

Liatris spicata

(Dense) Blazing Star, Gayfeather

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic



Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia
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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 perennial	
Alternate, glabrous to sparsely hairy, grass-like leaves decrease in size as they ascend rigid stem	
Spiciform** inflorescences of disk florets with exserted , deeply divided, white-pink style bloom July to August	
Cypselae with upwardly directed barbellate pappi	
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	
Seldom needs support; good cut or dried flower	
Ethnobotanic and therapeutic uses	
Attracts bees, butterflies, hummers to flowers and birds to seeds; larval host to ~4 lepidopterans	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements : Average, well-drained	<i>Allium</i> species - Ornamental Onions
Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade	<i>Gladiolus</i> species - Sword Lily
Water Requirements : Moist	<i>Lavandula</i> species - Lavender
Divide corms every 4th or 5th year in early spring	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i> - Purple Loosestrife
Unreliable/sparse rebloomer if deadheaded so let seedheads develop for birds and winter interest	*It is native 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. **As pictured, determinate " spikes " bloom from the top down. *** Pictured pollinators are a bumble bee and sachem skipper.
Use en masse in borders and in butterfly, cutting, meadow, and rain gardens	
Hardiness : USDA Zones 3a–8b	

developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria

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



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