

Fall Asters

The fall aster is one of those perennials that blooms throughout the fall and leads many people to ask, “what is that flower”? With its striking purple/blue flowers and golden center, they create a solid mound of terrific color, and brings a nice ending to the hot summer months that ushers in the cooler nights of fall. They are truly one of the first signs of fall.

This outstanding Texas native deserves to be used more in the landscape. Among the many attributes of this plant are its xeriscape value; it is an evergreen perennial, which is a huge plus for those looking for some semblance of green during the stark winter months, it only reaches about three foot tall, will take full or part sun, and the butterflies and bees love it. The aster is tolerant of many Texas soil types, however it does best in well-drained beds/soils.

Fall asters tend to lose their lower foliage as it ages, so an occasional (not regular) trimming in the spring when new foliage appears will force the leaves and plant to stay low during the non-blooming season. Since this aster is a native, it does best without much fertilizer, and is virtually pest resistant, so use of this plant could be economically beneficial in the landscape as well.

Plant fall asters with Mexican mint marigolds, or copper canyon daisy for a great combination fall colors of golden yellow and lavender. They multiply by stolons, so be aware of their sprawling nature. Use them in a flower arrangement as fillers with chrysanthemums.

Interesting tidbits:

- ❑ The Greek meaning of Aster is “star” which describes “the beautiful one.”
- ❑ The native aster has two types of aromatic leaves; at the base of the shrub the leaves are long and wide, then they decrease in size at the tips of the branches.

