



Blue Star (*Amsonia*)

Angie Litchy, UMN Extension Crow Wing County Master Gardener Volunteer

Blue Star is a compact, erect, clump-forming perennial with showy clusters of periwinkle blue, star-shaped flowers. With early-season blue flowers, attractive summer foliage, and golden fall color, it is a great option for the garden plant. It is a welcome addition to borders, rock gardens, or cottage gardens. The blooms also last very well as cut flowers.

Type	Herbaceous Perennial
Hardiness Zone	3 - 9
Sun	Full Sun, Partial Sun
Bloom Time	4 - 6 weeks in late spring to early summer
Height	Intermediate 1' - 3'
Spread	1' - 1.5'
Tolerance	Clay tolerant, somewhat drought tolerant
Attracts	Butterflies, hummingbirds, bees
Additional Features	Deer resistant

Soil and Site Recommendations

- Drainage: moist but well-drained
- Soil pH: acid, alkaline or neutral
- Type: chalk, clay, loam or sand

Planting Recommendations

- Type: seeds require 4 - 6 weeks of moist stratification (cold moist conditions before germination) or division of crowns
- When to plant: spring; seedlings will flower in 2-3 years
- Depth of planting: seeds per instructions, crowns at the same depth they were previously planted
- Mulching: 3 inches of organic mulch around the plants
- Spacing: 18" - 24"
- Spread: 1' - 2' via very short rhizomes
- Division/transplant tips: Divide in spring or fall while plants are dormant. Make sure each division has at least one "eye".



Maintenance

- Watering: average
- Fertilization: work in compost or well-rotted manure. After the flowers fade, feed each plant a shovelful of compost
- Pinching/deadheading: deadhead or remove seed pods to prevent self-seeding
- Annual maintenance: Cut plant back by a third to half after flowering to maintain shape and keep plants upright, especially in shady plantings.

Common Problems

Disease: rust

Insects: virtually pest-free

Caution: contact with the milky sap may cause skin irritation

Resources

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/willowleaf-bluestar-amsonia-tabernaemontana/>

<http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scenec68d.html>

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=276085>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/amsonia-ciliata/>

https://www.clemson.edu/cafls/demo/plant_profiles/amsonia-tabernaemontana-eastern-blue-star.html

Questions or problems: “What’s wrong with my plant” for information on garden pests and diseases:

<http://apps.extension.umn.edu/garden/diagnose/plant/>

Visit us at crowwingmastergardeners.org, on Facebook @CWCMasterGardeners and on Instagram @cwcmastergardener.