Common Name: CLIFFSIDE GOLDENROD

Scientific Name: *Solidago simulans* Fernald

Other Commonly Used Names: granite dome goldenrod

Previously Used Scientific Names: *Solidago uliginosa* Nuttall (in part), *Solidago gracillima* Torrey & A. Gray (in part)

Family: Asteraceae/Compositae (aster)

Rarity Ranks: G1/S1

State Legal Status: Endangered

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: none

Description: Perennial **herb** with a reddish **stem**, 1½ - 3 feet (40 - 100 cm) tall. **Basal leaves** 4 - 12 inches (10 - 30 cm) long and up to 3 inches (8 cm) wide, with pointed tips and tapering bases, **leaf stalks** clasping the stem; **upper leaves** smaller and lacking leaf stalks. **Flower cluster** cylindrical, composed of many small flower heads on short branches that arise in the angle between upper leaves and stem; heads sometimes found only on one side of the stem. **Flower heads** about ¼ inch (8 mm) high, with 2 - 7 small, yellow ray flowers, unevenly spaced around 6 - 16 tiny, yellow disk flowers; lower half of the head with several series of tiny, green bracts. **Fruit** about ⅛ inch (3 mm) long, seed-like, hairy.

Similar Species: Southern bog goldenrod (*Solidago gracillima*) is tall and lanky and has many more, and much narrower, stem leaves; it occurs in seepage areas in the Coastal Plain and on granite outcrops in the Piedmont.

Related Rare Species: Northern bog goldenrod (*Solidago uliginosa* var. *uliginosa*, Special Concern) closely resembles cliffside goldenrod; it occurs in mountain bogs in Rabun County. Showy goldenrod (*S. speciosa* var. *rigidiuscula*) occurs in limestone barrens in Floyd County.

Habitat: Granite domes and rocky mountain summits; base and ledges of seepy, high-elevation cliffs; occurs with twisted hair spike-moss, mountain dwarf dandelion, and Blue Ridge St. John's-wort (see account on this website).

Life History: Cliffside goldenrod is a perennial herb that reproduces sexually. Like most members of the composite family, its flower heads contain ray and disk flowers. The ray flowers are fertile, female only, and capable of producing seeds; the disk flowers are bisexual (having both female and male parts) and are also fertile and capable of producing seeds. No pollination studies have been conducted on cliffside goldenrod, but goldenrods are typically pollinated by a wide variety of insects including bees, butterflies, flies, beetles, and wasps. Small, barbed bristles are attached to the top of the fruits and aid in seed dispersal by clinging to fur and feathers.
.**Survey Recommendations:** Surveys are best conducted during flowering (August–September).

Range: Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

Threats: Construction of homes and roads near summits and ridgelines. Trampling by hikers and climbers. Severe rainstorms that dislodge plants.

Georgia Conservation Status: Two populations are known; both occur in the Chattahoochee National Forest.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Limit access by hikers and rock climbers. Protect summits and ridges from construction and development. Monitor plants yearly and after severe storms that could dislodge plants.

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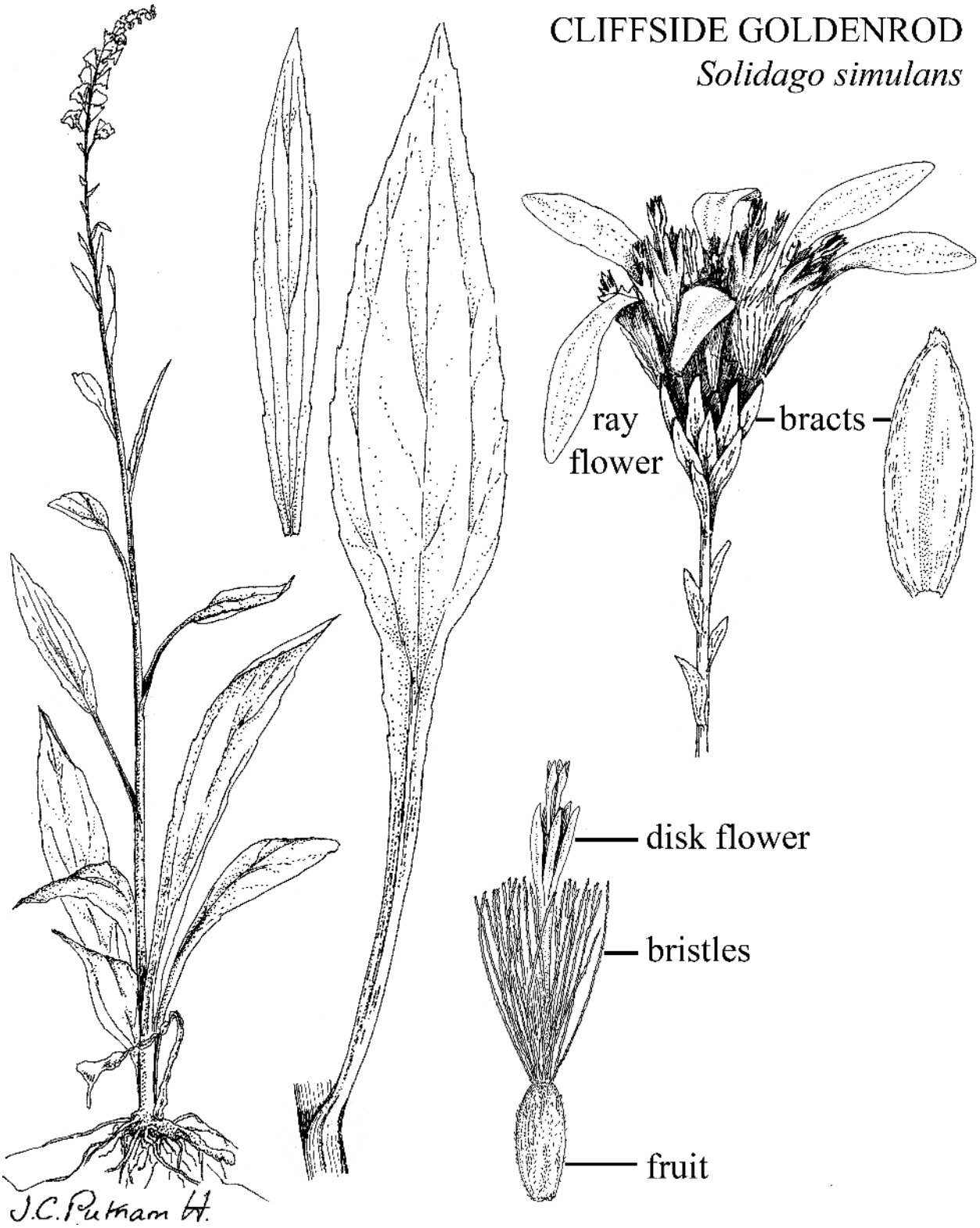
Author of Species Account: Linda G. Chafin

Date Compiled or Updated:
L. Chafin, Aug. 2008: original account
K. Owers, Feb. 2010: added pictures


CLIFFSIDE GOLDENROD
Solidago simulans
ray flower
bracts
disk flower
bristles
fruit
J.C. Putnam H.