

J is for June...

and for multi-purpose **Joe Pye weed**



Just count all those pollinators!

Sometimes overlooked as a common roadside plant, Joe Pye weed offers both outstanding ornamental qualities and great support for pollinators. Tough and easy to grow, this beautiful late-season bloomer deserves its rightful place in our gardens.

Long used as an herbal remedy to lower fevers and other maladies, the plant's common name honors Joe Pye, a Native American healer from New England who reportedly cured typhus with it.

Research by Doug Tallamy (respected author and professor of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware) ranks the plant as one of the top hosts of caterpillars, supporting between two and three hundred species. Add Joe Pye to your garden, and you will be astonished at the number of butterflies and other insects that visit.

Joe Pye weed has sturdy, often purple stems with whorls of attractive foliage. In mid-summer, the plants are topped with rounded pink flower clusters. It prefers moist soils and part sun but can tolerate full sun if given adequate moisture.

The *Eutrochium* (formerly *Eupatorium*) genus actually contains four species of Joe Pye weed native to the United States:



Spotted Joe Pye weed takes its name from purple-speckled stems clad with serrated, lance-shaped, medium green leaves.

- *Eutrochium fistulosum*, hollow or common Joe Pye weed, is the largest, reaching up to six feet tall.
- *E. purpureum*, or sweet Joe Pye weed, has a deep purple stem and a slight vanilla scent when the leaves are crushed.

E. purpureum is more tolerant of shade and drier soils than other species.

- *E. maculatum*, or spotted Joe Pye weed, has a more flat-topped flower. *E. maculatum* 'Gateway' is a popular cultivar that is more compact, growing only four to five feet tall.
- *E. dubium*, commonly known as coastal plain Joe Pye weed, is a wetland species. A cultivar named 'Baby Joe' reaches only two to three feet tall and has fuchsia-pink flowers.

Joe Pye weed's height makes it suited to the back of perennial borders, cottage gardens, meadows, and native plant gardens. Cutting back by six inches in early June will produce a shorter plant with a later bloom period. It combines well with other late-blooming perennials such as asters.