

# CHICAGOLAND GROWS<sup>®</sup>, INC.

*Plant Introduction Program - Plant Release Bulletin #25*

## **Midnight False Indigo – Prairieblues<sup>™</sup>**

*Baptisia* 'Midnight' PP#20432

The Midnight False Indigo features an elegant vase-shaped habit and a profusion of deep violet-blue flowers on 24-inch-long racemes. Shorter secondary flower stems keep this selection in bloom for upwards of a month. Developed at the Chicago Botanic Garden.



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# Midnight False Indigo – Prairieblues™

*Baptisia* 'Midnight' PP#20432

## Botanical Name

*Baptisia* 'Midnight'

## Common Name

Midnight false indigo

## Family

Fabaceae (Pea family)

## Origin

Midnight false indigo was selected in 2003 by Dr. Jim Ault of the Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, Illinois, from an open-pollinated seedling population. The seed parent was a hybrid of [*Baptisia tinctoria* x *Baptisia alba*]. The pollen parent is thought to be *Baptisia australis*. The selection features traits from all three parent species.

## Hardiness

USDA Zones 4-9

## Bloom Season

This selection blooms for nearly the entire month of June in northern Illinois (USDA Zone 5).

## Plant Habit

The plant possesses a distinct vase-shaped habit in youth, with a wider head of foliage as it matures. Produces fewer stems to a plant than more vigorous *Baptisia*, such as *B. australis* and *B. 'Twilite'*, which helps accommodate it in a smaller landscape. The primary stems are strongly erect and hold the primary inflorescences well above the foliage. The upper branches divide and produce shorter inflorescences, extending the bloom season. The strong stems hold up well to summer storms.

## Size

Mature plants are broad rounded and measure about 4 feet tall and 4½ feet wide in five years.

## Growth Rate

Medium vigor for a false indigo. A mature plant tends to have fewer stems than more vigorous *Baptisia* such as *B. australis* and *B. 'Twilite'*.

## Ornamental Characteristics

The dark violet-blue flowers are borne in profusion on the 24-inch-long primary inflorescences. The shorter secondary inflorescences come into bloom as the primary inflorescences are finishing up, extending this selection's bloom season to three to four weeks, longer than most *Baptisia*. The fine-textured foliage remains an attractive green all season until the first hard freeze of autumn.

## Culture

This low-maintenance perennial requires only to be cut back every winter. Midnight false indigo prefers a well-drained, mesic to dry soil with full sun. Excellent in sandy soils and tolerant of clay soils that are not overly wet. Drought tolerant once established. These long-lived plants produce extensive root systems and are best not disturbed once established.

## Pest and Disease Problems

None known.

## Landscape Value

This striking plant makes an excellent specimen but is also effective massed at the back of a perennial border. Can be an outstanding addition to a mixed border or grouped for a naturalistic effect in prairie or meadow settings. Its durability lends it to low-maintenance landscapes. The upright stems and their lack of lowermost foliage make 'Midnight' suitable for planting close to other plants in the landscape, unlike some false indigos such as *B. australis*.

## Propagation

Propagate by division, vegetative or root cuttings. Plants propagated from seed will not be true to type.

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The Chicagoland Grows® Plant Introduction Program is dedicated to the evaluation, selection, production, and marketing of recommended and new plant cultivars. Plants selected for the program have proven to be adaptable to the Midwest and are made available to the commercial and retail landscape industry through an international network of growers and propagators.

