

AZURE ASTER

Symphyotrichum oolentangiense var.
oolentangiense (Riddell) Nesom

Synonyms: *Aster azureus* Lindl. var. *azureus* ;
Aster oolentangiensis Riddell var.
oolentangiensis

Family: Asteraceae (composite)

FNAI Ranks: G5T5/S1

Legal Status: US-none; FL-none



Ray flowers violet with 10 - 20 per flower. Photo © Scott Ward.

Field Description: Perennial **herb** 20 - 150 cm, cespitose; short-rhizomatous or with branched, woody caudices. **Leaves** usually scabrous or pubescent adaxially, entire to weakly undulate or crenate-serrate; cauline leaves narrowly lanceolate, with bases cuneate to attenuate, gradually narrowed onto the petiole or sessile; **petioles** not notably dilated at the base; basal leaves cordate; **inflorescence** denser, rays blue or purple, sometimes pale; phyllary tips appressed or ascending and with a short diamond-shaped green blaze (1 - 1.5 times as long as wide); heads smaller: involucre 3.8 - 7 (-8) mm high; **disc flowers** (8-) 10 - 25 (-30); **ray flowers** 8 - 20 (-25).

Similar Species: This species is somewhat similar to wavyleaf aster (*Symphyotrichum undulatum*) but wavyleaf aster has at least some cauline leaves with petiole wings dilated to cordate-clasping bases (often panduriform); cauline leaf blades ovate to lanceolate, bases cordate to broadly cuneate, upper sessile and clasping; upper stems and often adaxial leaf surfaces densely hirtellous with whitish hairs.

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Related Rare Species: An uncommon, potentially rare aster, Short's aster (*Symphyotrichum shortii*), can be differentiated from this species by stem leaves nearly all distinctly petiolate, petioles scarcely winged, blade bases cordate to subcordate; leaves glabrous adaxially except on veins. It also occurs on upland glades and within calcareous upland hardwood forest communities.

Habitat: Prairies, glades and upland mixed woodland.

Best Survey Season: Flowering and fruiting August - November.

Range-wide Distribution: NY, ON, MN, and SD, south to Panhandle FL and TX. Reported for GA. East to southwestern TN, AL, and Panhandle FL.

Conservation Status: Two extant locations exist and one is protected but is in need of prescribed fire. Suitable habitat for the species occurs on several protected sites where surveys should occur to determine the species presence. Mowing, forestry management practices, and the continuation or manipulation of prescribed fire management within the element's habitat are the greatest threats for the species.

Protection and Management: Continue to apply prescribed fire at the appropriate time intervals in upland mixed woodland, where the element may occur on protected lands in Jackson County.

References: Chester, Wofford, & Kral 1997, Fernald 1950, Kartesz 1994, Weakley, A. S. and the Southeastern Flora Team 2024, Wunderlin & Hansen 2008



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Phyllaries in 4 - 6 series, appressed, with apical green zones in a diamond-shaped. Photo © Scott Ward.



Cauline leaves narrowly lanceolate (much longer than wide, and widest below the middle). Photo © Scott Ward.