



## ASTER TATARICUS 'JINDAI'

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"Asters have long been valued for their late-season colour—notably the North American "asters" now mostly reassigned to the genus *Symphyotrichum*

However, the prize for extreme late flowering goes to a true aster: *Aster tataricus*, a resilient but attractive East Asian perennial whose range extends into Siberia and Mongolia and can flower even into early winter.

This aster stands out from the crowd in shape and size, with dense rosettes of unusually large paddle-shaped leaves that can exceed 45cm in length. This distinctive deep green foliage holds the ground well through the early growing season before flowering stems with smaller leaves gradually gain height during the summer. Flat-topped clusters of purple-blue, yellow-centred flowers appear from early autumn onwards.

At up to 2m in height, the species grows exceptionally tall for an aster. For most urban schemes, the more compact cultivar 'Jindai' will be found more suitable, though still far from the dwarf, at 1.2m.

Sturdy and not requiring staking, the cultivar is very drought tolerant and performs well in the sun or half-shade.

Its robust nature makes it most suitable for larger-scale natural planting schemes, where it associates well with tall grasses and other late-autumn performers such as *Amsonia* and *Solidago*.

It increases by means of rhizomes, which can spread aggressively in fertile loams (less so in leaner soils). This tendency can be managed—or even exploited, as Piet Oudolf has done in several projects—by positioning them as scattered accent plants, allowing their natural spread to be absorbed within the natural play of a dynamic planting scheme.

Remarkably resistant to early frosts, *A. tataricus* often provides striking oases of fresh-looking foliage even as the surrounding vegetation sits brown and frosted off—a striking and highly distinctive addition to the perennial plant palette."