

Aster spp. Aster¹

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Introduction

Asters produce large clusters of flowers in white, purple, lavender, pink and red. The plants tolerate poor soil and dryness but bloom poorly in dry soil. They grow two to five feet tall and are spaced 15 inches apart. They multiply rapidly so may need frequent division. Tall varieties need staking or grow the shorter varieties. For best bloom, thin out shoots from large clumps. Asters grow best in full sun or light shade.

General Information

Scientific name: *Aster spp.*

Pronunciation: ASS-ter species

Common name(s): Aster

Family: *Compositaceae*

Plant type: herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 4B through 9A (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: mass planting; edging; attracts butterflies; cut flowers

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 1 to 3 feet

Spread: 2 to 4 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: symmetrical habit with a regular (or smooth) outline and individuals having more or less identical forms

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

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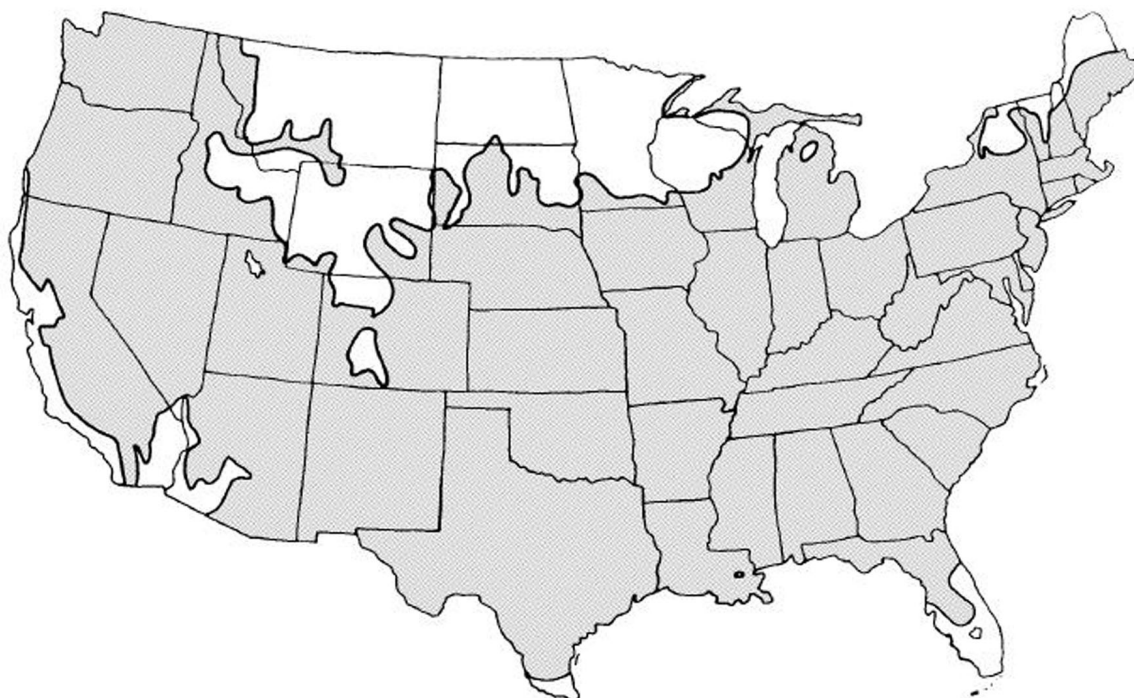


Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** alternate
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** entire
- Leaf shape:** lanceolate
- Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see
- Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
- Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches
- Leaf color:** green
- Fall color:** no fall color change
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower color:** lavender; white; pink; red; purple
- Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** unknown
- Fruit length:** unknown
- Fruit cover:** unknown
- Fruit color:** white
- Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

- Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
- Current year stem/twig color:** green
- Current year stem/twig thickness:** thin

Culture

- Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun
- Soil tolerances:** acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay
- Drought tolerance:** moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Aster is grown from seed or division. Division is done in October or early spring when flowering deteriorates. The seed germinates in 15 days indoors, or 20 to 30 days outdoors.

Aphids feed on lower leaf surfaces and flower stems.

Japanese beetles feed on aster.

Pests and Diseases

Leaf spot fungi cause spots of various types on the leaves. The spotting may be worse in rainy seasons.

Downy mildew causes a downy mold on the lower leaf surfaces but is not important on aster.

Powdery mildew develops on the lower parts of crowded plants in late season. Symptoms are a whitish coating on the leaves.

Bacterial crown gall causes the formation of rough, rounded galls. Bacterial crown gall causes the formation of rough, rounded galls. Avoid infested soil and destroy infected plants.

Verticillium wilt occasionally kills plants.