

False Indigo



False Indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*)

General Description

Native legume to North Dakota and throughout the Great Plains east to New England and south to the Gulf States. This plant has been cultivated since 1724 and grows well in moist soils. Subject to periodic dieback and regrowth which may be accentuated by drought. Similar to a sub-shrub.

Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Alternate.

Bud Color - Brownish-gray.

Bud Size - 1/8 inch long.

Leaf Type and Shape - Pinnately-compound, 13 to 33 narrow leaflets, rounded on the ends, mucronate.

Leaf Margins - Entire, no serrations.

Leaf Surface - Finely-pubescent to smooth.

Leaf Length - 6 to 12 inches; leaflet 1 to 1½ inches.

Leaf Width - 2 to 3 inches; leaflet 1/3 to 3/4 inch.

Leaf Color - Dark green; yellow fall color.

Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Clustered spikes, 3 to 6 inches long.

Flower Color - Bluish-purple.

Fruit Type - Curved pods, 1/4 to 3/8 inch long, ripen in August.

Fruit Color - Light green, becoming dark brown.

Form

Growth Habit - Upright shrub with most foliage on upper 1/3 of the plant. Plants can spread by layering.

Texture - Medium-fine, summer; medium-coarse, winter.

Crown Height - 8 to 12 feet.

Crown Width - 6 to 10 feet.

Bark Color - Brownish-gray.

Root System - Fibrous, spreading, holds soil from erosion, especially on sandy sites.

Environmental Requirements

Soil

Soil Texture - Adapted to a variety of soils.

Soil pH - 5.0 to 8.0.

Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 1K, 2, 3, 4, 4C, 5.

Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 3.

Water

Prefers above average moisture conditions.

Light

Full sun or light shade.

Uses

Conservation/Windbreaks

Conservation plantings along stream banks for erosion control. Often short-lived, especially if droughty.

Wildlife

Dense shrub form provides cover to many wildlife species near wetland and riparian areas.

Agroforestry Products

No known products.

Urban/Recreational

Limited uses in landscape, parks and other public areas.

Cultivated Varieties

None.

Related Species

Dwarf False Indigo (*Amorpha nana*)

Lead Plant (*A. canescens*)

Pests

Diseases include rust, leaf spot, powdery mildew and twig canker. There are a few gall insect pests. Extracts of *Amorpha* species are toxic to various insect pests.