



FYN Garden Q & A Series

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Yards & Neighborhoods



FYN Topic: Ageratum and Blue Mistflower

Question: Is ageratum a native? If not, is it invasive? I recently purchased some tropical sage and this flower has sprouted from within it. I'm wondering if I should get rid of it.

from Florida Yards website

Answer: Depending on your nursery source, *Ageratum houstonianum*, a non-native is not likely to be growing with the native wildflower, tropical sage, *Salvia coccinea*. It is probably the almost identical native, blue mistflower (Hardy Ageratum), *Conoclinium coelestinum*. I'd transplant whatever is growing in the pot to the garden and wait and see what happens. Ageratum and Blue Mistflower look very, very similar. Each has a cluster of blue flowers, triangular leaves and only grow 6-15" high. The more common twin, ageratum, is a cool-season annual called floss flower. It has many cultivars and colors from white to pink to blue to purple. Ageratum here in SWFL will grow under very dry conditions once established while blue mist flower requires continuously moist soil. Ageratum is a prolific seed producer but researchers at the University of Florida have not found it to be invasive in Florida. Ageratum will come up in unexpected places like nursery pots, flower beds and pathways. Use ageratum to add color now to the garden while daytime temperatures stay slightly cooler. Native to Central and South America, use ageratum for a dry border or bedding plant used in water-conserving, Florida-Friendly landscaping™. Fertilize only sparingly. Cover if temperature drop below 35°F (2°C) Our earliest planting month here is normally February. Typical removal time is month of July.

Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>
<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>
<http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>
<http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>



Conoclinium coelestinum on left and *Ageratum houstonianum* on right. Pictures by Jane Wallace on Mangrove Chapter Florida Native Plant Society website

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 239-533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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