

Liatris - Growing Guide

Growing Liatris

Blazing star, Gay feather

These are native perennial plants from the prairies and open woodland in the south and east of the USA. They grow on dry stony ground but make excellent hardy and long lasting herbaceous border or container grown plants in our gardens or patios. Mice aside they are very easy to grow in full sun in well-drained soil. They have tuber or corm-like flattened root stems which is why they, like so many bulbs, are attractive to mice. We have even found squirrels digging them out of freshly potted compost so plant them a bit deeper than you might normally think. Boggy ground is far from ideal as there is a risk that the rootstocks will rot in winter.

Liatris are best planted as a group of at least three potfulls and preferably five or seven for the best quick results. *L. scariosa* has lance shaped basal leaves and hairy stems. This species has flower spikes of up to 18in in length which are plastered in reddish purple (or white) flower heads. These appear in early autumn. *L. spicata* has hairless stems and lance shaped basal leaves. The flower heads appear in late summer to early autumn and are pink-purple (or white) and the spikes are 18-30in long.



Liatris scariosa 'Alba'



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Liatris spicata

Liatris flower spikes open first at the tips when the flowers at the base of the spike are in tight bud.

Liatris clumps can be lifted and divided manually in the spring while still dormant. Ripe seed can be sown straightaway in autumn in the cold frame.



Liatris scariosa 'Alba'



Liatris scariosa 'Alba'



Liatris spicata



Liatris spicata



Liatris spicata

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