



Andy's Garden

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ASTERS



Asters are beautiful fall-blooming perennials that bloom in shades of pink, purple, crimson, blue, or white. They are relatively easy to care for and are more tolerant of our clay soil than mums. Varieties are available in a range of sizes from dwarfs that make a 15 inch mound to New England Asters that become a 3 - 4 feet tall bush. Not only do they bring needed color to the late summer and fall garden, but the flowers are also loved by butterflies. Asters also make excellent cut flowers to use in fresh bouquets.

Asters need to be planted in a location that receives sun at least half of the day and perform best in full sun. They can tolerate drought, but the flowers will be nicer and last longer if the soil is kept moist. Some varieties are susceptible to powdery mildew, but this can be prevented by providing good air circulation, avoiding wetting the foliage in the evening, and keeping the soil consistently moist.

Other perennials, such as Sedum Autumn Joy, Pink Turtlehead (Chelone), Joe-Pye Weed (Eupatorium), and most ornamental grasses (i.e Fountain Grass (Pennisetum) and Miscanthus) make excellent companion plants to asters.

Like mums, asters should be pinched back a couple times in the early spring. This makes the plants more compact and floriferous. Cut the plants back by half in early June and again in early July. A light feeding once a month with a fertilizer for perennials or blooming plants will help to keep your asters happy. Remove old blooms to keep plant tidy looking. Asters should be divided every 3 years to promote the best blooms.



***Making the world beautiful
one flower at a time.***