



***Aster laevis* – Smooth Aster**

COMMON NAME: Smooth aster, smooth blue aster

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Aster laevis* comes from the Greek *aster* for star describing the resemblance of the flower heads to stars and *laevis* meaning smooth or free from hairs. This also has a scientific name of *Symphyotrichum leave*.

FLOWER: Purplish blue in open clusters on the ends of stems.

BLOOMING PERIOD: August to early October

SIZE: 1 to 3 feet tall.

BEHAVIOR: Spreads by seeds and self-sows easily. In a cultivated garden smooth aster may grow up to 4 or more feet tall.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Grows in full sun on a variety of soils, from rich to moderately dry.

NATURAL RANGE: Maine to Saskatchewan, south to Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and west to Kansas, Iowa and Minnesota. It grows throughout most of Wisconsin.

SPECIAL FEATURES: It has attractive flowers and bold foliage, usually with colorful fall foliage. The seeds attract juncos and other winter birds while the flowers attract long-tongued and short-tongued bees, butterflies and caterpillars.

SUGGESTED CARE: Water well during the first season. It may need staking in garden settings. It is easy to grow, but doesn't like competition from taller plants. Beware of rabbits nibbling!!

COMPANION PLANTS: Big bluestem, heath aster, bastard toadflax, coreopsis, flowering spurge, showy sunflower, alumroot, round-headed bushcloser, switch grass, prairie phlox, yellow coneflower, rosinweed, compass plant, prairie dock, stiff goldenrod, and needle grass.