



Common name: **New England aster** Genus Species: ***Symphyotrichum novae-angliae***



Photo credit: Harlan B. Herbert, Bugwood.org

Description: New England aster is a native perennial forb, 2.5 to 6 feet tall with hairy stems and leaves. The flower heads are in clusters at the top of main stem branches. Each flower head has 40 or more bright purple (occasionally lavender or pink) ray flowers surrounding a central disk of tiny orange-yellow flowers.

Habitats: New England aster grows in prairie swales, wet meadows, low fields in valleys, and in moist ground along streams and ditches.

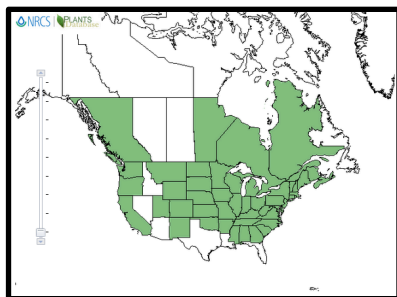
Phenology highlight: The abundant and usually brightly colored New England aster flowers provide welcome color from late summer through mid-autumn.

Species facts

- New England aster is pollinated primarily by long-tongued bees, bee flies, butterflies, and skippers.
- Short-tongued bees and flies also visit the flowers to collect pollen, though they do not pollinate.
- A poultice made from New England aster has been used in the treatment of pain, fevers, and diarrhea.
- New England aster can be used for roadside plantings, prairie restoration, wildlife cover, prairie landscaping and wetland situations.



Photo credit: Celia Cuomo; nyphenologyproject.org



Why observe this species? New England aster is one of the plant species observed by New York Phenology Project member organizations. The mission of this public participation in science research initiative is to educate and engage the public while collecting data that is useful for detecting broad scale patterns in the natural world.

Tip for observing this species: In contrast to most plants, the "Leaves" phenophase of the New England aster does mention the petiole (stalk), because leaves of this species have no petioles, but clasp directly to the main stem.

Map credit: USDA, NRCS. 2014. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>, 03 November 2014). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA

For more information about phenology and the New York Phenology Project (NYPP), please visit the NYPP website (www.nyphenologyproject.org) and the USA-NPN website (www.usanpn.org).



New England aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)

Note: flower and fruit phenophases are nested so you may need to record more than one phenophase for each; for example, if you record **Y** for "open flowers" you should also record **Y** for "flowers or flower buds."

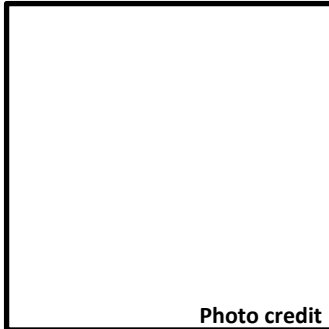


Photo credit

Initial Growth New growth is visible after a period of no growth (winter or drought), from above-ground buds or new shoots breaking through the soil. Growth is "initial" on each bud or shoot until the first leaf has fully unfolded.



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nyphenologyproject.org

Leaves One or more live, fully unfolded leaves are visible on the plant. For seedlings, consider only true leaves, not the two small leaves (cotyledons) found on the stem soon after the seedling sprouts. Do not include dried or dead leaves.



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Flowers or flower buds One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds that are still developing, but do not include wilted or dried flowers.



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Open flowers One or more open fresh flowers are visible. Flowers are "open" when the reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between open flower parts. Do not include wilted or dried flowers.

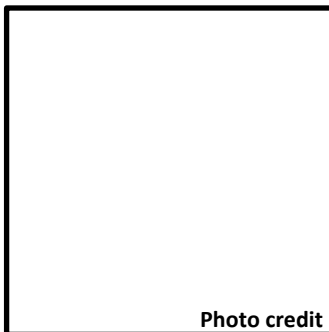


Photo credit

Fruits One or more fruits are visible. New England aster fruits are very tiny and seed-like and are crowded into spent flower heads. Each tiny fruit has a tuft of white hairs. Do not include empty flower heads that have dropped their fruits.



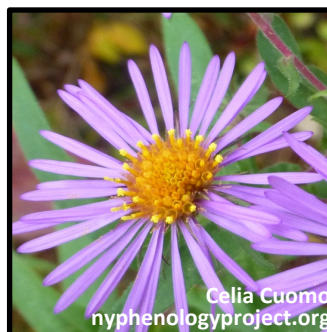
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Ripe fruits One or more ripe fruits are visible. New England aster fruit is ripe when it has turned whitish, dull purple or brown, or when it readily drops or blows away from the spent flower head. Do not include empty flower heads with no fruits.



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Recent fruit or seed drop One or more mature fruits dropped or have been removed since your last visit. Do not include immature fruits that dropped before ripening or empty flower heads that remain on the plant.



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Ray flowers and tube flowers The 'flower' of New England aster is really an aggregate of about 100-150 individual flowers that form a capitulum (flower head). Each purple 'petal' is one ray flower. Many orange-yellow tube flowers form the center.

All phenophases pictured here.