

Blue giant hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)

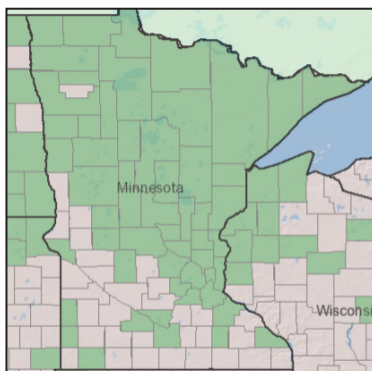
Family: Mint
(*Lamiaceae*)

DESCRIPTION: A perennial member of the mint family with leaves that smell like licorice and purplish flowers that grow in showy spikes, blue giant hyssop is an excellent source of nectar for honeybees and native bees. It grows up to 5 feet tall, flourishing in part shade and moist, well-drained soils.

USES: A long taproot and fibrous roots make the species effective at stabilizing shorelines. It can add pollinator habitat and beauty to prairie plantings, rain gardens, shorelines and woodland edges. Its ability to grow in both moist soils and drought conditions make it a good choice around retention ponds or in dry ponds. The species feeds a wide range of pollinators including honeybees, bumble bees, masked bees, halictid bees, leaf-cutting bees, native flies, butterflies, skippers and moths.

REFERENCES:

[Minnesota Wildflowers](#)
[USDA Plants Database](#)



Range Map Credit: NRCS Plants Database



Photo Credit: Prairie Moon Nursery

STATEWIDE WETLAND INDICATOR STATUS: None

ID: Plants are topped by showy, purplish flower spikes that bloom in mid- to late summer. Composed of dense whorls of individual flowers, the unscented flower spikes grow 1 to 5 inches long. Like other mints, plants have square stems and opposite leaves. Coarsely toothed and emanating a licorice smell when crushed, the leaves grow up to 4 inches long, with short petioles. They're dull green, with whitish undersides. Plants grow in clumps that can spread over time.

Planting Recommendations

Plants can be propagated from seed, started as bare-root or containerized plants, or by transplanting. The tiny seeds (90,000 per ounce) should be broadcast on the soil surface. Seeds are planted in late fall for good seed-to-soil contact, and to naturally achieve the cold moist stratification necessary to break dormancy. Seeds also can be successfully

grown in trays or containers, as the species tends to grow quickly. Transplanting can take place in early spring or late fall. Individual clumps can be separated. Plants prefer part shade and moist soils, but grow in full sun and tolerate drought conditions. The species is also deer-resistant; deer avoid eating the foliage of plants in the mint family.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Purple giant hyssop (*Agastache scrophulariifolia*) is generally shorter. Its leaves don't smell like licorice, and are darker green underneath. Hedge nettle's (*Stachys palustris*) individual flowers grow up to 0.75 inch long, in spikes with about six flowers; its stems are hairy along the edges. Wild germander's (*Teucrium canadense*) individual flowers grow up to 0.75 inch long in a spike; its serrated leaves grow up to 5 inches long; hairs appear on the leaves and stem.