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FARM & GARDEN

Mel's Blue Aster

Stokesia laevis 'Mel's Blue'



Mel's Blue Aster flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 15 inches

Spread: 12 inches

Spacing: 10 inches

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 4b

Other Names: Stoke's Aster

Description:

A compact, rounded cultivar small enough for containers and small gardens; the fragrant periwinkle-blue flowers are showy and plentiful; attracts butterflies and hummingbirds to your garden; tolerates summer heat well; water daily

Ornamental Features

Mel's Blue Aster has masses of beautiful fragrant double sky blue daisy flowers with lilac purple overtones and white centers held atop the stems from mid summer to early fall, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its narrow leaves remain green in color throughout the year.

Landscape Attributes

Mel's Blue Aster is a dense herbaceous evergreen perennial with a mounded form. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Mel's Blue Aster is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

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Planting & Growing

Mel's Blue Aster will grow to be about 14 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 10 inches apart. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 8 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This is a selection of a native North American species. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Mel's Blue Aster is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a mass of flowers against which the thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.