“Favorite Flowers & Plants of the Chesapeake Master Gardeners”

Stokes’ Aster by Helene Haluska

Latin name/cultivar: ***Stokesia laevis*** **‘Blue Danube’**
Common name: Stokes’ aster
Family name: Asteraceae

Stokes’ aster is an evergreen perennial with fluffy, cornflower-like, deep sky-blue flowers with small white centers. I like this plant because of its blue flowers, which are about 3 inches wide, and the fact that the plant is easy to grow. It doesn’t have any serious diseases or pests and is covered with blooms for several weeks in early summer. The only maintenance I’ve done in the three years I’ve had this plant is to deadhead it after it stops blooming and cut back the foliage in late winter.

The Stokes’ aster is native to the southeastern coastal plain from North Carolina to Florida, then west to Louisiana. It grows to 1.5 – 2.0 feet tall with an equal spread, prefers full sun, and likes moist, sandy soils. It needs a well-drained location, especially in the winter. It can grow in zones 5 through 9. The flowers on the cultivar I have tend to close up at night and when there in minimal light, and do the same in the house as cut flowers,

Photo by Helene Haluska
Reference: Missouri Botanical Garden/ Plant Finder