

Liatris spicata

Gayfeather, (Dense) Blazing Star

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic
mgnv.org

Tall and upright, Gayfeather provides nice vertical form in a garden. Its purplish, feathery flower spikes contrast well with yellow-flowered, mound-forming plants. Its widely scattered natural populations in the Mid-Atlantic Region* include those in Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudon counties.



Perennial	Flowers En Masse and with Pollinators**
Height: 1–4 feet	
Spread: 1–1½ feet	
Bloom Color: Pink-purple or white	
Characteristics	
Erect, unbranched, clump-forming perennial	
Basal tuft of dark green, grass-like leaves, 12 inches long	
Spikes of fluffy purplish flower heads July and August bloom from the top down on rigid stems	
Attributes	
Tolerates clay soil, drought, heat, and humidity; Intolerant of waterlogged, winter soils	
No serious pests or diseases; deer seldom severely damage (may browse mature plants); small herbivores like young plants; voles may eat corms	
Good cut and dried flower	
Ethnobotanic and therapeutic uses	
Attracts bees, butterflies, hummers, birds	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements: Average, well-drained	<i>Allium species</i> - Ornamental Onions
Light Requirements: Sun, Partial Shade	<i>Buddleia species</i> - Butterfly Bush
Water Requirements: Moist	<i>Hemerocallis fulva</i> - Orange or Tiger Daylily
Seldom needs support	<i>Lilium species</i> - Lilies (Asiatic, Trumpet, Oriental...)
Deadhead when 70% of flowering finished	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i> - Purple Loosestrife
May need division in fourth or fifth year	
Use en masse in borders and in butterfly, cutting, meadow, and rain gardens	*It is native to DC; historical in DE; and native to the southeastern and central western counties in PA. In VA, it is infrequent in the mountains and rare in the Piedmont, although often abundant where found.
Hardiness: USDA Zones 3–8	**The pictured pollinators are bumble bees and a skipper.
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria	

Images by Mary Free, Sunny Garden