

CARING AND SHARING - GARDEN BENEFITS AND CARE

Like many North American genera, *Solidago* has long been more popular in Europe than in its native land. But here, too, gardeners are learning to appreciate its many virtues: Self-sufficient, carefree garden performance, multiple sizes and forms and, best of all, long-season display of dazzling golden flowers.

'Goldrush' heralds the coming of fall with masses of yellow flower clusters, all but concealing its rich green foliage for about a month. It is as though King Midas had strolled by and brushed against the plant.

Bloom Season & Habit. Forms very attractive, uniform and compact mounds. Densely packed, four-inch-long "rods" of tiny individual yellow gold florets appear in profusion for about four weeks in August and September.

Location. Plant in full sun at the front of beds and borders or in containers. USDA Hardiness Zones 4 to 9. AHS Heat Zones 9 to 5.

Size. 12 inches tall by 30 inches wide when mature. Plant up to two plants per square yard, or alone as specimens at the front of borders.

Culture. Like all *Solidago*, 'Goldrush' prefers well-drained soils and is happiest in full sun. Good air movement helps prevent rust and other fungal diseases, which can be a problem in very wet summers. Fertilize with a light hand, as overfeeding will produce lush foliage at the expense of flowering performance.

KNOWING AND GROWING - TIPS FOR PRODUCERS

Solidago is a useful season extender for potted perennial sales. Many varieties are prized as cut flowers, but at just 12 inches, 'Goldrush' lacks the necessary stem length. Plants are completely winter hardy and quite drought tolerant once established.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS - HISTORY AND COMPANION PLANTS

An old canard holds goldenrod responsible for hay fever, but the real culprit is ragweed (*Ambrosia spp.*). In folklore, *Solidago* is known for its healing powers. From Chippewa medicine men to latter-day homeopaths, various preparations have been used as diuretics and astringents for cramps, infection, inflammation, respiratory ailments, even kidney stones.

For modern homeowners, 'Goldrush' is the cure for the common garden, bringing a welcome blaze of late-summer glory to the front of the border. Good companions include *Aster* 'Flora's Delight', Garden Mums, *Gaura* 'Pink Fountain' and other late- or long-blooming perennials.

From Blooms of Bressingham, England.

