

Amsonia 'Blue Ice' | Blue Ice Eastern Bluestar



Flower description / bloom time

Dark blue buds open to clusters of bright, lavender-blue, star-like flowers from May into June for about 6 weeks. Each star-like bloom is $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide.



Foliage interest—color/texture

'Blue Ice' has very clean, lustrous green, willow-like foliage that turns yellow in fall.

Habit and growth rate observations

This is a compact, mounded plant. The size reported varied from 1 to 2 feet tall but the width averaged twice as wide as tall. This compact cultivar does not need to be cut back after flowering, and generally requires no staking or support when grown in full sun to part shade.

Site preference—soil and light

'Blue Ice' does well in sun to light shade. It performs well in average garden soil with good drainage. The trial for *Amsonia* 'Blue Ice' included the drought of 2005 and it performed very well with only a little extra watering required.

Successes and possible drawbacks—how to overcome them

The strong habit and easy care make it a great choice for the garden. It lacks the size of *Amsonia tabernaemontana* and the fine-texture of *Amsonia hubrichtii* but makes up for it with darker, more impressive flowers and a sturdy mounded habit.

Notes from growers/retailers

Although it is a slow grower with a long production time [slow to fill a #1 container], it has no pest or disease problems. *Amsonia* 'Blue Ice' is rated USDA Zones 4 to 9 for hardiness.

Best combinations

'Blue Ice' can be combined with taller grasses such as *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Stricta' (feather reed grass), *Iris sibirica* 'Caesar's Brother' which bloom at the same time, and contrasts nicely with *Heuchera* 'Lime Rickey' or other plants with yellow or chartreuse foliage.

Parting "SHOT" – the overall evaluation results were Excellent 🌸🌸🌸

All plants under evaluation survived in each location. *Amsonia* 'Blue Ice' was rated as an excellent plant for the garden for its great blooms, pleasing foliage and clean form. It is a carefree plant requiring no extra care but adds beauty to the garden with its spring flowers, summer foliage and habit, and added yellow fall color.

Evaluated 2004-2007

