

Liatris pycnostachya Prairie Blazing Star

This striking native plant boasts bright purple spikes of flowers reminiscent of Fourth of July sparklers. *Liatris pycnostachya* (Prairie Blazing Star) reaches up to 5' tall with unbranched stems topped with dense clusters of purple flower heads. Each flower head hosts 5-10 pink to purple flowers with miniscule curly narrow petals that reach outward from the tubular stem, giving a feathery form. Thin, arching leaves shoot out from a stout stem, giving an overall feathered appearance. Beginning at the peak of summer, the flower stems ignite into bloom, starting at the top of the plant and slowly blooming down the stem, a slow burn that can last two months. This plant is a pollinator magnet attracting butterflies, long-tongued bees, hummingbirds, and other nectar seekers. Native to mesic prairies and wet meadows, *Liatris pycnostachya* thrives in rich, loamy soils in full sun, but can tolerate dry soils and drought. In fall, the long wands of flowers become tan, fuzzy bottlebrush seed heads that remain standing through winter and attract finches and small songbirds.

Botanical Name: *Liatris pycnostachya*

Common Name: Prairie Blazing Star

Family: Asteraceae

Nativity: Great Lakes Native

USDA Zone: 3-9

Light Type: Full Sun

Soil Type: Clay, Loam, Sand

Soil Preferences: Rich loam to clay loam

Soil Moisture: Dry, Moist

Typical height (ft): 2-5'

Typical width (ft): 1.5-2'

Foliage: Bright Green

Bloom Time: July, August

Bloom: Purple, Rose

Ecological features: Attracts birds, butterflies, bees and parasitic wasps.

Tolerance of: Deer, Drought, Heat

Additional notes: Dense spikes of tiny purple-pink flowers that bloom from the top down. Slow to establish first year.

Companion plants: Prairie plants and grasses: Aster species, Yellow Coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*), Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*), Bee-balms (*Monarda* spp.), Coneflowers (*Echinacea* spp.), Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)

For more information see:

<http://www.newmoonnursery.com/plant/Liatris-pycnostachya>

<https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/flower/prairie-blazing-star>

https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/prairie/plantx/pr_blazingstarx.htm

<https://www.midwestgroundcovers.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/plants.kwSearchPost/index.htm>

Images of *Liatris pycnostachya*



Liatris pycnostachya kz1.jpg

purple-spiked feather flower clusters



Prairie_blingstar_purle_pink_flower_liatris_pycnostrachya.jpg

Pink/purple flowers with miniscule curly narrow petals that reach outward from the tubular stem



Liatris_pycnostachya_-_Botanischer_Garten_der_Universität_Würzburg.JPG

leaf feathered stems topped with purple-spiked flower clusters



Liatris_pycnostachya_with_Bombus.jpg
fuzzy pale purple pink flower cluster with bee



Liatris_pycnostachya_with_bee.jpg
Purple-spiky feather flower close-up with bee

Image choices for narrative:

First Choice:

810px-Liatris_pycnostachya_-_Botanischer_Garten_der_Universität_Würzburg.jpg
leaf feathered stems topped with purple-spiked flower clusters

Second Choice:

Liatris_pycnostachya_with_bee.jpg
Purple-spiky feather flower close-up with bee