

Green & Gold

Green & gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum*) is a low-growing, herbaceous, perennial that is native to the Eastern US. It is primarily found along dry, woodland edges and forest clearings from Ohio to Georgia, and westward to Louisiana. Sometimes green and gold is referred to as goldenstar because of its bright yellow, star-shaped flowers.



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Green & gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum*) flower.
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Botanical Varieties

Three naturally-occurring varieties of *Chrysogonum virginianum* are found in the Eastern US. Although these naturally-occurring varieties maintain their unique differences, these varieties will cross or inter-breed. Natural varieties are distinct from cultivars (from cultivated varieties), which are selected for and propagated by horticulturists (see Cultivars section).

These distinct varieties occupy slightly over-lapping regions and include:

- *Chrysogonum virginianum* var. *virginianum*, which is found in the more northern range of the species, including North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and Ohio;
- *Chrysogonum virginianum* var. *brevistolon*, which is found in the central portion of the species range, including South Carolina, Eastern Georgia, and Western North Carolina; and
- *Chrysogonum virginianum* var. *australe*, which is found on the East Gulf Coastal Plain in Alabama and Louisiana.

Several plant characteristics are used to distinguish the three varieties, but that of most importance to the gardener is stolon length. Stolons are above-ground, horizontally-oriented stems that increase the spread of a plant. The other morphological characteristics that vary among the three varieties are whether or not the flowering stems are leafy, and the height of the flowering stems.

The northern-most variety, *C. virginianum* var. *virginianum*, is without stolons and therefore not considered mat-forming. However, basal offsets (natural crown divisions) can gradually increase the size of each plant. This variety is also the tallest in bloom, with flowering stem height of 6 to 13 inches, and has the longest bloom time. The southern-most variety, *C. virginianum* var. *australe*, has the longest stolon length, which can be 5 to 24 inches long. The flowering stems are shorter and only 2 to 4 cm tall. The variety in the central portion of the range, *C. virginianum* var. *brevistolon*, has shorter stolon lengths of 1 to 2½ inches long, and similar flowering stem heights to *C. virginianum* var. *australe*.



Green & gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum* var. *brevistolon*) slowly spreading in a landscape bed.

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Green & gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum* var. *brevistolon*) bloom with 1 inch diameter, bright yellow flowers.

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Landscape Culture

Green & gold grows best in a partly shaded site with well-drained soils. Amend heavy clay soils with leaf compost or composted pine bark at 20% by volume to improve soil aeration and internal drainage. Improving the soil drainage will reduce the chance of root rot. Incorporate dolomitic limestone in the planting area to raise the soil pH into the range of 6.0 to 6.5. Plant establishment will be enhanced with the addition of a slow-release, organic fertilizer mixed into the planting soil.

Mulch the planting area to reduce weed occurrence and to maintain uniform soil moisture. Use a 2-inch thick layer of shredded leaf mulch, pine needles or ground bark. Plants will need supplemental water during periods of summer drought or if exposed to afternoon sunlight.

Landscape Use

As a native to South Carolina woodlands, green & gold is an excellent choice as a low-growing plant in the front of a naturalized area or woodland landscape. The faster spreading *C. virginianum* var. *australe* will colonize larger woodland sites more quickly.

Plant spacing can be determined by the variety and its ability to spread. In general, space plants 8 inches apart for slower spreading plants and up to 18 inches apart for more rapidly spreading plants. Green & gold combines well in naturalized areas with most woodland natives, such as dwarf crested iris, native columbine, lungwort, foam flower, fringed bleeding heart, and most ferns.

Cultivars

- ‘Eco-Lacquered Spider’ (*C. virginianum* var. *australe*) is a fast spreading cultivar from South Central Georgia. The foliage is more blue-green and glossy in the summer and takes on tinges of purple in winter. The long stolons have a purple tint.
- ‘Mark Viette’ (*C. virginianum* var. *virginianum*) is a 6-inch tall plant in bloom with buttercup yellow flowers.
- ‘Allen Bush’ (*C. virginianum* var. *virginianum*) is a dwarf form with leafy stolons and smaller yellow flowers.
- ‘Pierre’ (*C. virginianum* var. *virginianum*) has softer green leaves and a long bloom time.
- ‘Quinn’s Gold’ (*C. virginianum* var. *brevistolon*) is a cultivar from North Carolina and is characterized by flowers that emerge gold, and then change with maturity to a multi-colored yellow and creamy white.

Problems

Green & gold are generally problem-free plants. Snails and slugs may eat holes in the newer spring foliage, but damage is rarely significant. Iron phosphate slug baits give safe and effective control. Root rot may occur if the planting bed has poor drainage, or if the bed is heavily mulched and watered excessively. Incorporation of composted pine bark at 20% by volume into heavy clay soils may reduce the chance of root rot.

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