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.