

Plants for Solving Resource Problems

'APPAR' BLUE FLAX

Species: *Linum perenne*
Common Name: Blue Flax
Plant Symbol: LIPE2
Accession Number: PI-445972

Source: 'Appar' is a selection from a non-native plant collection made in the badlands of the Black Hills region of South Dakota in 1955. It is named for its collector, A. Perry Plummer, at that time a Range Scientist with the USDA Forest Service Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station in Ephraim, Utah.

Native Site Information: Once thought to be the native species Lewis flax, Appar has since been identified as blue flax, an introduced species from Europe.

Method of Selection: Appar was selected after several years of testing at the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Research Nursery at Ephraim, Utah and at the NRCS Plant Materials Center in Aberdeen, Idaho. Appar was chosen based on superior beauty, vigor, seed production and competitiveness with understory grasses at the original collection site.

Description: Appar blue flax is a tap-rooted, medium-lived perennial forb arising from a woody caudex or root crown. Numerous stems bear small, alternate, linear leaves which range from one to three mm long. Plant height varies from 12 inches in arid sites to 36 inches when irrigated. Flowers are 1 to 1.5 inches across and have five deep blue petals with a yellow hint at the throat. Flowers are produced from mid-May to late June. Individual flowers bloom from morning to mid-day after which petals are shed.



'Appar'
Blue Flax

Use: Appar is consumed readily by big game animals and livestock, especially in the spring when they are changing diets from shrubs to forbs and grasses. Because of its beautiful deep blue color as compared to the paler native flax plants, Appar is often used in horticultural settings such as roadside improvement applications and as an ornamental in home gardens.

Insect and Disease Problems: No detrimental disease symptoms or insect problems have been observed in plantings of Appar.

Environmental Considerations: Because Appar is an introduced plant from Europe, it is not an appropriate component in native plant community restoration. It has no known negative impacts on wild or domestic animals and does not cross with native flax species. It is not considered a weedy or invasive species but can spread to adjoining vegetative communities under ideal conditions. It coexists with other plant species and adds biodiversity to those plant communities.

Area of Adaptation: Appar is adapted to many areas of the Intermountain West on sites receiving 10 to 23 inches mean annual precipitation. It is well suited to live in a variety of plant communities from big sagebrush to mountain brush sites. It prefers full sun and does not perform well as an understory species.

Soil Adaptation: Appar is best suited to sites with well-drained to moderately well-drained soils that are moderately basic to weakly acidic. It is also well adapted for use in mixtures for seeding mine spoils and highway rights-of-way.

Planting and Harvesting: Appar should be seeded with a drill at a depth of $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in a firm, weed-free seedbed. The full seeding rate is 4 pounds Pure Live Seed (PLS) per acre. Adjust for desired percentage when used as a component of a seed mix.

For seed production, plant in 36 inch rows at a rate of 1.6 pounds PLS per acre to allow mechanical weed control and to maintain rows.

Appar must be swathed before harvest. Seed is typically harvested in early-August. Seed yields range from 300 pounds per acre (dryland) to 700 pounds per acre (irrigated).

Seed Maintenance: Breeder and Foundation seed is maintained at:

USDA-NRCS, Aberdeen PMC
P.O. Box 296
1691A S. 2700 W.
Aberdeen, ID 83210
Phone: (208) 397-4133

Foundation seed is available through the University of Idaho Foundation Seed Program and Utah Crop Improvement Association and Soil Conservation Districts in Idaho, Utah and Nevada. Certification of seed shall be limited to not more than two generations from Foundation seed (Registered and Certified).

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