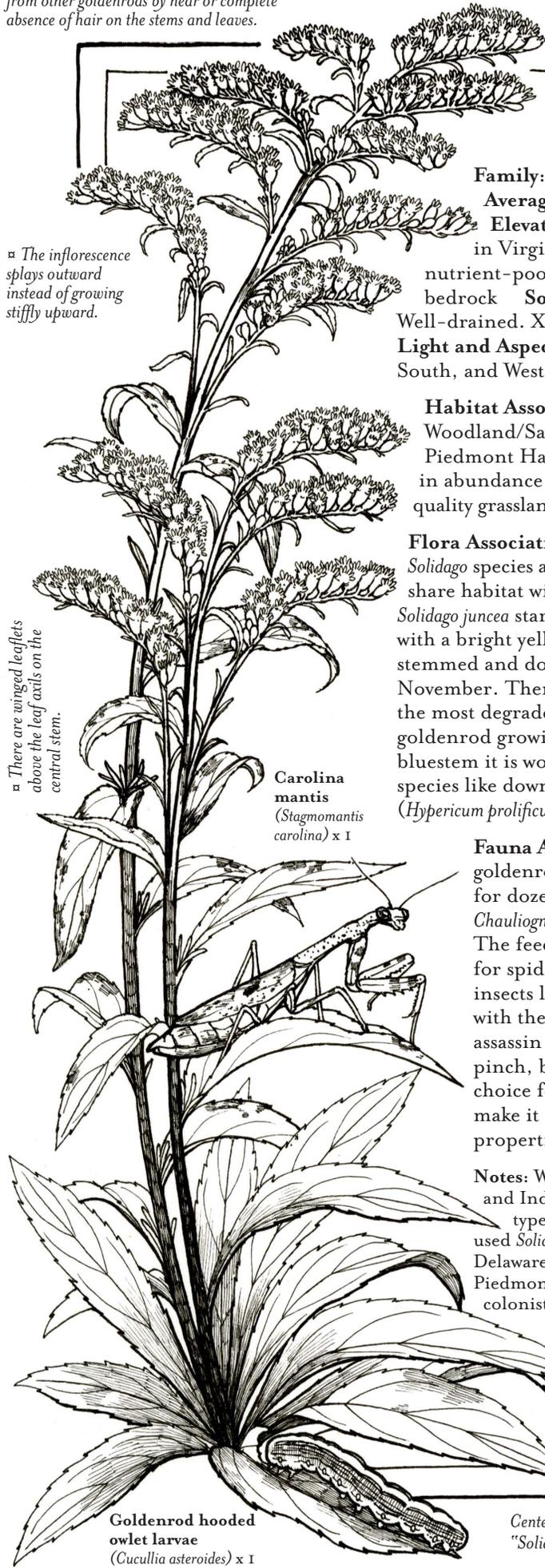


Early Goldenrod can be distinguished from other goldenrods by near or complete absence of hair on the stems and leaves.

The inflorescence splay outward instead of growing stiffly upward.

There are winged leaflets above the leaf axils on the central stem.



Carolina mantis (*Stagmomantis carolina*) x 1

Goldenrod hooded owlet larvae (*Cucullia asteroides*) x 1

Early Goldenrod

Solidago juncea

Family: Asteraceae Genus: *Solidago* Species: *juncea*

Average Height: 36" Bloom Time: June–August

Elevation Range: Widespread, occurring at all elevations in Virginia

Geologic/Soil Associations: Acidic nutrient-poor soils to basic soils over mafic or calcareous bedrock

Soil Drainage Class and Moisture Regime:

Well-drained. Xeric (extremely dry) to Mesic (somewhat moist).

Light and Aspect: Full sun. Flat terrain, and slopes facing East, South, and West.

Habitat Associations: Piedmont Prairies and Oak-Hickory Woodland/Savannas. Occasionally found in Southern Piedmont Hardpan Forests or Mafic Barrens. When found in abundance *Solidago juncea* is a reliable indicator of a high quality grasslands.

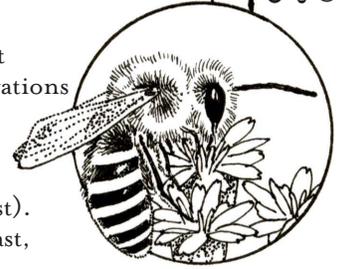
Flora Associations: The Flora of Virginia lists 38 *Solidago* species and even more varieties, many of which share habitat with *Solidago juncea*. As the first to flower, *Solidago juncea* starts the goldenrod bloom season off with a bright yellow bang in late June, while rough-stemmed and downy goldenrod bloom well into November. There are goldenrods that will grow in the most degraded of places, but if you see early goldenrod growing with grass species like Elliot's bluestem it is worth looking for less common grassland species like downy lobelia (*Lobelia puberula*), showy St. John's-wort (*Hypericum prolificum*), or grass-leaved blazing star (*Liatris pilosa*).

Fauna Associations: Ubiquitous and reliable, goldenrods are a staple late season food source for dozens of bees, moths, and beetles including *Chauliognathus pensylvanicus* (the goldenrod soldier beetle). The feeding insects themselves present a generous buffet for spiders and birds, as well as for native predatory insects like the Carolina mantid (not to be confused with the highly invasive Chinese mantid) and Wheel assassin bug. Mammals will eat goldenrod foliage in a pinch, but its highly aromatic foliage is not the first choice for most. The same aromatic compounds that make it generally unpalatable to deer have medicinal properties that have a long history of use by *Homo sapiens*.

Notes: When found with little bluestem, narrow-leaf mountain-mint, and Indian grass, the group is a strong indication that the ecosystem type is Piedmont Prairie. Many Indigenous tribes have used *Solidago juncea* to treat various health issues, including the Delaware (Lenni Lenape) who were forced off their northern Piedmont lands in the late 1700's by European colonists. The Chippewa, in the northern reaches of where early goldenrod grows, call *Solidago* "gi'ziso'muki'ki" meaning "sun medicine."

Carolina mantis egg case (*Stagmomantis carolina*) x 1

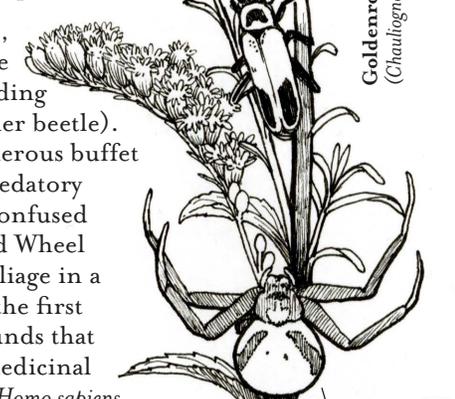
Goldenrod celophane bee (*Colletes solidaginis*) x 4



Little glasswing (*Pompeius verna*) x 1



Goldenrod soldier beetle (*Chauliognathus pensylvanicus*) x 2



Goldenrod crab spider (*Misumena vatia*) x 2

