



***Aster sericeus* – Silky Aster**

COMMON NAME: Silky aster

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Aster sericeus* – from the Greek word for star, *aster*, and *sericeus* meaning silky. *Symphyotrichum sericeum* is also used.

FLOWER: Magenta

BLOOMING PERIOD: September to frost

SIZE: 8 to 24 inches high

BEHAVIOR: Often inconspicuous amongst other prairie species until fall when it blooms. Flowers are few, but about 1 inch across. Silky aster does not spread readily from seed. Propagate by dividing.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Full sun, dry soils, either sand or gravel.

NATURAL RANGE: Central U.S., northern Michigan west to southern Manitoba and North Dakota, south to Tennessee, Missouri and east Texas. It is found mostly in southern and western Wisconsin, where it occurs most frequently on dry prairies.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Silky aster has silky-soft “mouse ear” leaves; subtle, but attractive flowers. Visited by bees, butterflies, rabbits and groundhogs. Green metallic bees are frequent visitors.

SUGGESTED CARE: Water well to establish new plants, but avoid soggy soil. This aster develops more slowly than most. It does not like too much competition from taller, more aggressive plants.

COMPANION PLANTS: Lead plant, little bluestem, side-oats grama, downy gentian, purple prairie clover, prairie dropseed, pasque flower, and prairie smoke.