

# **Liatris**

## **CHARACTERISTICS**

**Scientific Name: *Liatris spicata***

**Common Name: Spike gayfeather**

**Season: summer to fall**

**Height: 18-36 inches**

**Hardiness: USDA Hardiness Zone 3-9**

**Flower color: mauve, pink, white**

**Soil: The plant prefers light (sandy) and medium (loamy) soils and requires well-drained soil. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils.**

**Exposure: full sun to light shade**

**Propagation: division of tuberous roots in spring, seed**

**Origin: Eastern North America**

## **Plant Uses**

**Accent: Good Texture/Form**

**Attracts Butterflies**

**Border**

**Containers**

**Cut Flower**

**Deer Resistant**

**Drought Tolerant**

**Rabbit Resistant**

**Massed**

**Wild Flower**



**Comments:**

**The genus *Liatris* belongs to the Asteraceae, or aster family, and is composed of around 40 different species. Common names include gayfeather and blazing star. These showy plants are native to eastern and central United States. The flowers are generally purple, but sometimes white.**

**One of the reasons *liatris* are such popular cut flowers is their unusual mode of blooming. Unlike most plants they bloom from the top of their flower spikes down to the bottom. You can actually cut a portion off the top of the spike to bring indoors, and the remaining flower heads will continue to open and provide color for the landscape.**

***Liatris* is in flower in September. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by bees. It is noted for attracting wildlife. Butterflies are particularly attracted to the nectar-rich blossoms. Birds will also visit as they enjoy the fall-ripening seeds.**

***Liatris* seeds ripen in October, when they can be collected and sown directly outdoors. The seeds need cool and moist conditions in order to germinate in the spring. On older plants, the tuberous corms can be dug and divided during late winter while dormant. Softwood cuttings can also be taken in spring. However, propagation from seed is the easiest and most reliable method.**

***Liatris* will endure heat, cold, drought, and poor soil. Fertilizing will produce larger flower spikes, which will then need to be staked. *Liatris* is best used in mixed perennial borders, with careful planning to avoid color clashed with the rosy purple. It is a beautiful American wildflower which was brought to Europe, popularized as a cut flower and perennial, and then returned to popularity in the USA.**