

Goldenrod: The Harbinger of Fall



For the past several years, American gardeners have been drawn to the bright yellow plumes of the *Solidago* species. This time of year, goldenrod blooms wave gracefully on roadsides and waste areas. Due to its ability to survive extreme roadside conditions, it is an ideal candidate for low-water use areas in the home landscape. The flower heads also make long-lasting cut flowers and are particularly useful in herbal wreaths and fall wall ornaments.

While this showy plant should be a prime candidate for late-season color in perennial plantings, goldenrod has been shunned by many gardeners in the past. Because it is so conspicuous in the landscape, it is often blamed for fall hay fever. In reality, ragweed (*Ambrosia spp.*) is the major culprit of nasal distress in fall. Ragweed

blooms when goldenrod blooms, but its small, yellow-

green flowers are not eye-catching. For fertilization, the ragweed plant produces large quantities of light pollen that are carried by the wind to other plants. In comparison, goldenrod pollen is too heavy to be airborne long. Bees are its principal pollinators.

If you're interested in growing this vibrant plant, you can find several varieties for sale in most garden catalogs. Local nurseries also usually carry a selection of goldenrod. Read more about the many species of goldenrod you can add to your garden at the [NC Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox](#).

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