



**Upland White Aster** (*Aster ptarmicoides*) or  
**Upland White Goldenrod** (*Solidago ptarmicoides*)/  
(*Oligoneuron album*) – The Controversial Flower

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Did you Know?

- Taxonomists disagreed over which family this flower belongs to: at first it was considered an Aster, then a Goldenrod and now it is included under its own genus with other former Goldenrod species
- This plant is known to attract butterflies as it supplies them with a valuable food source

Photo : 2012 Brian Popelier

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**Habitat** – bluffs, rocky outcrops, rocky open woods, dry sandy or rocky prairies, often found in limy soils

**Size** – 10-45 cm

**Range** – Central and eastern North America

**Flowering Date** – July to September

**Status** – S5/ Common in Ontario

**Other Common Names** – Prairie Goldenrod, Prairie Flat-Top-Goldenrod, Stiff Aster, Sneezewort Aster



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**Identification:**

Single stemmed erect perennial, leaves are lance-like, linear and alternate. Upper leaves are smaller than basal leaves. Both stems and leaves can be covered with fine hairs or smooth. Dense flat-topped flower clusters with individual flower heads measure from 1-2 cm wide. Individual flowers have between 10 and 20 white petals, all surrounding a creamy white to pale yellow disk.

Photo : 2012 Brian Popelier

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**Interesting Facts**

While it can't be confused with any other Ontario goldenrod species, which are mostly yellow, it can be mistaken for one of the many white aster species which grow in the Fall.

It is known to hybridize with other goldenrods species.

Characteristic of shore alvar, open pavement alvar and calcareous fens on Manitoulin Island; prefers full sun; also typical of dry prairies, inland sands, and sandy, gravelly, limy soil

**Upland White Aster on the Niagara Escarpment**

At one time this plant was thought to be rare in Ontario but further botanical surveys in northern areas of the province revealed that it was quite common. This is apparent on many of the BTCs properties in the Peninsula section as BTC ecologists regularly see this plant during their inventories. It is adapted to high calcium, shallow soils so the Bruce Trail along Georgian Bay provides ideal habitat for this Aster. It is uncommon south of Wiarton.



**Bruce Trail**  
**CONSERVANCY**



The Bruce Trail Conservancy is continually acquiring and protecting land along the Niagara Escarpment, often including land that contains open fields and alvars in the northern section of the Trail that are perfect habitat for the Upland White Aster.