



***Gentiana puberula* – Downy Gentian**

COMMON NAME: Downy gentian, prairie gentian, sand gentian

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Gentiana puberula* – named for Gentius, king of Illyria who supposedly discovered that the roots from a certain plant helped to cure his troops suffering from malaria. *Puberula* means “to have tiny hairs”.

FLOWER: Blue, but occasionally white with blue markings, about 2 inches across.

BLOOMING PERIOD: Late August to frost.

SIZE: 8 to 20 inches tall

BEHAVIOR: Long-lived perennial with deep roots and notoriously difficult to transplant. The cup-shaped flowers tend to close up on cloudy days.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Full sun on rich to dry soils. Prefers sandy or gravelly soils.

NATURAL RANGE: Western New York to North Dakota, south to Georgia and Kansas. In Wisconsin it is primarily in southern central counties where it occurs most frequently on mesic (rich) prairies.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Relative scarcity, intense blue color and late blooming make downy gentian a much sought after treasure.

SUGGESTED CARE: New plantings will need conscientious watering, but will not do well if they stay wet for prolonged periods.

COMPANION PLANTS: On rich to somewhat drier prairies look for big bluestem, sky blue, heath and smooth asters, cream baptisia, coreopsis, shooting star, rattlesnake master, yellow coneflower, rosinweed, compass plant, prairie dock, and needle grass. On gravelly or sandy prairies look for leadplant, little bluestem, thimbleweed, pasque flower, silky aster, side-oats grama, prairie smoke, white and purple prairie clovers.