

Seaside goldenrod

(*Solidago sempervirens*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

Seaside goldenrod is generally the most available of the four native goldenrods grown commercially. It blooms in very showy masses on dunes, in swales and brackish marshes, on sandy soils in coastal areas, and occasionally inland throughout the state. Its nectar attracts a variety of butterflies, bees and other pollinators. The plant also attracts birds searching for insects.

Seaside goldenrod's bright yellow flowers are born in clusters on terminal spikelike racemes. Individual flowers are composed of many tubular disk florets; ray florets are absent. Basal leaves are glabrous, strap-like and alternately arranged. Stem leaves are sessile and reduced. The fruit is a pubescent achene.

Goldenrods in general get a bad rap as allergy instigators, but this is merely a misconception. The real culprit tends to be ragweed, which blooms at the same time of year but is far less noticeable in the landscape. Ragweed pollen is lightweight and buoyant, making it easily airborne — and easier for us to inhale. Goldenrod has heavier pollen; it is less likely to catch the wind or find its way to our noses.

Goldenrods have been used medicinally since Roman times or earlier. Seaside goldenrod was used by Seminoles to treat wounds.

Family: Asteraceae (Aster, daisy or composite family)

Native range: Most coastal Panhandle counties, much of peninsular Florida

To see where natural populations of Seaside goldenrod have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Hardiness: Zones 7–10

Soil: Well-drained, sandy soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 3–5' tall in bloom

Propagation: Seed, division, cuttings

Garden tips: Seaside goldenrod does best in dry, sunny conditions. This will keep its height in check and allow it to produce more blooms. It has a tendency to spread, and thus is better suited to mass plantings rather than small areas. It is also salt-tolerant.

Seaside goldenrod seeds are often available from the Florida Wildflowers Growers Cooperative at www.FloridaWildflowers.com. Plants are occasionally available at nurseries that specialize in native plants. Visit PlantRealFlorida.org to find a native nursery on your area.



Photo by Mary Keim



Photo by Walter Taylor