**Liatris spicata**  
(Dense) Blazing Star, Gayfeather

Tall and upright, Gayfeather provides nice vertical form in a garden. Its purplish, feathery flower spikes contrast well with yellow-flowered, mound-forming plants. Its widely scattered natural populations in the Mid-Atlantic Region* include those in Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun counties.

**Perennial**

Height: 1–4 feet  
Spread: 1–1½ feet  
Bloom Color: Pink-purple or white

**Characteristics**

Erect, unbranched, clump-forming perennial  
Basal tuft of dark green, grass-like leaves, 12 inches long  
Spikes of fluffy purplish flower heads July and August bloom from the top down on rigid stems

**Attributes**

Tolerates clay soil, drought, heat, and humidity; Intolerant of waterlogged, winter soils  
No serious pests or diseases; deer seldom severely damage (may browse mature plants); small herbivores like young plants; voles may eat corms  
Good cut and dried flower  
Ethnobotanic and therapeutic uses  
Attracts bees, butterflies, hummers, birds

**Growing and Maintenance Tips**

Soil Requirements: Average, well-drained  
Light Requirements: Sun, Partial Shade  
Water Requirements: Moist  
Seldom needs support  
Deadhead when 70% of flowering finished  
May need division in fourth or fifth year  
Use en masse in borders and in butterfly, cutting, meadow, and rain gardens  
Hardiness: USDA Zones 3–8

**Excellent Replacement for**

*Allium species* - Ornamental Onions  
*Buddleia species* - Butterfly Bush  
*Hemerocallis fulva* - Orange or Tiger Daylily  
*Lilium species* - Lilies (Asiatic, Trumpet, Oriental...)

*It is native to DC, historical in DE, and native to the southeastern and central western counties in PA. In VA, it is infrequent in the mountains and rare in the Piedmont, although often abundant where found.  
**The pictured flower spikes, which demonstrate bloom from the top down, attract pollinators like the bumble bees and skipper.

Images by Mary Free, Sunny Garden

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