

VERBESINA OCCIDENTALIS (L.) Walt.
Yellow Crownbeard

FAMILY: Asteraceae (Compositae)

HABIT: Perennial herb to 2 m.; flowering August-October; fruiting September, October.

SIMILAR SPECIES: *Verbesina occidentalis* is frequently confused with the more common *V. alternifolia*, which occurs in similar habitats and blooms at the same period, or slightly earlier, as the rarer species. Most keys separating these species emphasize that *V. alternifolia* has alternative leaves, while *V. occidentalis* has opposite leaves. However, this leaf character is not reliable, particularly in the autumn when *V. alternifolia* produces atypical shoots with opposite to subopposite leaves. The best characters separating these 2 species are the achenes and the involucre bracts. These require careful examination. *V. occidentalis* also may superficially resemble other yellow-flowered composites, such as ox-eye (*Heliopsis helianthoides*) or sunflowers (*Helianthus spp.*). However, these can be easily distinguished from each other by close examination of flower characters.

TOTAL RANGE: FL to MS, n. to PA, WV. s. OH, and IL.

STATE RANGE: There are post-1980 records from Gallia and Lawrence counties. There are pre-1980 records from Meigs and Pike counties.

HABITAT: A variety of open to semi-open situations, often in disturbed areas: open woods, woods borders, thickets, clearings, pastures, fields, roadsides, and waste ground.

HAZARDS: Overshading by woody species as a result of succession.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Presumed good due to its tolerance of disturbance.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Mature flowering or fruiting material is needed for positive identification.

COMMENTS: This species may prove to be more frequent than the records indicate, though it probably is restricted to the southeastern Ohio counties. It is easily mistaken for the common *Verbesina alternifolia*, which occurs throughout Ohio (see Similar Species). Also, *V. occidentalis* seems most frequent in disturbed habitats that are of common occurrence. More fieldwork is required to ascertain the true status of this species in Ohio.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Cronquist, A. 1980. Vascular flora of the southeastern United States. Vol. I. Asteraceae. Univ. of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC. xv + 261 p.

Fisher, T.R. 1988. The Dicotyledoneae of Ohio. Part 3. Asteraceae. Ohio State Univ. Press, Columbus. 280 pp.



Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Natural Areas and Preserves