

NEW YORK ASTER

Symphotrichum novi-belgii

(L.) Nesom var. *novi-belgii*

Plant Symbol = SYNON

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Alternative Name

Michaelmas daisy, *Aster novi-belgii*

Uses

Landscape: New York aster is an excellent upright perennial for a mixed bed or border. This species provides a color accent, bringing autumn color to the garden.

Wildlife: New York aster is known for attracting butterflies and moths to areas where it is found growing. This is a good bee plant providing nectar in the autumn. Most species in this genus seem to be immune to the predictions of rabbits (Thomas 1990).

Status

Please consult the Plants Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values.

Description

General: Aster family (Asteraceae). New York aster is an upright, native perennial that grows between one and a half to five feet tall. The leaves are elliptic to linear, smooth to scabrous above and glabrous beneath (Radford, Ahles & Bell 1968). The disc flowers are red to yellow. The flowers are

hermaphrodite (having both male and female organs) and are pollinated by bees, butterflies, flies, beetles and moths.

Distribution: New York aster ranges from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia south to Georgia, apparently to Alabama, chiefly near the coast (Tiner 1987). For current distribution, please consult the Plant profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Adaptation

New York aster is found growing in slightly brackish and tidal fresh marshes, occasionally borders of salt marshes; inland marshes, shrub marshes, shores and other moist areas (Tiner 1987). This plant requires well-drained soil and prefers sandy, loamy and clay soils. It can grow on nutritionally poor soil, in semi-shade or no shade but prefers a sunny location.

Establishment

Propagation by Seed: New York aster seeds should be sown fresh in the fall or spring (Heuser 1997). Pre-chill spring sown seeds to improve germination. When the seedlings are large enough to handle, place them into individual pots and plant them out in the summer. Division of this species should be done in the spring. Large divisions can be planted into their permanent positions whereas smaller clumps should be kept in a cold frame until they are growing well.

Management

Divisions of New York aster should be done in the spring every three years to maintain vigor (Heuser 1997). Regular spraying is recommended for this species because it is prone to mildew and attack from pests.

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Available through some native plant seed sources. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the phone book under "United States Government." The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture."

References

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adjacent Canada. 2nd ed. The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York.

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Huxley, A. 1992. *The new RHS dictionary of gardening*. MacMillan Press, New York, New York.

Radford, A.E., H.E. Ahles, & C. Bell 1968. *Manual of the vascular flora of the Carolinas*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Thomas, G.S. 1990. *Perennial garden plants*. J.M. Dent & Sons, London

Tiner, R.W., Jr. 1987. *A field guide to the coastal wetland plants of the northeastern United States*. The University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, Massachusetts.

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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