

Tradescantia virginiana

Spiderwort

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic



Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia
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The genus name of this showy native* honors naturalist John Tradescant. Its common name may derive from several characteristics: its crouching spider-like leaf arrangement, web-like flower filaments, or web-like sap secretions from cut stems. The Virginia Native Plant Society honored Spiderwort as Wildflower of the Year in 2008.

| Perennial | Clumps, Flowers (Magenta & White Varieties) |
|---|--|
| Height: 1–3 feet |  |
| Spread: 1–1½ feet | |
| Bloom Color: Deep blue, purple, rose, or rarely white | |
| Characteristics | |
| Erect, clump-forming herbaceous perennial | |
| Alternate , long, arching, linear, glabrous leaves | |
| Terminal cymes subtended by two spathaceous bracts ; pilose-pedicellate flowers with 3 villous green sepals , 3 petals , and 6 stamens with bearded filaments bloom April to July |   |
| Self-seeds from capsules ; may produce offshoots | |
| Attributes | |
| Tolerates clay & poor soils, Black Walnut; no serious pests or diseases; deer seldom severely damage | |
| Ethnobotanic uses; leaves or sap may irritate when touched; mildly toxic to humans and pets | |
| Attracts bees, pollinators; larval host to ~4 lepidopterans | |
| Growing and Maintenance Tips | Excellent Replacement for |
| Soil Requirements : Well-drained, loamy , acidic | <i>Commelina</i> species - Dayflower |
| Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade, Shade | <i>Iris sibirica</i> - Siberian Iris |
| Water Requirements : Moist | <i>Murdannia keisak</i> - Marsh Dewflower |
| Flowers open several at a time lasting only about a half day, melting into jelly-like substance in p.m. sun | |
| After blooming period, remove stems directly to promote fall rebloom and cut back foliage to tidy appearance and reduce mid-summer sprawl | |
| Divide overcrowded clumps | *It is native in DC and uncommon in the DE Piedmont. In MD, it is scattered mainly in the mountains and Piedmont and is mostly found in the southern part of PA. In VA, it is frequent in the mountains, infrequent in the Piedmont (although it is found in Fairfax and Loudoun counties) and inner Coastal Plain, and rare in the outer Coastal Plain. |
| Use in woodland gardens or naturalized | |
| Hardiness : USDA Zones 4a–9b | |

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

Images by Mary Free, Quarry Shade Garden



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