

# Rough blazing star (*Liatris aspera*)

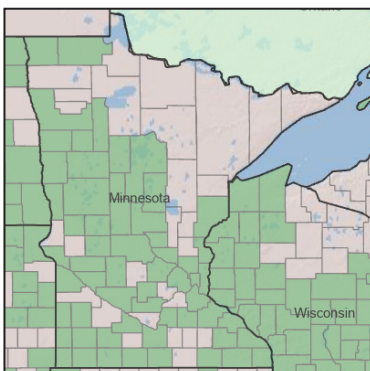
**Family: Aster**  
**(Asteraceae)**

**DESCRIPTION:** A stunningly beautiful perennial, rough blazing star grows up to 3 feet tall with a spiky, pinkish-lavender bloom 6 to 18 inches long. It's also called tall blazing star, rough gayfeather, button snakeroot or button blazing star.

**USES:** Blooming July through October, rough blazing star can be a foundation plant for tallgrass prairie restorations and native pocket gardens. The nectar sustains bees including the federally endangered rusty-patched bumblebee; hummingbirds; and butterflies including the monarch, tiger swallowtail, painted lady and red admiral. Rabbits and deer may eat the leaves, but rarely the flowers. Great Plains tribes treated intestinal problems with tea brewed from the leaves and roots.

**REFERENCES:**

- [Minnesota Wildflowers](#)
- [USDA NRCS Plants](#)
- [Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center](#)



Range Map Credit: NRCS Plants Database



Photo Credit: Dan Shaw, BWSR

**STATEWIDE WETLAND INDICATOR STATUS:** None

**ID:** A central green or purplish stem grows from an underground corm. Lance-shaped, bright green and with a central vein that forms at the base of the stem, the leaves can be mistaken for grass in the spring. Leaves near the top of the stem are narrower and shorter. Flowers bloom from the top down on stiff stems covered with grayish hairs. Each spike of blooms may contain 25 to 40 star-shaped, short-stalked disk flowers.

**SIMILAR SPECIES:**

Four more *Liatris* are native to Minnesota: cylindric, Northern Plains, dotted and prairie blazing stars. Rough blazing star's individual flower heads attach on very short stalks on a slightly zig-zag stem. Its round bracts with fringed, curled edges distinguish it from other blazing star species.

## Planting Recommendations

This resilient, drought-tolerant beauty thrives in full sun and in a variety of soils — rocky, sandy, loam or clay. Plants may be propagated by seed, which requires 60 days of cold stratification to germinate, or by dividing and transplanting root corms in the spring. Adding fertilizer to the soil will likely weaken stem stalks, causing the

plant to fall over; compost is sufficient. Surround rough blazing star with tall prairie flowers and grasses such as big bluestem, butterfly weed, heath aster, purple prairie clover, goldenrod and prairie smoke. The mix will establish a three-season prairie garden that feeds pollinators throughout their life cycle, and offers seeds to migrating birds.

**Developed by Bonny Siegford**, an Itasca County volunteer Extension Master Gardener whose pollinator gardens feature 70-plus native species, she provides plants, education and guidance to encourage pollinator gardens in her community.

