

**FAMILY**

Fabaceae

GENUS*Baptisia***SPECIFIC EPITHET***australis***COMMON NAMES**blue wild indigo,
false indigo**FLOWER COLOR**

blue to violet

BLOOM PERIOD

spring

PLANT TYPE

perennial

PROPAGATION

seeds, cuttings

USE

dyeing, medicinal

HEIGHT/WIDTH

3-4'/3-4'

LIGHT

full sun

SOIL

rich, moist

WATER

normal to moist

ZONE

3-8

HABIT

upright, shrub

2010 Promising Plant

Baptisia australis

Promising Qualities

- ◆ 2010 Perennial Plant of the Year
- ◆ Heat resistant
- ◆ Native genus
- ◆ Eye-catching fruit

The next time you visit the nursery nearest you don't pass up what looks like dead sticks in a pot; you may be passing up the opportunity to enjoy the eye-catching false indigo in your garden. *Baptisia australis* is native from the Eastern United States to the Midwest (1) and can be found growing in a wide range of zones. The plant has beautiful blue flowers which grow in long spikes and can last up to four weeks in the spring. They make a striking contrast against the light blue-green, succulent foliage. The long dark seed pods add to ornamental appeal of *B. australis*, and they are highly prized for flower arrangements. False indigo has an extremely long taproot which makes it nearly impossible to divide and transplant. Propagation by seed may be difficult but it can be enhanced by scarification of the seeds. The shades of the blue flowers may vary when this herb is grown from seed.(2) False indigo spreads by rhizomes below the soil surface, so the gardener should give it plenty of room to grow. Used as a dye plant and has medicinal value for Native Americans.

Where can I find this plant?

- ◆ Bluestone Perennials www.bluestoneperennials.com
- ◆ Jackson & Perkins Co. - www.jacksonandperkins.com
- ◆ Richter's Herbs www.richters.com

The Herb Society of America
9019 Kirtland Chardon Road
Kirtland, OH 44094
440.256.0514
www.herbsociety.org



Photos courtesy of Robin Siktberg/The Herb Society of America

1. Armitage, Allan M. 2006. Armitage's native plants for North American Gardens. Portland, Oregon: Timber Press.
2. Armitage, Allan M. 2008. Herbaceous perennial plants, third edition. University of Georgia.