



ALMANAC

Thursday, May 1, 2025



ORDER YOUR ALMANAC TODAY!

HOME > GARDENING > GROWING GUIDES

How to Grow Asters: The Complete Aster Flower Guide



Photo Credit: Pixabay

Botanical Name: *Aster* spp., *Symphyotrichum* spp.

Plant Type: [Flowering](#)

FREE GUIDE!

pe
:

Su [Full](#)
n [Sun](#) ,
Ex [Part](#)
po [Sun](#)
su
re:

So [Varies](#)
il
pH
:

Bl [Summ](#)
oo [er](#) , [Fall](#)
m
Ti
m
e:

Fl [Blue](#) ,
ow [Pink](#) ,
er [Purple](#)
Co , [Red](#) ,
lor [White](#)
:

Ha [3](#) , [4](#) ,
rdi [5](#) , [6](#) ,
ne [7](#) , [8](#)
ss
Zo
ne
:

Sp [Attract](#)
eci [s](#)
al [Butterfl](#)
Fe [ies](#)
at
ur
es
:

Planting, Growing, and Caring for Asters

By [Catherine Boeckmann](#)

Last Updated: April 24, 2025



Sign up for daily gardening advice and tips

Enter your email address

SIGN UP

ADVERTISEMENT

**The Almanac Garden Planner -
Use It Free for 7 Days!**



Plan your 2025 garden with our
award-winning Garden Planner.

TRY NOW

Asters enliven the garden in late summer and early fall when many flower

blooms fade—providing a late-season treat for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators! Plant these deer-resistant native perennials to keep the color going. Learn all about planting, growing, and caring for asters.

About Asters

ADVERTISEMENT

Cold-hardy perennials with daisy-like flowers, aster flowers are the pollinator stars of the garden from late summer through fall. Growing 1 to 6 feet tall, depending on variety, these upright flowering plants bear cheerful, star-shaped flower heads ranging from purple to white to blue.

BUY SEEDS NOW

Even though there are more than 600 aster species, the two most commonly encountered asters in home gardening are the **New England aster** (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*) and

the **New York aster** ([*S. novi-belgii*](#)).

Several years ago, the Aster genus was split into multiple genera. Aster now covers most European and Asian asters, while those native to North America belong to *Symphyotrichum*.

Some hybrid varieties are available in showy colors, yet “wild type” species native to your region are generally a wise choice for the ecologically minded gardener despite not being quite as flashy as the cultivated varieties in some cases. Learn more about recommended varieties further down this page.

Aster is versatile: Depending on the height, it's suitable for borders, rock gardens, or wildflower gardens. As well as being a valuable pollinator plant for bees and butterflies, its tasty seed heads are sought by [cardinals](#), [chickadees](#), finches, nuthatches, and many other seed eaters.

According to the [North Carolina Extension](#), “Any species or cultivars of this genus would be a lovely addition to any home garden. It may be planted in a container for use on a porch or patio. It will also add color to a cottage garden or border garden. Butterflies and bees will appreciate the flowers, particularly as summer is ending and the evenings are getting cooler.”

Read Next

- [Asters: Stars of the Fall Garden](#)
- [September Birth Flowers: Asters and Morning Glories](#)
- [20 Easy-to-Grow Perennial Flowers for Beginners](#)

PLANTING

Asters prefer areas with cool, moist summers and cool nights in sites with full to partial sun. In warmer climates, asters do not like the hot midday sun. Soil should be moist but well-draining and loamy. Wet clay soil will lead to root rot, and dry sandy soil will

lead to plant wilt. Mix 2 to 3 inches of compost into the soil before planting.

When to Plant Asters

- The best time to put young aster plants in the ground is in mid- to late spring after the danger of frost has passed. ([See local frost dates.](#))
- Or, you can plant mature, potted asters when available at garden centers (typically in the late summer or early fall).
- Asters can be grown from seed, but germination can be uneven. If desired, plant seeds in the fall or start them indoors in the winter.

How to Plant Asters

- When planting young aster plants outside in the spring, space them 1 to 3 feet apart, depending on the type and how large they're expected to get.
- Fully grown asters, such as those available in late summer or early

fall, should be planted about 3 feet apart.

- If planting seeds, sow 1 inch deep in pots or flats and refrigerate them for 4 to 6 weeks to simulate winter dormancy. This cold period will kick-start germination.
- Water well, and spread mulch around the plants to keep the soil cool and prevent weeds.



Asters are highly attractive to pollinators, especially bees and butterflies.

GROWING

- Add a thin layer of compost (or a portion of balanced fertilizer) with a 2-inch layer of mulch around the plants every spring to encourage vigorous growth.

- If less than 1 inch of rain falls weekly in summer, water regularly. But beware: Many asters are sensitive to too much or too little moisture. They will lose their lower foliage or not flower well. Watch for stress and try a different watering method if your plants lose flowers.
- Stake the tall varieties to keep them from falling over.
- Pinch or cut back asters by one-third once or twice in the early summer to promote bushier growth and more blooms. Don't worry; they can take it! [Do the Chelsea Chop!](#)
- In winter, cut back asters after the foliage has died, or leave them through the winter to add some off-season interest to your garden. Birds may munch on the seeds, too.
 - **Note:** Aster flowers that mature fully may reseed themselves. The resulting asters may not bloom true to their parent. (In other words, you may not get the same color flowers you planted initially!)

- Divide every 2 to 3 years in the spring to maintain your plant's vigor and flower quality.

Types

The most common asters available in North America are the **New England aster** (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*) and the **New York aster** (*Symphyotrichum novi-belgii*). Both of these plants are native to North America and are great flowers for pollinators. We recommend planting a native species of aster over a non-native species when possible, so talk with your local [Cooperative Extension](#) or garden center about which species are best suited to your area. Look for varieties with disease resistance.

North American Asters

- **New England asters** (*S. novae-angliae*): Varieties have a range of flower colors, from magenta to deep purple. They typically grow

larger than New York asters, though some varieties are smaller.

- **New York asters** (*S. novi-belgii*):
There are many, many varieties of New York asters available. Their flowers range from bright pink to bluish-purple and can be double, semi-double, or single.
- **Blue wood aster** (*S. cordifolium*):
Bushy with small, blue-to-white flowers.
- **Heath aster** (*S. ericoides*): A low-growing ground cover (similar to creeping phlox) with small, white flowers.
- **Smooth aster** (*S. laeve*): A tall, upright aster with small, lavender flowers.
- **Aromatic aster** (*S. oblongifolium*):
Multi-branched at the base, stiff upright stems, with lavender or pink flowers.

European/Eurasian Asters

- **Frikart's aster** (*Aster x frikartii*)
'Mönch': Hailing from Switzerland,

this mid-sized aster has large, lilac-blue flowers.

- **Rhone aster** (*A. sedifolius*) 'Nanus':
This aster is known for its small, star-shaped, lilac-blue flowers and compact growth.

HARVESTING

Cut asters for flower arrangements when blooms are just beginning to open. Vase life is 5 to 10 days.

Asters have side shoots, which will continue to develop. These can be cut for indoor arrangements once they are the size you like.

[Learn more about keeping cut flowers fresh.](#)

GARDENING PRODUCTS

PESTS/DISEASES

Diseases: aster yellows; Botrytis blight; leaf spot, fungal; powdery mildew; rust; rot, Rhizoctonia root and stem, white smut, Fusarium wilt, Verticillium wilt.

Pests: aphids, foliar nematodes, slugs and snails, Tarsonemid mites.

WIT AND WISDOM

- The name aster comes from the Ancient Greek word for “star”—a reference to the plant’s star-shaped flowers.
- Asters are called Michaelmas daisies because they bloom around September 29, the ancient feast day of St. Michael, and a quarter day, marking the transition to autumn.
[Learn more about Quarter Days!](#)
- Asters, one of September’s birth flowers, were once burned to ward off serpents.

“ The asters twinkle
in clusters bright,

While the corn
grows ripe and the
apples mellow.
- Celia Thaxter

FLOWERS

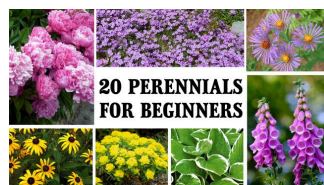
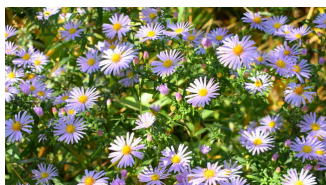
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Boeckmann



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

MORE LIKE THIS



Asters: Stars of the Fall Garden

September Birth Flowers: Asters and Morning Glories

20 Easy-to- Grow Perennial Flowers for Beginners



How to Grow Phlox: The Complete Phlox Flower Guide



How to Grow Lupines: The Complete Lupine Flower Guide



How to Grow Black-eyed Susans: The Complete Black-eyed Susan Flower Guide



GROW YOUR BEST GARDEN YET

Join The Old Farmer's Almanac
Gardening Club Today!

[LEARN MORE](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

COMMENTS

ADD A COMMENT

JR (not verified) 1 year 6 months ago

I challenge this statement: "Asters prefer areas with cool, moist summers and cool nights in sites with full to partial sun." While the native asters in the yard did not do that well during drought conditions in the northeast, the ultra-hot weather this year, combined with higher rainfall produced tall plants with ample blossoms.

ADVERTISEMENT

REPLY

The Editors 1 year 6 months ago

Hi JR,

While asters prefer cooler conditions that does not mean the plants can not survive and even thrive during stretches of hotter conditions, especially once they are established. The flowers do best when the temperatures are cooler in the late summer and fall. Since asters prefer moist soil, it is important that they receive enough water/precipitation to keep them growing during hot and/or dry stretches.

Hot weather can cause plants to be affected, which is why it is important in warmer climates to plant them in an area where they receive some shade during the midday sun. And once cooler tem-

peratures return they tend to
bounce back quite well.

REPLY

ErmaBlack (not verified) 2 years 6
months ago

I have a beautiful very large purple aster
they I would like to split up and replant this
fall is that a good idea.?

REPLY

The Editors 2 years 5 months
ago

It's best to divide flowering plants
when they are not blooming.

Because asters bloom so late into
the year, it's usually best to wait
until early spring to divide and
transplant them
(chrysanthemums, too).

REPLY

ErmaBlack (not verified) 2 years 6 months ago

May I split up a very large aster plant in the fall

REPLY

Ci mcdonald (not verified) 3 years 7 months ago

Can they take heavy humid hot days of our summers??

REPLY

Steve Morgan (not verified) 4 years 7 months ago

I had planted some Aster Flowers, this fall, so that I start getting flowering from the starting summer, few of them started drying up. So I bought a net from Olmsted's

Nursery to avoid excess sunlight. Now they are doing well. Thank You!

REPLY

Sikhar Shriniwas (not verified) 4 years 7 months ago

I am planning to plant some Aster Flowers this fall, so that I start getting flowering from the starting summer. Thank You!

REPLY

I love growing... (not verified) 5 years 5 months ago

Growing asters

REPLY

Rocky (not verified) 5 years 7 months ago

We just had a couple of unusually hot days for Ohio. My potted Aster just lost the majority of its blooms. They turned brown and

shireveld up. Kinda was hoping to plant this
one soon, but now unsure

REPLY

MORE COMMENTS

THE OLD FARMER'S STORE

ADVERTISEMENT

Our Brands

[The Old Farmer's
Almanac for Kids](#)

[Yankee Magazine](#)

[Family Tree
Magazine](#)

[NH Business
Review](#)

Resources

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Free Daily](#)

[Newsletter](#)

[Webcam](#)

[Advertise with Us](#)

Connect with Us

[New Hampshire](#)

[Magazine](#)

[Yankee Custom](#)

[Marketing](#)

[Media Relations](#)

[Sell the Almanac](#)

[Where to Buy](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Cookie List](#)

[Do Not Sell or](#)

[Share My Personal](#)

[Information](#)

©2025 [Yankee Publishing Inc.](#), An Employee-Owned Company

1121 Main Street | P.O. Box 520 | Dublin, NH 03444