

NATIVE PERENNIALS

Sunflower, Stiff

Helianthus pauciflorus

Native. Yellow flowers in late summer. Rhizomatous roots often form colony. Stems are rough and often tinted red. Tolerates wet to dry soil. Deer browse the flowerheads. Grows 1-4 feet tall.



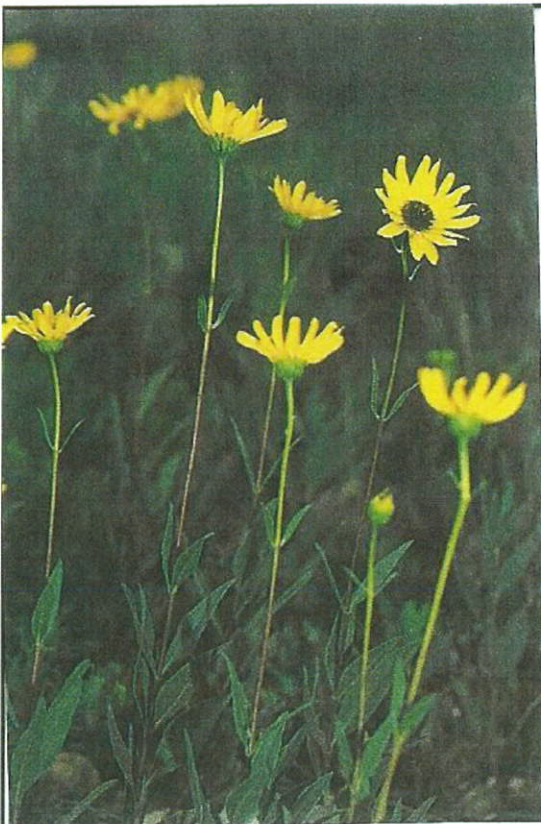
Description: Stiff sunflower is a perennial forb, often growing in open colonies formed by spreading rhizomes. Stems are stiff, rough, and commonly tinged with purple. It is the smallest perennial sunflower, only 1 to 3 feet tall, typically with a single flower head atop each stem. Flower heads, which appear in July and August, have yellow rays and brown to purplish disk flowers. Leaves are mostly paired and basal, somewhat gray-green, rough, stiff, leathery, lanceolate to ovate, with 3 prominent ribs, and tapering to a very short stalk.

Distribution/Habitat: Stiff sunflower is found naturally in the area bounded by Alberta, New Brunswick, Arkansas, Texas and New Mexico. Stiff sunflower grows throughout the Great Plains. At one time it was found extensively on the uplands and frequently on the lowlands. As a native upland forb, it ranked with leadplant in abundance, occupying the same sites with little bluestem, even on poor, dry soil. Livestock grazing has reduced its abundance. In South Dakota, its abundance is greatest in the eastern part of the state and prairie areas of the Black Hills.

Comments: Stiff sunflower is so readily eaten by livestock that it is rarely found on lands that have been long overgrazed. Deer and pronghorn eat the flower heads.

Credit: James E. Johnson & Gary E. Larson, Grassland Plants of South Dakota and the Northern Great Plains. SDSU, Brookings, SD. B-566 (rev.) August 1999. Page 124.

Photo Credit: USDA-NRCS Plant Database and SDSU Ag Experiment Station



USDA-NRCS Plant Database