

CHICAGOLAND GROWS[®], INC.

Plant Introduction Program - Plant Release Bulletin #26



Solar Flare Prairieblues[™] False Indigo

Baptisia 'Solar Flare' US PPAF
Solar Flare Prairieblues[™]

Solar Flare Prairieblues[™] features purplish stems in spring, followed by yellow flowers that take on a unique orange to violet hue with age. A vigorous, easy-to-grow hybrid *Baptisia* developed at the Chicago Botanic Garden.



Chicagoland Grows[®] is a nonprofit corporation of the Chicago Botanic Garden, The Morton Arboretum, and the Ornamental Growers Association of Northern Illinois (OGA).



Solar Flare Prairieblues™ False Indigo

Baptisia 'Solar Flare' US PPAF
Solar Flare Prairieblues™

Botanical Name

Baptisia 'Solar Flare'

Common Name

Solar Flare Prairieblues™ false indigo

Family

Fabaceae (Pea family)

Origin

Solar Flare Prairieblues™ was selected in 2004 by Dr. Jim Ault of the Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, Illinois, from an open-pollinated seedling population. The seed parent was thought to be a hybrid of [*Baptisia tinctoria* x *Baptisia alba*] x *Baptisia australis*. The pollen parent is unknown, but traits suggest *Baptisia sphaerocarpa*.

Hardiness

USDA Zones 4-9

Bloom Season

This selection blooms for two to three weeks in early to mid-June in northern Illinois (USDA Zone 5).

Plant Habit

Primary stems are produced in numbers on a mature plant. Initially strong and erect, the upper portions of each stem branch repeatedly to produce a broad-rounded head over stout stems below. 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

A vigorous grower, it will reach mature size quickly for a *Baptisia*.

Ornamental Characteristics

The emerging stems in spring exhibit a distinct purplish cast that persists for several weeks. In early to mid-June (in USDA Zone 5) medium yellow flowers appear on long primary inflorescences held above the foliage. Flowers take on a distinct orange to violet cast with age, producing a unique two-toned inflorescence. Shorter secondary flower stems are produced throughout the expanding foliage, extending the bloom display. The medium green foliage remains attractive all season.

Culture

This low-maintenance perennial requires only to be cut back every winter. Solar Flare Prairieblues™ 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 lend this selection to close interplanting with shorter perennials, 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.

