



WILDFLOWER

A non-profit organization dedicated to researching and promoting wildflowers to further their economic, environmental and aesthetic use.

Newsletter of the National Wildflower Research Center

Vol. 2, No. 2 Summer 1985

Guide to Black-Eyed Susan

by David Northington

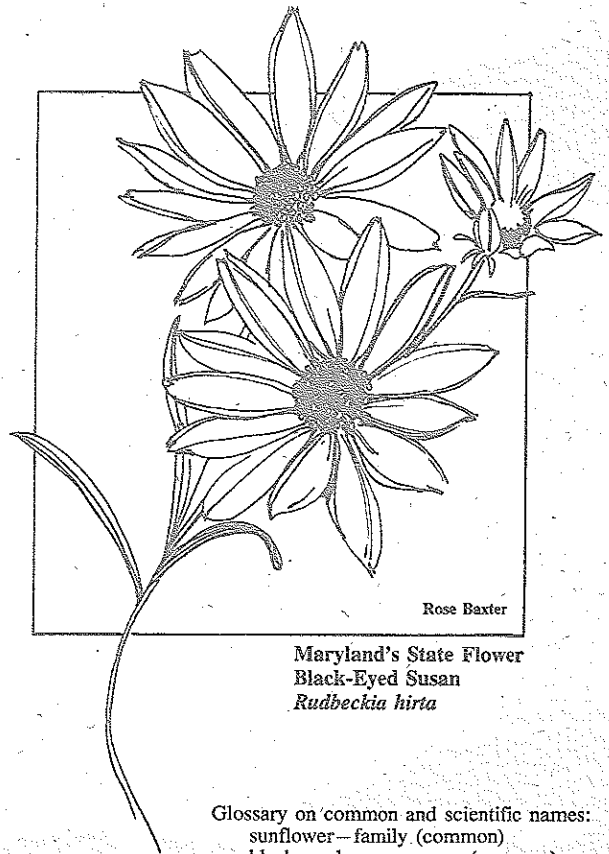
No other group of plants includes more wildflower species than the compositae or sunflower family. Members of this family are characterized by many small flowers grouped together into a single composite head; black-eyed susans are a fine example of a head of hundreds of small flowers having the appearance of a single large flower. The small tubular "disk" flowers in the center are actually dark reddish-brown, not black, and the elongated outer "ray" flowers are bright yellow. The "ray" flowers are what appear to be the petals of the single large "flower" or head.

Even though black-eyed susans are really brown-eyed and no-one has yet determined who susan was, world-wide the plant is known as *Rudbeckia hirta*. The regional and inconsistent use of common names makes the use of scientific names necessary for scientists, growers, and other professional groups.

Rudbeckia is a true native of midwestern North America, growing from Canada to northern Mexico, and contains 30 species. *Rudbeckia hirta* thrives in a wide range of soils and climates but prefers full sun and open areas. It is shunned by most livestock and is often found in abundance in overgrazed pastures where it grows up to three feet tall.

Black-eyed susans are annuals and can be successfully seeded in the spring, although fall seeding is advised. The recommended seeding rate varies from two to four pounds per acre depending on the commercial source. With more than one million seeds per pound, the lighter seeding rate will probably produce a dense stand of flowers if late spring and early summer rains are adequate, but supplemental watering will improve density in a dry year and prolong the flowering season, which lasts from June to October. The large yellow colored heads make ideal cut flowers, as they last well in vases of fresh warm water.

Prior to their ornamental value, black-eyed susans were valued by Native Americans and settlers in daily life. The Cherokees extracted juices from the roots to treat earache, and the dried leaves and flowers were used to make a pleasant tasting tonic. The plant has also been used successfully to treat skin infections as it contains antibiotic properties. Black-eyed susans are one of the hardiest and most adaptable summer and fall wildflowers for that area of the United States lying east of the Rockies, and should be included in wildflower mixes for those regions with excellent results.



Maryland's State Flower
Black-Eyed Susan
Rudbeckia hirta

Glossary on common and scientific names:
sunflower—family (common)
black-eyed susan—name (common)
compositae—family (scientific)
Rudbeckia—genus (scientific)
hirta—species (scientific)

Parkways—Wildflowers for the East



Nash Castro
Executive Director,
Palisades Interstate
Park Commission

In 1984 Nash Castro, Executive Director of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission and President of the Board of Trustees of the National Wildflower Research Center, originated a three plot test site alongside the Palisades Parkway in New Jersey, to study the feasibility of sowing wildflower seeds along the roadway. The flamboyant stands of wildflowers that resulted were sufficiently promising for the program to merit expansion. With the generous help of the Lila Acheson Wallace Fund, (Mrs. Wallace co-founded Readers Digest) this year's wildflower project consisted of 11 acres propagated along a 12 mile stretch of the New Jersey section of the Palisades Parkway.

An array of favorite species were planted including sunny black-eyed susans, coneflowers, wall flowers, coreopsis, butterfly weed, yarrow and dainty queen anne's lace. Mr. Castro reports, "Fifty million people a year pass by the New Jersey section of the (Palisades) parkway." He estimates that 25 to 30 million people travel the parkway during the summer wildflower season. "Many people have commented on how attractive the parkway looked this year, and how they are looking forward to next year's blooming season," said Mr. Castro.

A pleasing result of this planting is that the New York State Department of Transportation was so inspired by the wildflower display that this fall they will plant a \$25,000 wildflower project along the New York section of the parkway. In 1986 the 35 million motorists who travel the parkway will be treated to roadsides and medians bursting with wildflower color, thanks to these pioneering individuals and their organizations.

National Wildflower Research Center Invites You to Become a Member

Your membership donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed under Federal and State laws. For information concerning the benefits of each level of membership, please contact the Center.

- \$15 Contributing Member
- \$100 Key Member
- \$1000 Benefactor

- \$25 Supporting Member
- \$250 Center Sponsor

- \$50 Sustaining Member
- \$500 Trust Member

Please make your check or money order payable to "NWRC."

From: *Title/Name*
Address

Bankcard Information

Please provide the following information if you wish to charge your membership donation.

- Visa
- MasterCard

Card Number	Expiration date
Name as it appears on the card (please print)	
Signature	2/2

The Arboretum to Open

The Trammell Crow Company, an international commercial developer noted for its environmental-awareness, is nearing completion on the Arboretum, a shopping center at Highway 183 and Loop 360 in northwest Austin, Texas. The center is built among native trees, grasses and shrubs on a 95 acre site, where views of the majestic Texas Hill Country will harmonize with elegant specialty stores.

At the Arboretum, over 50% of the existing native vegetation was saved during construction. In addition 30 acres of the 95 acre development has been set aside for hike and bike trails. This area of unique limestone bluffs, seeps, and native vegetation will be administered by a committee consisting of representatives from the Trammell Crow Company and local neighborhood associations.

The National Wildflower Research Center will be the beneficiary of a sparkling black-tie gala celebrating the grand opening of the Arboretum on Friday, October 25, 1985. The event, called a "Celebration of Color," will feature an Open House of more than 20 stores, musical groups, and brightly colored tents serving foods keyed to the seasonal wildflower theme. The highlight of the evening will be the dedication of a wildflower plot by Lady Bird Johnson, followed by a fireworks display.

If you are a member of the National Wildflower Research Center, or if you are on our mailing list and live in the Central Texas area, in late September you should receive an invitation to the Arboretum grand opening. To obtain additional information, you may call the Center at (512) 929-3600.

From the Mailbox

All Eyes on Wildflowers

A symposium, *All Eyes on Wildflowers*, will be held on September 28, 1985 at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington D.C. The symposium, which will focus on the cultivation and uses of wildflowers, is jointly sponsored by the National Wildflower Research Center, the American Association of Nurserymen, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the National Park Service—National Capital Region, the American Horticultural Society, the U.S. National Arboretum and Friends of the U.S. National Arboretum.

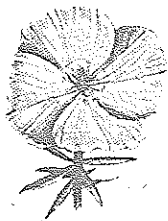
For further information, and a brochure on the symposium, contact the American Association of Nurserymen, 1250 I Street N.W., Suite 500, Washington D.C. 20005 (202) 789-2900.

Executive Director: Dr. David Northington
Associate Director: Carolyn Curtis
Editor: Mae Daniller

Wildflower is the newsletter of the National Wildflower Research Center. It is financed through contributions from friends. Material contained herein may be reprinted with the proper written acknowledgement of the editor. Address all correspondence to Wildflower, National Wildflower Research Center, 2600 FM 973 North, Austin, TX 78725.

National Wildflower Research Center

2600 FM 973 North
Austin, TX 78725



NATIONAL WILDFLOWER RESEARCH CENTER
4801 LaCrosse Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78739
(512) 929-4200

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 1005
AUSTIN, TEXAS