

# Liatris spicata

## (Dense) Blazing Star, Gayfeather

Tried and True  
Native Plant Selections  
for the Mid-Atlantic

Tall and upright, Gayfeather provides nice vertical form in a garden. Its purplish, feathery flower spikes contrast well with yellow-flowered, mound-forming plants. Natural populations are widely scattered in the Mid-Atlantic Region.\*



Perennial	Clump, Flowers with Pollinators,*** Fruit
Height: 1–4 feet	
Spread: 1–1½ feet	
Bloom Color: Pink-purple or white	
Characteristics	
Erect, unbranched, clump-forming <a href="#">perennial</a>	
<a href="#">Alternate</a> , <a href="#">glabrous</a> to sparsely hairy, grass-like leaves decrease in size as they ascend rigid <a href="#">stem</a>	
Spiciiform** <a href="#">inflorescences</a> of <a href="#">disk florets</a> with <a href="#">exserted</a> , deeply divided, white-pink <a href="#">style</a> bloom July to August	
<a href="#">Cypselae</a> with upwardly directed barbellate <a href="#">pappi</a>	
Attributes	
Tolerates <a href="#">clay</a> soil, drought, heat, and humidity; intolerant of waterlogged, winter soils; no serious pests or diseases; <a href="#">deer</a> seldom severely damage (may browse mature plants); small herbivores like young plants; voles may eat corms	
Seldom needs support; good cut or dried flower	<div>Excellent Replacement for</div> <div><a href="#">Allium</a> species - Ornamental Onions</div> <div><a href="#">Gladiolus</a> species - Sword Lily</div> <div><a href="#">Lavandula</a> species - Lavender</div> <div><a href="#">Lythrum salicaria</a> - Purple Loosestrife</div> <div><small>*It is <a href="#">native</a> to DC, rare/historical in DE, recorded only in Baltimore and Washington counties in MD, and mostly found in southeastern and western PA. In VA, it is infrequent in the mountains and rare in the Piedmont, although often abundant where found, including Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun counties.</small></div> <div><small>**As pictured, determinate "<a href="#">spikes</a>" bloom from the top down.</small></div> <div><small>*** Pictured pollinators are a bumble bee and sachem skipper.</small></div>
Growing and Maintenance Tips	
<a href="#">Soil Requirements</a> : Average, well-drained	
<a href="#">Light Requirements</a> : Sun, Partial Shade	
<a href="#">Water Requirements</a> : Moist	
Divide corms every 4th or 5th year in early spring	<div>Unreliable/sparse rebloomer if deadheaded so let seedheads develop for birds and winter interest</div> <div>Use en masse in borders and in butterfly, cutting, meadow, and rain gardens</div> <div><a href="#">Hardiness</a>: USDA Zones 3a–8b</div>
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developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria

Images by Mary Free, Sunny Garden and private garden, Arlington, VA