

# Eastern silver aster

(*Symphyotrichum concolor*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_botanical\\_terms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms).

Eastern silver aster is a winsome wildflower found in Florida's pineland habitats. It typically blooms in fall but may bloom in summer and early winter (or year-round in South Florida). Its many flowers provide nectar for a variety of butterflies.

Eastern silver aster's flowers consist of lavender to bluish-purple ray florets surrounding a compact center of creamy white disk florets. Anthers are reddish-brown and extended.

Leaves are linear and covered with a silky, silvery pubescence (hence its common name of "silver" aster). They are alternately arranged and slightly appressed. Bracts are pubescent with purplish uppers and green undersides. Fruit is an inconspicuous achene.

Members of the *Symphyotrichum* genus were once classified in the genus *Aster*, which contained over 600 species. All have since been reclassified into 10 different genera. The genus name *Symphyotrichum* is from the Greek *sýmphysis*, meaning "growing together," and *thrix*, or "hair." It refers to a basal ring of hairs or bristles (pappi) thought to occur on New England aster (*Aster novi-belgii*, now *Symphyotrichum novi-belgii*); however, this characteristic is absent in most modern *Symphyotrichum* species.

**Family:** Asteraceae (Aster, composite or daisy family)

**Native range:** Nearly throughout Florida with heavier concentration in Panhandle and north/north-central peninsula

To see where natural populations of Eastern silver aster have been vouchered, visit [www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu](http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu).

**Lifespan:** Perennial

**Soil:** Moist, well-drained sandy or calcareous soil

**Exposure:** Full sun to minimal shade

**Growth habit:** 1–3+’ tall

**Propagation:** Seed

**Florida regions of landscape suitability:** North, Central, South

**Garden tips:** Eastern silver aster is suitable for naturalistic landscapes and restorations. It should be planted with grasses and taller wildflowers to help support its stem. The plant grows in low-nutrient soils and is very drought tolerant.

Eastern silver aster plants are occasionally available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit [www.PlantRealFlorida.org](http://www.PlantRealFlorida.org) to find a nursery in your area.



Photo by Eleanor Dietrich

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