Introduction

Formerly known as *Rudbeckia purpurea* Purple Coneflower displays wonderful daisy-like, pink flowers on top of strong, hairy stems that stand against the wind and rain (Fig. 1). Flowers stand 2- to 4-feet-tall, well above the medium-green foliage. The large flowers have a dark purple center with a variety of outer-flower colors from pink, lavender to purple. Flowers appear in spring and summer in central Florida and in the summer elsewhere in the eastern U.S. There is nothing quite like a Purple Coneflower in bloom.

General Information

**Scientific name:** *Echinacea purpurea*  
**Pronunciation:** eck-kin-NAY-see-uh pur-PURE-ee-uh  
**Common name(s):** Purple Coneflower  
**Family:** Compositae  
**Plant type:** herbaceous  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 4 through 10 (Fig. 2)  
**Planting month for zone 7:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 8:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 9:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round  
**Origin:** native to Florida  
**Uses:** naturalizing; cut flowers; edging; attracts butterflies; mass planting  
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

**Height:** 1 to 3 feet  
**Spread:** 2 to 3 feet  
**Plant habit:** oval; upright  
**Plant density:** moderate  
**Growth rate:** moderate  
**Texture:** coarse
Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: serrate  
Leaf shape: lanceolate  
Leaf venation: pinnate  
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous  
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: no fall color change  
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink; lavender; purple  
Flower characteristic: summer flowering; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown  
Fruit length: unknown  
Fruit cover: unknown  
Fruit color: unknown  
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems  
Current year stem/twig color: green  
Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade  
Soil tolerances: well-drained; occasionally wet; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam; clay  
Drought tolerance: high  
Soil salt tolerances: poor  
Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches
Other

**Roots:** not applicable  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

**Use and Management**

The stiff appearance of Purple Coneflower contrasts well with the softness of other perennials and other fine-textured plants. The plant attracts much attention due to the wonderful flower and makes a nice component in a mixed perennial border. It is especially useful in light shade in summer, where protection from afternoon sun enhances flower and foliage color. It is fairly tolerant of drought in the partial shade, less so in full sun.

Clumps of Purple Coneflower should be divided every few years to help keep plants blooming. Growers also propagate by root cuttings. Coneflowers with white flowers also exist.

Roots have been used to treat rabbies, snakebites, skin diseases and other ailments.

**Pests and Diseases**

Purple Coneflower can be moderately to severely infested with Sweetpotato whitefly.

Japanese beetle in northern gardens eat foliage and disfigure plants. Leaf spots can be a problem any place the plant is grown.