

CHICAGOLAND GROWS®, INC.

Plant Introduction Program - Plant Release Bulletin #21



Starlite Prairieblues™ False Indigo

Baptisia × *bicolor* 'Starlite' US PPAF, CA PBRAF, EEC PBRAF
Starlite Prairieblues™

Starlite Prairieblues™ is a long-lived, easy-to-grow hybrid *Baptisia* bred at the Chicago Botanic Garden. It produces an impressive springtime display of periwinkle-blue flowers.



Chicagoland Grows® is a nonprofit corporation of the Chicago Botanic Garden, The Morton Arboretum and the Ornamental Growers Association of Northern Illinois (OGA).



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Baptisia × bicolor 'Starlite' US PPAF, CA PBR AF, EEC PBR AF
Starlite Prairieblues™

Botanical Name

Baptisia × bicolor 'Starlite'

Common Name

Starlite Prairieblues™ false indigo

Family

Fabaceae (Pea family)

Origin

Baptisia is a genus consisting of approximately 20 species and natural hybrids of native North American perennials. Starlite Prairieblues™ is a selection from a controlled cross of *Baptisia* (*australis* × *bracteata*) made by Dr. Jim Ault of the Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, Illinois.

Hardiness

U.S.D.A. Zones 4-9

Bloom Season

This selection starts blooming in northern Illinois (U.S.D.A. Zone 5) in mid-May with a heavy flush in late May continuing into June.

General Description and Habit

Starlite Prairieblues™ is a long-lived, easy-to-grow hybrid *Baptisia* that will produce an impressive floral display every spring. It is one of the earliest *Baptisia* selections to bloom at the Chicago Botanic Garden, usually showing color 7 to 10 days before *B. australis* and *Baptisia* Twilite Prairieblues™. Initially vase-shaped, Starlite Prairieblues™ becomes broad-rounded with age and has the appearance of a low, dense shrub. Its blue-green foliage remains clean and attractive all season.

Size

Mature plants are broad-rounded and measure about 3 feet tall and 4 feet wide in 5 years.

Growth Rate

A vigorous grower, it will reach mature size quickly for a *Baptisia*.

Ornamental Characteristics

Vivid violet-lavender buds unfurl to periwinkle, lupinelike flowers with contrasting butter-cream keels. Starlite Prairieblues™ has oversized blossoms held on 24-inch-tall racemes that extend well beyond the foliage and arch gracefully outward as they age. The flowers are positioned closely to each other, creating a very dramatic display in the garden or as a cut flower. The clean, blue-green foliage creates a fantastic backdrop for other flowering plants all summer long. In the late season the inflated seedpods turn charcoal-black and make valuable additions to dried flower arrangements.

Culture

This extremely low-maintenance perennial requires only to be cut back every winter. Starlite Prairieblues™ prefers well-drained dry to medium-wet soils with full sun. It has exceptional tolerance to poor soils and drought. These are long-lived plants that should not be disturbed once established.

Pest and Disease Problems

None known.

Landscape Value

This striking plant makes an excellent specimen but is also effective massed at the back of a perennial border. Makes an outstanding addition to a mixed border or grouped for a naturalistic effect in prairie or meadow settings.

Propagation

Propagate by division, vegetative or root cuttings. Plants propagated from seed will not be true to type.

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The Chicagoland Grows® Plant Introduction Program is dedicated to the evaluation, selection, production and marketing of recommended and new plant cultivars. Plants selected for the program have proven to be adaptable to the Midwest and are made available to the commercial and retail landscape industry through an international network of growers and propagators.



For more information about Chicagoland Grows®, contact the Plant Introduction Department, Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, IL 60022, (847) 835-8301.