

BOOK NOTICE

SAM HOADLEY AND LAURA REILLY. 2025. **Solidago for the mid-Atlantic region.** (No ISBN or ISSN, softcover). Mt. Cuba Center, 3120 Barley Mill Road, Hockessin, DE 19707, U.S.A. (**Orders:** mtcubacenter.org). No price given, softcover; 24 pp, color photographs, tables, 8.5" × 11".

From the Publisher

Solidago, commonly known as goldenrod, is a genus that includes more than 100 species in the aster family that are primarily found in North America. This trial focused on highlighting and evaluating more than 50 *Solidago* species that are found in the eastern United States along with various cultivars, hybrids, and closely related plants including members of the genus *Euthamia*.

The goldenrods in eastern North America are herbaceous perennials that can be found in a wide range of habitats including woodlands, rocky cliffs, bogs, and coastal sand dunes. Thanks to this diversity in the wild, there are *Solidago* species well suited for just about every garden. Most goldenrods produce golden-yellow composite flowers complete with ray and disc florets (see page 3 of the report for more details) while a few species produce white inflorescences. Many *Solidago* species bloom in fall but a few bloom earlier, and at least one species of goldenrod was in flower from May through November in the Trial Garden.

The spectacular floral displays of goldenrods are widely recognized by gardeners and non-gardeners alike, although a perception exists that goldenrods are aggressive or weedy, and are therefore not good candidates for the average home landscape. This trial showed that only a handful of the evaluated *Solidago* could be categorized as aggressive, and even these plants can be used to great effect in naturalistic gardens.

Solidago are not only beautiful, but also provide valuable resources for wildlife. Goldenrods are keystone plants, which means that they have an exceptionally high capacity to support biodiversity. Species that rely on goldenrods include generalist and specialist pollinators, caterpillars and other insects that feed on the foliage, and larger organisms such as birds that feed on these insects as well as goldenrod seed.

This trial evaluated 70 different goldenrods over a three-year period from 2021–2023 and focused on their ornamental and ecological value. The *Solidago* trial was grown in full sun in “average” garden soil best described as clay-loam with a pH near 6.5. Throughout the trial, plants were provided with minimal care. The trial was watered only in 2020, the year it was planted, to encourage establishment. Mt. Cuba Center is located near Wilmington, Delaware and is within USDA hardiness zone 7a.

Trial Garden Research at Mt. Cuba

Mt. Cuba Center’s Trail Garden, managed by Sam Hoadley and Laura Reilly, evaluates native plants and their related cultivars for their horticultural and ecological value. This research aims to provide gardeners and the horticulture industry with information about superior plants for the mid-Atlantic region as well as highlight the important ecosystem services native plants provide. Mt. Cuba Center has conducted Trial Garden research since 2002, including previously completed evaluations of *Vernonia*, *Amsonia*, *Carex*, wild hydrangea, *Echinacea*, *Helenium*, *Phlox*, *Monarda*, *Baptisia*, *Coreopsis*, *Heuchera*, and asters.

—Barney Lipscomb,

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