

Saving Dense Blazing Star:

What you can do to help

Dense Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*) is also known as Spiked Blazing Star. It is a stunning perennial herb with spear-like clusters or spikes of purple or white flowers. Several other native and non-native species of Blazing Star (Rough Blazing Star – *L. aspera*, Slender Blazing Star – *L. cylindracea*, and non-native Prairie Blazing Star – *L. pycnostachya*) look similar but can be distinguished by the scales at the base of the flower heads. These scales have rounded tips in Dense Blazing Star, pointed out-turned tips in Rough Blazing Star, and thin, see-through margins in Prairie Blazing Star. The flowers of Slender Blazing Star are not grouped on a vertical spike as found in Dense Blazing Star.

Do you live near Dense Blazing Star?

In Canada, Dense Blazing Star occurs only in southwestern Ontario. Dense Blazing Star prefers open habitats such as moist prairies, savannahs, dune swales, ditches and abandoned fields, utility and rail corridors. It does well in coarse sands or sandy loam soils that are moist in spring but very dry in summer. Such habitats may have developed as a result of past disturbances (e.g. fire, flooding, drought or overgrazing) or may be small left-over patches of ancient prairies that have now become farms and residential areas.

What you can do to help

- ✓ **Learn to identify this plant.** If you are lucky enough to discover a new population of Dense Blazing Star, be sure to report it to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources or the Natural Heritage Information Centre.
- ✓ **Do not collect this plant** or its parts for medicinal, ornamental or any other uses.
- ✓ **Stay on designated trails** to avoid trampling Dense Blazing Star when you visit natural areas or use your off-road vehicle.



Photo: J. Bowles

Field check

- ✓ Height: up to 2 m
- ✓ Leaves: narrow, long, lower leaves 10-40 cm long and 0.5-2 cm wide, leaves get smaller toward the top of the stem, arranged spirally
- ✓ Flowers: August; 1 cm wide; purple or white; dense clusters on spike; scales at base of flowers have rounded tips
- ✓ Stem: smooth

Did you know?

Dense Blazing Star attracts hummingbirds, songbirds, bees, butterflies and beetles to your garden or natural area.

- ✓ **Landscape with native plant species** from local seed-stock supplied by a reputable garden centre. Dense Blazing Star sold in garden centres is often a hybrid variety crossed with non-native *Liatris* species. Do not buy non-native varieties of Blazing Star. Non-native varieties such as Prairie Blazing Star compete for habitat and crossbreed with Dense Blazing Star.

More Best Stewardship Practices

- ✓ **Keep your pets on a leash** when you walk them in natural areas, as pets can transport invasive plant seeds if they get stuck in the pet's hair.
- ✓ **Learn to identify invasive species.** Your local Conservation Authority or Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Office can provide you with information on invasive species that occur in your area and what you can do to help prevent their spread.
- ✓ **Avoid dumping waste of any kind in natural areas.** Garbage damages plants, pollutes the environment and may introduce invasive species.
- ✓ **Maintain a naturally-vegetated buffer** between Dense Blazing Star and areas you use herbicides. Chemicals contained in the herbicides may be harmful to this plant.
- ✓ **Learn about stewardship activities** in your area and actively participate in protecting Species at Risk. To find more information about stewardship activities in your area, contact your local Stewardship Council or Conservation Authority.
- ✓ **Take advantage of the Environmental Farm Plan program.** To learn more contact the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources or the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.
- ✓ **If you have Species at Risk** on your property, you may be eligible for stewardship programs or financial incentives that support the protection and recovery of Species at Risk and their habitats. Contact the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for more information.
- ✓ **Report any illegal activity** related to plants and wildlife to 1-877-TIPS-MNR (847-7667)

Status

Dense Blazing Star is listed as threatened nationally and provincially. It is illegal to kill, harm or collect this tree, or to destroy its habitat.

Carolinian Canada Coalition is working with local Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Offices, Conservation Authorities and other Non-Governmental Organizations to recover Species at Risk.

You can help the recovery efforts by protecting this species and its habitat.

Good sources of information

Carolinian Canada Coalition:

www.carolinian.org

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources:

Includes information about Ontario Species at Risk
www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/

Natural Heritage Information Centre

<http://nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca/>

Find your local Conservation Authority Office:

www.conservationontario.ca

Government of Canada Species at Risk Public Registry:

www.sararegistry.gc.ca

Find your local Stewardship Council:

www.ontariostewardship.org

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

www.omafra.gov.on.ca/

Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Includes information about the Environmental Farm Plan
ontariosoilcrop.org

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