

NATIVE PERENNIALS

Blazing Star, Meadow



Liatris ligulistylis

Native. Monarch Butterfly magnet! Produces tall purple flower stalk late summer. Grows in moist meadows, prairies, and road ditches. Good garden, rain garden, and landscape plant. Grows 3-4 ft. tall.

Description: These showy native forbs are slender, unbranched plants from 8 to 40 inches tall, depending on species and growing conditions. All arise from thickened corn-like rootstocks. The purple flower heads, produced from August to October, are comprised entirely of disk flowers. Leaves are numerous, alternate, linear, sessile, entire, and variously rough or gland-dotted. Six species occur in South Dakota.

Distribution/Habitat: Blazing Star, Meadow – is a Monarch Butterfly magnet. Produces tall purple flower stalk in late summer. Grows in moist meadows, prairies, and road ditches. Good garden, rain garden, and landscape plant. Grows 3 to 4 feet tall.

Comments: As a group, *Liatris* is readily grazed by livestock and wild grazers. Excessive grazing greatly decreases their abundance. *Liatris*, especially the roots, has long been used medically by Plains Indians. Although tribes did not use all the same species, some general uses are recognized. These include treatments for skin inflammation, wounds, swelling, bloody urine and bladder trouble, gonorrhea, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. Some *Liatris* species roots were used as food by some tribes. However, because of extreme variation within and between species and a lack of knowledge about their specific chemical makeup, gay feather roots should not be eaten. These plants, which are native only to prairies and other open areas in North America, are recognized as attractive yard and bouquet ornamentals. When in bouquets assembled by florists, it is ironic that they are probably grown in European greenhouses. Butterflies flock to the nectar.

Credit: James E. Johnson & Gary E. Larson, Grassland Plants of South Dakota and the Northern Great Plains. SDSU, Brookings, SD. B-566 (rev.) August 1999. Page 128.

Photo Credit: Google Search & Big Sioux Nursery, Inc.,

