



Redding Garden Club Garden Tips

Arkansas Blue Star (*Amsonia hubrichtii*) 2011 Perennial Plant of the Year

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Each year the members of the Perennial Plant Association select a plant that has proven itself easy to grow and attractive over several seasons. For 2011, the Perennial Plant of the Year is *Amsonia hubrichtii*. Also known as Arkansas blue star and thread-leaf blue star, this plant grows to about three feet high and wide, resembling a small shrub.

Amsonia earns its place in your garden by looking good for three seasons. Its narrow, thread-like leaves are a fresh green in Spring and Summer, offering a soft texture to the perennial border. In late Spring, it covers itself with small, blue star-like blossoms. Perhaps its finest hour is in Fall, when the foliage turns a striking bright golden yellow. It looks wonderful among ornamental grasses and plants with attractive seedheads such as Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) and Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*). As with most perennials, it makes the best impact when massed in a group of three or more.

Amsonia hubrichtii is hardy in zones 4 through 9 and thrives in full sun to partial shade. It is adaptable to a wide range of soils and will tolerate dry conditions once established. In my experience, as with most plants, it grows best and produces the best color when it receives more sun. It is very hardy and low maintenance, unappealing to deer and other pests. It can be cut back to the ground after its foliage has dropped and divided in the spring.

Though we can't plant now, we can plan! Add this to your list.

