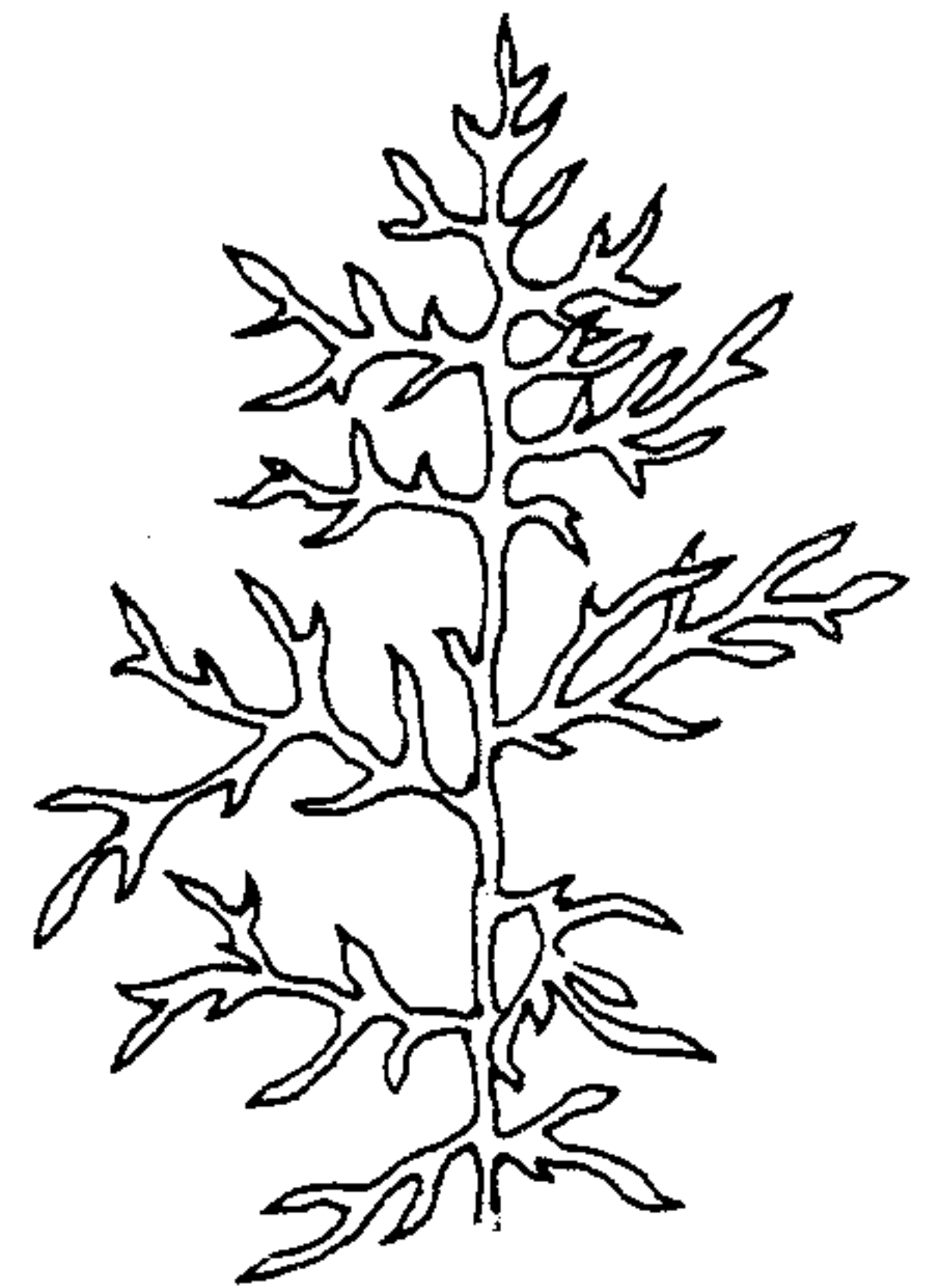


LOOK AGAIN !

One of the earliest and brightest of our spring composites is the ubiquitous Golden Ragwort (Senecio aureus), with its deep yellow-orange flower heads and vegetative parts that are often suffused with purple. The lower leaves are round or heart-shaped, while those on the stem may appear more fernlike.

Scarcely less familiar is the one that follows on its heels--Small's Ragwort (formerly S. smallii, now S. anonymus). In this common species the general aspect is yellowish green rather than purplish, and the basal leaves have lanceolate blades that are variously toothed or lobed. In some plants these leaves are seen to be finely dissected, and this can lead to the assumption that they are specimens of the Southern Appalachian endemic S. millefolium, but this is the case only if none of the segments of the basal leaves is as much as 3 mm wide.



S. MILLEFOLIUM



S. ANONYMUS

The confusion is caused by the hybridization of these two species, which sometimes grow in close proximity. This produces S. x memmingeri, in which the leaves exhibit a wide variety of intermediate forms. This tendency also raises the possibility that some populations of the already rare S. millefolium might be eliminated.

Dick Smith