




# Tradescantia virginiana

## Spiderwort

Tried and True  
Native Plant Selections  
for the Mid-Atlantic

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 <a href="#">perennial</a>   |  |  |
| <a href="#">Alternate</a> , long, arching, linear, <a href="#">glabrous</a> leaves  |     |  |
| Terminal <a href="#">cymes</a> subtended by two <a href="#">spathaceous bracts</a> ; <a href="#">pilose-pedicellate</a> flowers with 3 <a href="#">villous</a> green <a href="#">sepals</a> , 3 <a href="#">petals</a> , and 6 <a href="#">stamens</a> with bearded <a href="#">filaments</a> bloom April to July |  |  |
| Self-seeds from <a href="#">capsules</a> ; may produce offshoots  |  |  |
| Attributes  |  |  |
| Tolerates <a href="#">clay</a> & poor soils, Black Walnut; no serious pests or diseases; <a href="#">deer</a> seldom severely damage  |  |  |
| <a href="#">Ethnobotanic</a> uses; leaves or sap may irritate when touched; mildly toxic to humans and pets   |  |  |
| Attracts bees, pollinators; <a href="#">larval</a> host to ~4 <a href="#">lepidopterans</a>   |  |  |
| Growing and Maintenance Tips  |  |  |
| <a href="#">Soil Requirements</a> : Well-drained, <a href="#">loamy</a> , acidic  |  |  |
| <a href="#">Light Requirements</a> : Sun, Partial Shade, Shade  |  |  |
| <a href="#">Water Requirements</a> : Moist  | <b>Excellent Replacement for</b>   |  |
| Flowers open several at a time lasting only about a half day, melting into jelly-like substance in p.m. sun   | <i>Commelina</i> species - Dayflower   |  |
| After blooming period, remove stems directly to promote fall rebloom and cut back foliage to tidy appearance and reduce mid-summer sprawl   | <i>Iris sibirica</i> - Siberian Iris   |  |
| Divide overcrowded clumps   | <i>Murdannia keisak</i> - Marsh Dewflower  |  |
| Use in woodland gardens or naturalized  |  |  |
| <a href="#">Hardiness</a> : USDA Zones 4a–9b  | *It is <a href="#">native</a> 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. |  |
| developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria  |  |  |

Images by Mary Free, Quarry Shade Garden