

## EASTERN PURPLE CONEFLOWER

*Echinacea purpurea* (L.) Moench

**Synonyms:** *Rudbeckia purpurea* L.

**Family:** Asteraceae (composite)

**FNAI Ranks:** G4/S1

**Legal Status:** US-none FL-Endangered

**Wetland Status:** US-none+ FL-UPL



Gary Knight

**Field Description:** Perennial **herb** with 1 - 3 erect, hairy **stems**, 1 - 3 feet tall. **Leaves** 2.5 - 6 inches long, decreasing in size up the stem, alternate, simple, oval to lance-shaped, usually toothed, hairy on both surfaces, rough-hairy on upper surface, with long **leaf stalks**. **Flower heads** usually solitary at the top of long, leafless stalks. **Ray flowers** to 3 inches long, pink to purple, drooping, with 2 - 3 teeth at the tips; **disk flowers** in a rounded "cone," dark purple; each disk flower with a long, stiff, spiny-tipped, bright orange bract.

**Similar Species:** Purple coneflower is the only member of this genus in Florida, and the only member of the composite family in Florida with long, purple, drooping rays. Swamp tickseed (*Coreopsis nudata*) has pink-purple rays, but is a slender, leafless wetland species.

**Related Rare Species:** Many members of the composite family are rare in the FL

## eastern purple coneflower

*Echinacea purpurea*

Panhandle. In this guide, see Flyr's brickell-bush (*Brickellia cordifolia*), Godfrey's blazing-star (*Liatris provincialis*), Nuttall's rayless goldenrod (*Bigelowia nuttallii*), pine-woods aster (*Aster spinulosus*), and ciliate-leaf tickseed (*Coreopsis integrifolia*), among others.

**Habitat:** Upland glades; openings in calcareous hammocks.

**Best Survey Season:** Spring-fall; May - October.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Southeastern US, from the Ozarks to VA and south; FL populations are the southernmost occurrences of this species.

**Conservation Status:** There are 3 occurrences in Florida; 1 in a state recreation area, 2 on private timber lands.

**Protection and Management:** Avoid logging and clearcutting in hardwood forests. Occasional woods fires that create canopy gaps are beneficial.

**References:** Coile 2000, Cronquist 1980, Wunderlin 1998, Wunderlin and Hansen 2000a.