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GARDENING

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On the Cover

Garden gates are aesthetically pleasing, but also serve many purposes. This month we look at ways to personalize your landscape with an inviting gate that suits your style. Featured on page 28. Photo courtesy of Helen Yoest.



By Andy Cabe

'Henry Eilers' Sweet Coneflower

I've always been a fan of the genus *Rudbeckia* (the one of the black-eyed Susan and coneflower). In fact, I don't think I've ever met one I didn't like. Lately though, I've been in love with a new variety called *Rudbeckia subtomentosa* 'Henry Eilers', commonly known as sweet coneflower.

The thing that sets 'Henry Eilers' apart from other *Rudbeckia* are its yellow, quill-like, ray flowers. These quills add a new dimension to the typical daisy flower often associated with *Rudbeckia*. By the end of the season, the plant can reach upwards of 5 feet tall and is absolutely covered with dozens, if not hundreds, of flowers at a time. These long-lasting blooms look great in the garden as well as in vases as a cut flower.

I love it when you can get a plant with such exquisite beauty as *Rudbeckia* 'Henry Eilers' without having to expend much effort, and effort-less it is. Place it in a full sun to part shade location and make sure it is watered regularly throughout the hottest parts of the summer, and it will reward you with endless blooms. Depending on the growing conditions, staking may be required. However, it can look nice cascading (which is just a fancy term for flopping) in the right location.

Try 'Henry Eilers' in your garden. This new variety will change the way you think of coneflowers and black-eyed Susans forever.

Quick Facts and Keys to Success

Common Name: Sweet coneflower

Botanical Name: *Rudbeckia subtomentosa* 'Henry Eilers'

Color: Yellow with a brown center

Blooming Period: Summer to fall

Zones: 4 – 8

Type: Perennial

Size: 4 to 5 feet tall

Exposure: Full sun to part shade

When to Plant: Spring to fall

Soil: Average

Watering: Performs best in moist soil. Avoid drought.

When to Prune: Cut back in late fall to early winter to remove dead stems and foliage.

Andy Cabe is the botanical garden director at Riverbanks Zoo and Botanical Garden in Columbia, SC.

