

## ***Liatris spicata* - Marsh (Dense) Blazing Star, Spiked Gayfeather**



Native to the moist prairies of eastern North America, marsh blazing star was used as a medicinal by several Native American tribes. It is an easy-care, long-lived perennial, growing 3-4 feet tall by 2 feet wide. Mauve purple, upright, 6 -15 inch long flower spikes bloom from early to late summer, adding an architectural element to the garden. Marsh blazing star is one of the few flowers that blooms first from the top of the spike, then

continues to bloom towards the bottom. Plants may look shabby after flowering. Late in the growing season, remaining flowers and fluffy seed heads turn black and stems become red; leave standing for winter interest.

Hardy to USDA zone 3 (-40 degrees F), marsh blazing star grows well in deep, lean (infertile), moist but well-drained soil in sun. Plants do not tolerate moist to wet soils in winter. Plants may require support during the growing season. Deadheading will encourage re-bloom in August and September.

Marsh blazing star grows from a corm or tuberous rootstock. Plants seldom need division but, if additional plants are desired, the tuberous roots may be lifted from the soil and divided (cut), allowing one eye to remain in each division. Dust cut ends of divisions with a fungicidal powder before replanting.

Dense blazing star is an excellent cut or dried flower. Blooms have a vanilla scent when dried. These are attractive nectar plants for many varieties of butterflies, bees and hummingbirds. Birds will eat the seeds and the caterpillars of some moths feed on flowers and seeds and bore into stems. Groundhogs, rabbits, and voles will eat marsh blazing star but plants are considered resistant to deer.