

Summary of Key Identification Points of Asters

New England Aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)

- flowers: many rays
- flowers: long, narrow rays
- flowers: rays dark purple; occasionally white-rayed flowers are found
- leaves: clasping
- habitat: fields
- common
- similar to: Smooth Aster, Purple-stemmed Aster, Amethyst Aster

Purple-stemmed Aster (*Aster puniceus var. puniceus*)

- flowers: disc flowers yellow becoming purple
- flowers: rays light purplish-blue
- leaves: clasping
- leaves: may be hairy on upper surface
- stem: smooth to densely hairy
- stem: usually reddish-purple
- habitat: wet places
- common
- similar to: New England Aster, Purple-stemmed Aster

Smooth Aster (*Aster laevis var. laevis*)

- flowers: rays light purplish-blue
- leaves: smooth, waxy, almost rubbery
- stems: smooth
- common
- similar to: Purple-stemmed Aster, New England Aster

Amethyst Aster (*Aster x amethystinus*)

- hybrid between New England Aster & Heath Aster
- characteristics are midway between these two species
- leaves: size and form like Heath Aster
- leaves: clasping like New England Aster
- habitat: fields
- uncommon
- similar to: New England Aster, Heath Aster

Heath Aster (*Aster ericoides*)

- flowers: many, small, crowded, overlapping
- flowers: rays very short
- flowers: discs stay yellow longer
- leaves: often loses lower leaves
- stems: upper stems crowded with incurved hairs
- habitat: fields
- grows in patches (spreads vegetatively)
- common
- similar to: Calico Aster

Summary of Key Identification Points of Asters

Calico Aster (*Aster lateriflorus*)

- flowers: discs turn maroon quicker than others
- flowers: individual corollas more deeply lobed than in other small-flowered white asters.
- branches lateral, widely spreading
- branches relatively long
- habitat: slightly shady places
- common
- similar to: Heath Aster

Azure Aster (*Symphyotrichum oolentangiense* var. *oolentangiense*)

- flowers: sparse rays
- flowers: rays wide
- flowers: rays light purplish-blue
- leaves: don't have the lobing of Heart-leaved Aster
- leaves: teeth few and obscure
- leaves: feel like fine sandpaper
- looser and more open than Heart-leaved Aster
- less common
- similar to: Heart-leaved Aster, Arrow-leaved Aster, Fringed Blue Aster

Fringed Blue Aster (*Symphyotrichum ciliolatum*)

- flowers: inflorescence an open panicle
- flowers: inflorescence many-branched; many tiny linear bracts
- leaves: basal/lower: heart-shaped with little or no notch
- stems: upper are pubescent; lower are smooth
- habitat: open woods & meadows
- less common
- similar to: Heart-leaved Aster, Arrow-leaved Aster, Azure Aster

Arrow-leaved Aster (*Symphyotrichum urophyllum*)

- flowers: white rays
- flowers: discs yellow, turn maroon
- flowers: inflorescence narrow, upward ascending branches; "very up"
- leaves: largest leaves at bottom of stem
- leaves: "arrow"-shaped (more like a diamond shape)
- leaves: few; petiole winged
- leaves: teeth few & inconspicuous
- habitat: fields
- common
- similar to: Heart-leaved Aster

Heart-leaved Aster (*Symphyotrichum cordifolium*)

- flowers: rays light purplish-blue
- flowers: inflorescence scattered, not flat-topped
- leaves: largest leaves at bottom of stem
- leaves: teeth usually coarse
- leaves: distinctive leaf base, widely notched, lobes often overlapping
- habitat: edges of woods
- common
- similar to: Large-leaved Aster, Arrow-leaved Aster

Summary of Key Identification Points of Asters

Large-leaved Aster (*Eurybia macrophyllus*)

- flowers: early in season; earlier than Heart-leaved
- flowers: inflorescence: more or less flat-topped
- leaves: many non-flowering clusters of plants: just leaves
- habitat: in the woods
- common
- similar to: Heart-leaved Aster

Flat-topped White Aster (*Aster umbellatus* var. *umbellatus*)

- flowers: rays white
- flowers: discs yellow becoming brown
- flowers: inflorescence flat-topped
- leaves: upper surface - hairs pointing in one direction - easy to run finger along in one direction only
- leaves: densely packed along upper stem
- leaves: prominent veins
- stem: smooth to densely hairy
- habitat: moist areas
- common

Panicled Aster (*Aster simplex*)

- flowers: white rays, yellow discs
- leaves: narrow
- leaves: lower ones turn brown or are gone by flowering time - dead ones are spiralled
- leaves: largest leaves are well up the stem
- habitat: fields
- common

Rush Aster (*Symphotrichum boreale*)

- flowers: sparse
- leaves: long and very narrow
- leaves: edges inrolled (slightly rolled under)
- habitat: bogs
- less common
- similar to: Panicled Aster, Upland White Aster

Upland White Aster (*Solidago ptarmicoides*)

- flowers: flat-topped cluster
- flowers: white rays
- flowers: few heads per plant, 1-2 per branch
- leaves: narrow
- leaves: basal leaves present at flowering time
- leaves: smaller at top of stem
- habitat: dry areas
- common in certain areas
- similar to: Rush Aster

Frost Aster (*Aster pilosus*)

- flowers: more disc flowers than any other white-rayed Aster
- flowers: discs yellow, stay yellow
- leaves: shaped like Panicled Aster
- leaves: fuzzy
- stem: dense hairs stick straight out; very fuzzy (but there's also a smooth-stemmed variety)
- open, spreading form
- habitat: fields
- common