

## Tradescant's Aster

*Symphotrichum tradescantii*

NS General Status Rank: Secure

HERBS: NON-WOODY PLANTS



© MEGAN CROWLEY

© SEAN BLANEY



© ALAIN BELLIVEAU



Leaf

© MEGAN CROWLEY

© ALAIN BELLIVEAU

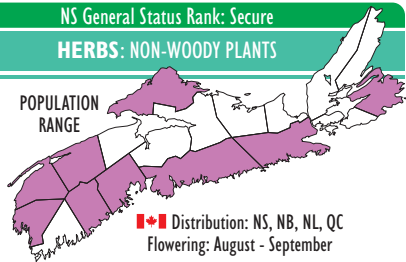


Long hairs of the seeds



Flower head with yellowish-purple center

POPULATION RANGE



■ Distribution: NS, NB, NL, QC  
Flowering: August - September

**SIZE:** 20-40 cm tall.

**LEAVES:** Narrow, linear or lance-shaped, smooth (no hairs), 3-10 cm long and 3-10 mm wide. The leaf edges are smooth (entire) or with shallow teeth. They have a line down the center (midrib).

**STEM:** Slender and fine.

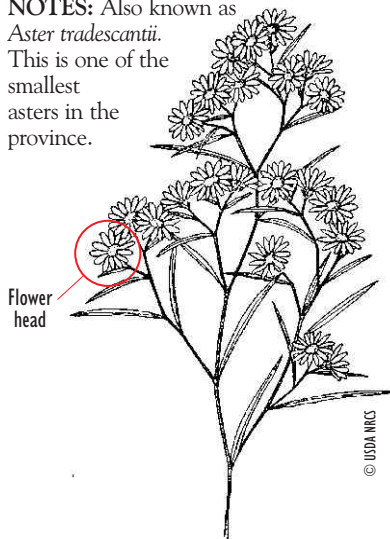
**FLOWERS:** There are numerous flower heads on short branches either at the top of the plant or where the leaves attach to the stem (leaf axils). The center of the flower head is made up of many smaller flowers (disc florets) which range in colour from purple to yellow. They are surrounded by 15-20 whitish, narrow petal-like rays, each 4-8 mm long.

**FRUITS:** Small, dry, flattened fruits (achenes) containing a single seed. The seeds are attached to long hairs that allow them to easily be carried by wind.

**NOTES:** Also known as

*Aster tradescantii*.

This is one of the smallest asters in the province.



Flower head

© USDA WPCS

### Habitat:

Gravelly and sandy lakeshores and streams.

**Interesting point:** The field of study dedicated to Asters is called *synantherology*.

**Similar species:** New York Aster (*Symphotrichum novi-belgii*) has wider flower heads with pale violet petals (rays) and is generally taller with longer leaves. New York Aster plants in southwest NS look different than the pictures in plant guides and have narrower leaves. Calico Aster (*Symphotrichum lateriflorum*) is infrequent on lakeshores (though common in disturbed areas like cottage lawns near lakeshores). It has similar small, white flower heads but tends to have main branches starting low on the plant and densely hairy midveins on the leaf undersides.



New York Aster flowers

© SEAN BLANEY