stems and multiple showy blooms, Prairie Coreopsis flowers are popular as a cut stem for floral arrangements and it is commonly planted in native gardens. Many insects are attracted to the abundant and accessible flowers including several types of bees (digger bees, cuckoo bees, leaf-cutting bees, Halictid bees, and dagger bees), butterflies, skippers, moths, and beetles. *Melissodes coreopsis* is a digger bee that exclusively collects nectar and pollen from *Coreopsis* spp..

Planting Recommendations
Seeds are best planted in fall or early winter where cycles of freezing and thawing will help break their seed coat and lead to germination in the spring. Established plants will self-propagate by rhizomes and self-seeding. The species can also be propagated in the spring by separating and transplanting clumps.

Similar Species
Smooth Oxeye (*Heliopsis helianthoides*) flowers have 10 to 18 yellow ray flowers surrounding a yellow to brownish disc floret that is often cone-shaped. The leaves are not lobed, and are often triangular in shape and serrated along the edges. The species grows relatively tall, up to five feet. It is found throughout Minnesota in upland areas.

Lance-leaf Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), also called Sand Coreopsis, is found throughout Minnesota, but is not native to the state. The flowers are two to three inches across with about eight ray florets surrounding a dense head of yellow disc florets. The ray florets have four lobes, creating a jagged appearance to the edge of the flower head. The leaves may be lobed or un-lobed and are typically lance shaped and hairy.

References

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