



Field of Tickseed Sunflower in an open wet area near the Cumberland River, Cross Creeks National Wildlife Refuge, Stewart County, Tennessee.

TICKSEED SUNFLOWER

Bidens polylepis Blake

Our several members of this genus are characteristic of the late summer-autumn flora. This is one of the most plentiful, and most beautiful, by far. Stems are about three feet, much branched and with compound leaves with linear segments. Plants are annual and may have more than a dozen heads with bright yellow rays. Fruits are achenes, each with two barbed projections called awns (the generic name is from the Latin *bidens*, meaning two-toothed). The awns enable the small fruits to readily attach to clothing and the fur of animals, an interesting adaptation for dispersal (check the common name again). This species may be found in open wet areas such as pond margins, ditches, meadows, and around marshes. However, best growth may be seen in fallow creek and river bottom-lands where acres of nearly pure stands may occur (**Asteraceae**, the Aster Family).

Flowering heads of Tickseed Sunflower.

