

# Perennial Pairings

## Horticulture Hint — October 2016

by Jeanne Nevard

This month will feature a trio of complementary fall plants: the **Azure Monkshood**, **Nippon (or Montauk) Daisy** and **Tatarian Aster**.

All 3 bloom around the same time, share similar light requirements and are attractive together displaying two purple tones against white blooms. They are all important, late season pollinator plants.

### Azure Monkshood

#### *Aconitum 'Carmichaelii'*

- Poisonous plant wear gloves, a substitute is Turtlehead
- Full sun to part shade
- 3-5' tall, slender, may need staking, 1-3' spacing
- Blooms early to late fall
- Tolerates average to rich moist soil, mulch is preferred
- Thick, fleshy roots prefer not to be moved, but can be gently transplanted in spring or fall when well watered
- Deep purple flowers on a tall stalk
- A striking bumblebee plant



### Nippon (or Montauk) Daisy

#### *Chrysanthemum 'Nipponicum'*

- Full sun
- 5-8' tall, 1-3' bushy, prune for shape in early spring to mid-summer
- Blooms early to late fall
- Tolerates average dry to sandy, well-drained soil
- Salt and drought tolerant
- White with yellow center flowers
- Butterfly, birds and bee magnet
- Originated in China in cultivation for 2,500 years before coming to west. \* see below for history.



### Tatarian Aster

#### *Aster 'Tataricus'*

- Full sun to part shade
- 5-8' tall, 1-3' spread forms colonies
- Blooms early to late fall
- Tolerates average to moist soil
- Light lavender flowers
- A great, dramatic meadow plant
- Butterfly and bee magnet



### History of the Montauk Daisy

Below is an excerpt from a website **Dave's Garden** highlighting the Montauk daisy- its origin & care:

Called "Montauk daisy", despite its Japanese origins, because it's naturalized on the beaches at Montauk on Long Island.

\* I've read that a ship returning from Japan in the 1800's was wrecked at Montauk, and some of these tough plants washed ashore alive. (Perhaps the wreck is a horticultural legend, but the plants are naturalized there today.)

To keep this semi-shrub growing in a neat fresh even mound, I cut the stems back by around half in the fall, enough to keep the snow and ice from breaking the stems. Then in early spring when new growth is beginning, I cut the stems back harder. Neglected plants may splay open with age and develop heavy but weak sprawling woody stems with little growth near the base.

When cutting back in the spring, don't cut the woody stems below the lowest point where you see buds swelling.

The attractive foliage is glossy, dark green, and fleshy, almost succulent. When brushed, it releases a strong, pungent chrysanthemum fragrance.

One of the last plants to bloom before frost here, blooming in October and November. When in bloom, it covers itself in flowers.