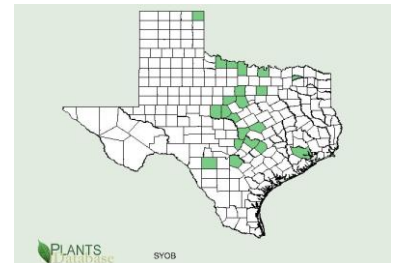


NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS

Lindheimer Chapter

PLANT OF THE MONTH AUGUST, 2012

FALL ASTER, *ASTER OBLONGIFOLIUM*



USDA Range Map: Texas

Fall Aster occurs across much of the US east of the Rockies, but in Texas it is mainly found in the prairie areas in the center of the state. As the name implies it blooms in the fall, when it is covered by dazzling purple flowers with yellow centers which are enjoyed by butterflies and bees. This perennial will grow to 2' tall and 3' wide. It benefits from being cut back by no more than half in June to keep it from getting top-heavy and forming open centers. Once it goes dormant in early winter it can be cut back to the rosette at the base of the plant. However, leaving the dead branches standing until early spring provides food and shelter for Turkey and other gamebirds.

Fall Aster should be given a well drained location in sun or part shade. The plant spreads by stolons (stems that grow at or just below the soil surface). These root and form young plants, eventually forming a large colony. Every third spring or so these should be dug up and divided to prevent the clump from growing too large. Newly planted young plants benefit from deep supplemental watering. However, once established they are fairly drought tolerant. Although it can be started from seed, transplanting small plants found at the base of the main plant is much more efficient. Fall Aster is browsed by deer and requires protection.

Note: Fall Aster is a NPSOT NICE![™] selection for Fall 2012