

# *Sympyotrichum oblongifolium* Aromatic Aster

Dense mounds of showy Aromatic Aster flowers, among the last to bloom before hard frost, attract myriad pollinators. They grow easily in habitats<sup>1</sup> ranging from moist woodlands to sandy prairies from New York west to Montana and south to North Carolina and New Mexico. Top-rated<sup>2</sup> cultivars include 'October Skies' and 'Raydon's Favorite.'

Tried and True  
Native Plant Selections  
for the Mid-Atlantic



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Perennial	Foliage, Flowers with Pollinators, <sup>3</sup> En Masse
Height: 1–3 feet	
Spread: 1–3 feet	
Bloom Color: Blue, purple, sometimes pink	
Characteristics	
Bushy, stiff-branched herbaceous <a href="#">perennial</a>	
<a href="#">Alternate</a> , <a href="#">clasping</a> , <a href="#">scabrous</a> (sometimes <a href="#">glabrous</a> ), oblong to <a href="#">lanceolate</a> , aromatic (when crushed) leaves reduced as they ascend <a href="#">pubescent stems</a> ; lower leaves quick to fall	
~1-inch, composite flowers of 14–40 <a href="#">rays</a> and yellow to red <a href="#">disk florets</a> bloom late Sep. until frost	
Ribbed <a href="#">cypsela</a> with brown <a href="#">pappi</a> disperse by wind	
Spreads by seeds and <a href="#">stolons</a> or <a href="#">rhizomes</a> <sup>4</sup>	
Attributes	
Tolerates <a href="#">clay</a> , <a href="#">sandy</a> , rocky, and dry soils; drought; erosion; coastal elements	
No serious problems but watch for leaf spot, rust, powdery mildew; <a href="#">deer</a> seldom severely damage	
Attracts numerous specialized and other bees and butterflies; <a href="#">larval</a> host to ~12 <a href="#">lepidopterans</a>	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
<a href="#">Soil Requirements</a> : Average, well-drained	<i>Chrysanthemum</i> - Mums (marginally hardy)
<a href="#">Light Requirements</a> : Sun	<i>Dendranthema</i> - Hardy Garden Mums
<a href="#">Water Requirements</a> : Dry, Moist	1. In the Mid-Atlantic region, it is <a href="#">native</a> to DC, rare in MD, and infrequent in central and southwestern parts of PA. In VA, it is infrequent to locally common in the mountains and rare in the Piedmont. In NoVA, it is not reported in Prince William County. 2. Cultivars receive 4.7 & 4.6 (out of 5) performance ratings in Mt. Cuba Center's " <a href="#">Asters for the Mid-Atlantic Region</a> ." 3. Bumble bee on compact 'October Skies' and American Lady butterfly on reliable, floriferous 'Raydon's Favorite.' 4. Aromatic Aster colonizes by stolons according to the USDA/NRCS Plant Fact Sheet and by rhizomes according to the <i>Flora of Virginia</i> . 5. Learn more about <a href="#">Garden Cleanup for Pollinators: Trim Perennial Stems in Their First Winter</a> .
Provide good air circulation to prevent foliar disease; may need regular thinning to control spread	
Pinch back by half mid-June for denser plant; dead-head after flowering to prevent seeding; trim <sup>5</sup> dead stems to 12–24" so native bees can nest in hollows	
Use in native, pollinator, or rock gardens, meadows	
<a href="#">Hardiness</a> : USDA Zones 3a–8b	

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

Images by Mary Free (foliage & butterfly), private and Sunny Gardens and by Elaine Mills, Glencarlyn Library Garden



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