

Native Plant of the Month

New York Ironweed

Vernonia noveboracensis

Family: Asteraceae

New England Distribution

Connecticut - Present

Maine - absent

Massachusetts - present

New Hampshire - present

Rhode Island - present

Vermont - absent

Plant Characteristics

Light: Sun

Type: Herbaceous Perennial

Zone: 5 to 9

Height: 4 - 6ft

Bloom Color: Purple

Bloom Time: August to September

Soil: It is found in moist soils in the

wild, but will flourish in regular and dry soil. Tolerates clay and neutral to acidic conditions.



New York Ironweed is a native plant of the eastern United States, and to southern New England. It is particularly good at attracting butterflies. The Cherokee used an infusion of this species for pains after childbirth as well as for stomach ulcers and hemorrhage.

It is a tall, coarse, upright perennial which typically occurs in the wild in moist thickets, low areas and along streambanks from Massachusetts to Mississippi. Features numerous tiny, fluffy, deep purple, composite flowers (rays absent) in loose, 3-4" wide, terminal clusters (cymes) atop stiff, leafy stems typically growing 4-6' tall. Somewhat suggestive of Joe Pye weed, except leaves of ironweed are alternate. Blooms late summer into fall. Rough, pointed, serrate, lance-shaped leaves (6-8" long). Flowers give way to rusty seed clusters. The source of the common name has been varyingly attributed to certain "iron-like" plant qualities including the tough stems, the rusty-tinged color of fading flowers and the rusty colored seeds.

Propagation - Sow seeds in fall or provide cold stratification. Germination is usually low so sow thickly. Also propagated by softwood cuttings taken in late spring or by division of clumps.

Garden Uses

Background plant for borders. Cottage gardens, wildflower gardens, meadows or naturalized areas.

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=g160>

<https://gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org/species/vernonia/noveboracensis/>