



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Callistephus chinensis*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

China Aster blooms for about six weeks in late summer (Fig. 1). The flowers are red, pink, white, lavender, purple, and blue. Upright types may be used for edging or bedding but may have branches too short for cutting. Branching cultivars are taller and will be large plants if spaced at least one and one half feet apart. Most are 12 to 24 inches tall and are spaced 8 to 15 inches apart. They may be grown in full sun or light shade and in a fertile and well-drained soil. Mulching keeps these shallow rooted plants from drying out. Tall varieties must be given some support. High nitrogen fertilizers may promote disease development.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Callistephus chinensis*

**Pronunciation:** kal-LISS-steff-us chin-NEN-sis

**Common name(s):** China Aster, Annual Aster

**Family:** *Compositae*

**Plant type:** herbaceous; annual

**USDA hardiness zones:** all zones (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** Jun

**Planting month for zone 8:** May

**Planting month for zone 9:** Apr; Oct; Nov; Dec

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** Feb; Mar; Oct; Nov; Dec

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; cut flowers

**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries



Figure 1. China Aster.

### Description

**Height:** 1 to 3 feet

**Spread:** 1 to 2 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** open

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** medium

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Foliage**

- Leaf arrangement:** alternate
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** dentate
- Leaf shape:** spatulate
- Leaf venation:** bowed
- Leaf type and persistence:** not applicable
- Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches
- Leaf color:** green
- Fall color:** not applicable
- Fall characteristic:** not applicable

**Flower**

- Flower color:** white; blue; pink; purple; lavender; orange; salmon
- Flower characteristic:** showy

**Fruit**

- Fruit shape:** no fruit
- Fruit length:** no fruit
- Fruit cover:** no fruit
- Fruit color:** not applicable

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

- Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable
- Current year stem/twig color:** green
- Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

**Culture**

- Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun
- Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; acidic; loam; alkaline
- Drought tolerance:**
- Soil salt tolerances:** unknown
- Plant spacing:** 6 to 12 inches

**Other**

- Roots:** not applicable
- Winter interest:** not applicable
- Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding
- Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

blossoms are yellowish and branches form in the leaf axils. The plants rarely die but infected plants are a source of the disease organism. Control leafhoppers and remove infected plants as they are noticed.

## Use and Management

The seed may be planted directly into the garden, however seed started indoors gives best results. The seed germinates in ten to fourteen days at 70-degrees F. Start seeds six weeks before plants are to be set in the garden. Do not cover the seed with more than an eighth inch of soil. China aster dislikes transplanting. A fall planting will provide winter color in USDA hardiness zone 10.

Leafhopper feeds on China aster and carries aster yellows.

Aphids suck juices.

Black blister beetle feeds on flowers and foliage in the middle of June.

Tarnished plant bug punctures the terminal shoot below the flowers and injects a poison causing the flower to die.

Mites cause the plants to lose their good green color and appear stippled. Heavy infestations develop noticeable amounts of very fine webbing.

## Pests and Diseases

The most serious disease on china aster is fusarium wilt. The disease may develop shortly after plants are set out or when they are full grown. The leaves become yellowish and the lower leaves wilt. Pink spores may be found on stems at, or just below, the soil level. The plant may show one sided development. Do not compost diseased plants and use resistant cultivars.

Root rot causes stems and roots to appear water-soaked and black. Do not compost diseased plants and do not replant china aster in the same spot.

A rust disease causes bright yellowish orange spots on the undersides of leaves. This disease will be rare in most home gardens.

Gray mold causes blossom blight under cool moist conditions. Remove and destroy infected plants and plant parts.

Several leaf spots may attack China Aster.

Aster yellows is transmitted by insects feeding on diseased plants then inoculating healthy plants. The leaves and affected