



***Baptisia bracteata* – CreamBbaptisia**

COMMON NAME: Cream baptisia, creamy false wild indigo, rattlepod

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Baptisia breateata* – This plant may have been used as a poor substitute for indigo dye as the origin for *baptisia*. The word *bracteata* means “with bracts.”

FLOWER: Creamy white, yellowish

BLOOMING PERIOD: Late May to mid-June

SIZE: 12 to 18 inches high; the plant forming a mound broader than tall.

BEHAVIOR: Long-lived, deep-rooted perennial. With age it forms a multi-stemmed clump like a shrub. It does not sucker and is slow to self-seed.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Full sun or very light shade. Does well in rich or sandy soils, even heavier soils if they are not too wet.

NATURAL RANGE: Primarily a midwestern plant growing from Arkansas and east Texas north to southern Michigan, Wisconsin and Nebraska. In Wisconsin cream baptisia occurs on rich and sandier prairie remnants in the southern and western part of the state.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Cream baptisia bears its large showy clusters of flowers as a “skirt” sweeping down to the ground, quite unlike its white-flowered cousin. This doesn’t really hide the flowers because the plant usually blooms before its leaves have reached full growth and before the surrounding prairie plants are tall enough to cover them. The leaves and large pea-like fruit turn black with the first frosts and make an interesting subject for dried arrangements. This plant is of special value to native bees and attracts butterflies.

SUGGESTED CARE: Water carefully during the first season after planting. It may be damaged by wind and need support from companion plants. It seems to be tolerant of hot, humid summers, poor soil and drought.

COMPANION PLANTS: Lead plant, smooth aster, coreopsis, downy gentian, alumroot, purple prairie clover, downy phlox, prairie dock, blue-eyed grass, prairie dropseed, needle grass and bird-foot violet.