Other Common Names: Goldenray, Leopard Plant, Ragwort, Rocket Flower, The Rocket.

Family: Asteraceae (Compositae).

Cold Hardiness: Useful regions vary by species/cultivar, but most taxa are reasonably well adapted to USDA zones 5 (4) to 8, a few to 9 and 10.

Foliage: Evergreen to deciduous herbaceous perennials; leaves arising from a basal rosette or alternate on the flower stalks; simple; cordate, broadly orbicular, to reniform; variable in size from 6O to 24O long, mostly 6Oto 12Oin length and width; margins vary from undulate or nearly entire to serrate, dentate, or even deeply lobed; most taxa in the trade are undulate, serrate, or dentate; surfaces of the blades vary from a dull medium green to a dark lustrous shiny green; those with handsome glossy leathery textured leaves and bold form are more frequently cultivated; some variegated cultivars with yellow splotches are popular; often long petioles are present; petioles are stout and vary from green to purple in coloration.

Flower: Mostly 3O to 6O diameter composite heads, sometimes smaller, with yellow disk and yellow to orange ray flowers; flower stalks arise above the foliage to a height of 3N to 6N depending upon the species/cultivar; the composite heads may be loosely to tightly grouped in corymbose, paniculate, or spire-like inflorescences; flowers vary from moderate to highly ornamental; flowering occurs from summer to fall depending upon the species.

Fruit: Small achenes; glabrous in most species; not ornamental.

Stem / Bark: Stems — leaves arise from basal rosettes or short rhizomes, except on flower stalks which are stout, pubescent to mostly glabrous, and usually dark green in color; Buds — foliose; green; Bark — not applicable.

Habit: Rounded mounds of handsome foliage from basal rosettes or short rhizomes; 1N to 4N tall; the 3N to 6N tall flower stalks are held above the coarse textured foliage.

Cultural Requirements: Not drought tolerant; Ligularia require a steady moisture supply and actually perform best where the soils stay moist but not soggy; best in partial to moderate shade, but this is particularly critical in Texas; plants in full sun will wilt during the heat of the day, even with adequate moisture present in the soil; these are site specific taxa and finding the proper location for them to thrive may not be easy.

Pathological Problems: Few insect or diseases cause serious problems on Ligularia.

Ornamental Assets: Plants can be planted for the foliage effects alone, with the flower considered a bonus; leaves of most taxa provide an excellent contrast to finer textured species in mixed plantings; the taxa with lustrous leaves lend a lush tropical look to planting schemes.

Limitations & Liabilities: Inadequate winter chilling and hot summers may contribute to a limited life expectancy of some Ligularia species in our region; Ligularia are intolerant of even moderate drought and regularly wilt in sunny locations.

Landscape Utilization: Shaded locations near water features and streams; mixed shade borders; path-side accents; groundcovers in moist shaded locations; the foliage is the main asset and sometimes in my view the flowers almost detract from this bold textural effect; cultivars of L. tussilaginea are sometimes used in interiorscapes.

Other Comments: I was surprised to find that several taxa can be grown effectively in Texas, as this was a plant I always associated with more northern locations; definitive areas of use in our region have not been fully delineated.

Native Habitat: Europe and Asia.
**Related Taxa:** The genus contains between 50 and 180 species, depending upon your taxonomic preferences for lumping or splitting taxa; four species commonly encountered in the US trade or involved in the parentage of hybrid cultivars are *Ligularia dentata* (A. Gray) H. Hara (*Ligularia clivorum, Senecio clivorum*), *Ligularia stenocephala* (C.J. Maximowicz) J. Matsumura & G. Koidzumi (*Senecio stenocephalus*), *Ligularia veitchiana* (W.B. Hemsley) J.M. Greenman (*Senecio veitchianus*), and *Ligularia wilsoniana* (W.B. Hemsley) J.M. Greenman (Giant Groundsel, *Senecio wilsonianus*); several of the popular hybrid cultivars are sold under the name of *Ligularia × hessei* (H.A. Hesse) J.B. Bergmans (*Senecio × hessei*); variegated cultivars of *Ligularia tussilaginea* (N.L. Burman) T. Makino (*Farfugium grande, Ligularia kaempferi, Senecio kaempferi*) have become popular in recent years, particularly the cultivar ‘Aureo-Maculata’ which is known as Leopard Plant due to its creamy yellow and green splotched foliage; this cultivar has performed well as far south as Houston; *Ligularia tussilaginea* is not as cold tolerant as other species in the genera, but is a bit more heat tolerant and performs best in USDA zones 8 and 9.

**References:** Armitage, 1989; Still, 1994; Clausen and Ekstrom, 1989; Odenwald and Turner, 1996; Terrell, 1989.

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