Aster laevis
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Introduction

*Aster laevis* is a sturdy branching perennial that reaches a height of 6 to 18 inches. The grey-silver leaves of Smooth Aster have a fine texture, and light blue daisy-like flowers appear on the plant in the late spring, summer, and fall. The Smooth Aster is not especially showy but has been proven to be reliable.

General Information

**Scientific name:** *Aster laevis*
**Pronunciation:** ASS-ter LEE-viss
**Common name(s):** Aster
**Family:** Compositaceae
**Plant type:** herbaceous
**USDA hardiness zones:** 4B through 9A (Fig. 1)
**Planting month for zone 7:** year round
**Planting month for zone 8:** year round
**Planting month for zone 9:** year round
**Origin:** native to Florida
**Uses:** mass planting; edging; attracts butterflies; cut flowers
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

**Height:** 2 to 3 feet
**Spread:** 2 to 4 feet
**Plant habit:** upright
**Plant density:** symmetrical habit with a regular (or smooth) outline and individuals having more or less identical forms

**Growth rate:** fast
**Texture:** fine

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate
**Leaf type:** simple
**Leaf margin:** entire
**Leaf shape:** lanceolate
**Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches
**Leaf color:** green
**Fall color:** no fall color change
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** lavender
**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; fall flowering

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** unknown
**Fruit length:** unknown
**Fruit cover:** unknown
**Fruit color:** white
**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

The flowers of Smooth Aster can be cut for flower arrangements, as they last several days indoors. The plant performs well as an edging in the landscape or in a group planting. It makes a nice component in a mixed border.

This perennial requires full sun and a well-drained soil. *Aster laevis* is drought tolerant.

Smooth Aster is propagated by softwood cuttings or by division.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.