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JOE PYE WEED—A POLLINATOR'S DESSERT

Native to the Eastern half of the United States, Joe Pye Weed has a sweet vanilla scent that attracts a host of pollinators, especially butterflies. There are five native species with *Eutrochium purpureum* being the most common.

It's a herbaceous perennial that can reach seven feet in a wildflower garden or meadow. Its long purple stems are topped by large clusters of small purple mauve blossoms that begin blooming in July and continue into the fall, thus complimenting autumn flowers, such as golden rod and asters. As autumn temperatures drop, it dies back to dormancy after which the stems can be clipped to four inches. Large root clumps can easily be divided while it is dormant. Seeds can also be collected and directly planted (raked into the soil) in the fall with plants emerging in mid spring. Like most native plants, Joe Pye Weed is basically free of disease and insect problems, though powdery mildew can affect its leaves in very humid conditions.



Finally, where did this name originate? According to an article in the New York Times, there was once an Indian medicine man living in the 1700's in Western Massachusetts named 'Jopi' who concocted from the weed's roots a cure for typhoid fever, thus stopping an epidemic. Its roots and leaves are used in a number of homeopathic teas to relieve ailments such as asthma, chronic coughs, rheumatism, etc.

Joe Pye Weed as a native plant, an herb, a wildflower and a butterfly magnet, is perfect for all types of gardens... (I will gladly share roots clumps and seeds!)