Canadian Goldenrod

Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Solidago canadensis*

**AKA:** *Solidago altissima*, Eurwialen Canada (Welsh)

**Native to:** North America

**Habitat:** Common on waste land, road and rail verges and river sides

Distinctive herb, can be confused with the native goldenrod (*Solidago virgaurea*). Relatively tall (up to 2 m) with numerous small yellow flowers forming pyramidal flower heads. Spreads by airborne seeds and rhizome. Clonal growth produces dense stands.

Cultivated as a garden plant since 1648, but did not become widespread until 1930s. Threat to natural habitats through displacement of native species. Dense stands along water-courses can impede flow under flood conditions. Considered a weed of river banks, forests, nurseries and gardens.

For details of legislation go to [www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation).

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Key ID Features

- **Flower heads** made of clustered flowers, approximately 5mm across
- **Strap shaped leaves**
- **Pyramid shaped flower head**
- **Downy stem**

60cm to 200cm tall
Identification throughout the year

Flowers present from August to October, after which the plant sets seed.

Seed heads in November

Individual seeds

Distribution

Widespread in England, less so in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Similar Species

There are a number of species of goldenrod in the UK, of which Canadian goldenrod and early goldenrod (Solidago giganteum) are non-native and Solidago virgaurea, commonly known just as goldenrod, is native. It can be difficult to distinguish Canadian and early goldenrod, however distinction is easier between this and the native species (shown below).

Goldenrod
Native
(Solidago virgaurea)

Canadian Goldenrod
Non-native
For comparison

Larger flowers heads
(6-10 mm across)

Much taller than goldenrod
(60-200 cm tall)

Shorter than Canadian goldenrod
(5–70 cm)

Small flower heads (less than 5 mm across)

References and further reading:

Photos from: Olaf Booy, Robert Svenson (mitsua.net), John Sykes