

Scientific Name: *Corydalis aurea* Willd.

Family: *Fumariaceae*

Common Names: golden corydalis, golden smoke, scrambled eggs



***Corydalis aurea* blooms and green capsules on same plant.**

Plant Description

Winter annual or biennial herb with slender taproot; stems are mostly 10 to 30 cm tall, decumbent or ascending, glabrous and more or less glaucous, diffusely branched and leafy at base; leaves alternate, bipinnate, leaflets pinnatifid; flowers golden yellow racemes, corolla 1.2 to 1.5 cm long, the spur 0.5 cm long; capsules loosely spreading or pendent, more or less constricted and cylindric (Moss 1983).

Fruit: Capsules.

Seed: Shining, black, 0.2 cm diameter (Moss 1983).

Habitat and Distribution

Open woods, clearings and shores (Moss 1983).

Often found on disturbed sites (Matthews 1993).

Seral Stage: Early obligate (Matthews 1993).

Soil: Moist to dry, well-drained rocky or sandy soil (Matthews 1993).

Distribution: Throughout Alberta. Alaska, Yukon to southwestern District of Mackenzie to northern Manitoba, northern Ontario, Quebec south to California, Texas, Missouri, Louisiana, Ohio, Vermont (Moss 1983).

Phenology

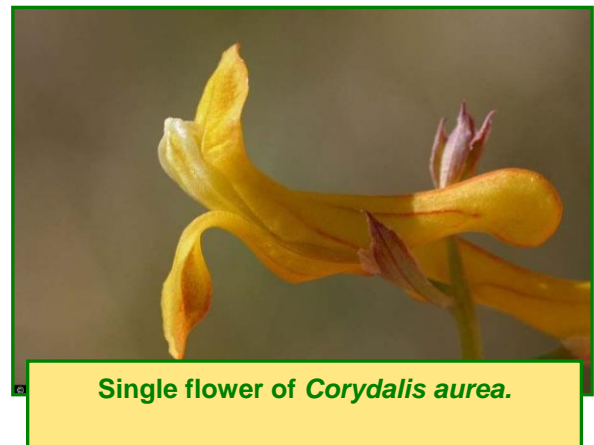
Indeterminate – flowers May through September (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center 2011).

Pollination

Insect pollinated (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center 2011).

Seed Dispersal

Ants and wind (Hanzawa 1985, Hanzawa et al. 1988, Matthews 1993).



Single flower of *Corydalis aurea*.

Genetics

$2n=16$ (Moss 1983).

Symbiosis

None known.

Seed Processing

Collection: Stems can be snipped and stored in breathable bags prior to hanging or drying.

Seed Weight: 1.09 g/1,000 seeds (Royal Botanic Gardens Kew 2008).

Harvest Dates: Late July or August (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center 2011).

Cleaning: Air-dry seeds in paper or Tyvek bags at 15 to 25°C. Crush material or remove large chaff and crush remaining material. Sieve to remove seeds from chaff using appropriate size screens (Matthews 1993).

Storage Behaviour: Likely orthodox.

Storage: Store cool and dry (Matthews 1993).

Longevity: May be long lived up to 160 years (Matthews 1993). Seeds in soil seed banks may live for decades or centuries until disturbance (Mackinnon et al. 2009).

Propagation

Natural Regeneration: Naturally regenerates from seeds (Matthews 1993).

Direct Seeding: Surface sow in the spring (Plants for a Future 2011).

Micro-propagation: Tissue culture has been successful in some species of *Corydalis*.

Aboriginal/Food Uses

Medicinal: Tea used for painful menstruation, backache, diarrhoea, bronchitis, heart diseases, sore throat and stomach aches. Smoke from burning roots could be inhaled for headaches (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center 2011).

Used medicinally for a variety of ailments, including rheumatism, diarrhoea, sores on the hands, stomach aches, menstrual problems, and sore throats, and as a general disinfectant (eFloras.org, n.d.).

However, may be toxic (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center 2011, Plants for a Future n.d.).

Wildlife/Forage Usage

Unpalatable, with poor value of content and produces poisonous alkaloids (Matthews 1993). Some poisoning of cattle and sheep has been reported (Mackinnon et al. 2009).

Reclamation Potential

An early seral species, *Corydalis aurea* would likely be easy to establish on freshly disturbed sites and would die off once the plant community stabilizes (Mackinnon et al. 2009, Matthews 1993).

Notes

Synonym *Capnoides aureum* (Willd.) Kuntze (ITIS n.d., Matthews 1993).

Photo Credits

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