

Helianthus divaricatus

Woodland Sunflower

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

This native* of open woodlands, clearings and outcrops is a truly high-value wildlife plant. Its showy fall flowers draw a variety of pollinators for nectar and seven species of specialized bees for pollen, and its seeds are favored by songbirds, doves, and small mammals. As a larval host, it supports more than 70 species of butterflies and moths, while mature colonies provide cover for many animals.



Perennial	Colony, Flowers with Pollinator,** Fruit	
Height: 2–6 feet		
Spread: 1–3 feet		
Bloom Color: Yellow		
Characteristics	 	
Upright herbaceous perennial with rigid stems		
Opposite (offset 90° from pair above/below), sharply-pointed, sessile or short- petiolate , pubescent leaves (≤6”) with smooth to slightly-toothed, ciliate margins on glabrous , sometimes rough, often glaucous , stems		
Terminal 2- to 3-inch-wide composite flowers with yellow rays & disk florets in cymose arrangement July-Sept. followed by cypselsae with awned pappi		
Spreads vigorously by rhizomes to form colonies		
Attributes		
Tolerates wide range of soil conditions, drought, Black Walnut; no serious pests or diseases; deer occasionally severely damage		
Good cut flower		
Attracts butterflies to nectar, specialized bees to pollen, birds to seed; larval host to ~70 lepidopterans incl. Silvery Checkerspot, Painted Lady, Rustic Sphinx		
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for	
Soil Requirements : Average, well-drained	<i>Achillea filipendulina</i> - Fernleaf Yarrow	
Light Requirements : Partial Shade	<i>Helianthus annuus</i> - Common Sunflower	
Water Requirements : Dry, Moist	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i> - Common Tansy	
Divide every 3–4 years to control spread and maintain vigor; may need staking		
Retain seed heads for birds	<p>*It is native to DC, rare in DE, scattered in MD (though concentrated in Montgomery County), and present throughout PA. In VA, it is common in the mountains, frequent in the Piedmont, and infrequent in the Coastal Plain.</p> <p>**Pollinator is <i>Bombus impatiens</i> (common eastern bumble bee).</p>	
Use in partially shaded border, pollinator garden, or naturalized planting		
Hardiness : USDA Zones 3a–9b		
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria		

Images by Elaine Mills and Mary Free (fruit), Glencarlyn Library Community Garden