

Chicagoland Grows,® Inc.

Plant Introduction Program - Plant Release Bulletin #49

Summer Snow Joe-Pye Weed *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Summer Snow' PP31,128

We are pleased to announce our introduction of a white-flowered selection of the native Joe-Pye weed (*Eupatorium maculatum* 'Summer Snow'). It has been an admirable performer in our trials at the Chicago Botanic Garden, thriving on a heavy clay soil that has at times been variously quite wet to fairly dry. The robust plants with their attractive, bold foliage definitely make a statement in the landscape. The white florets are on display for five to six weeks from early July through mid- to late August, and like the species, attract a variety of pollinators. Both the stout stems and the bold foliage are a handsome medium- to dark green that has remained free of powdery mildew. The foliage also emits a faint vanilla fragrance. Developed at the Chicago Botanic Garden from northern Illinois native plants.



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Summer Snow Joe-Pye Weed
Eupatorium maculatum 'Summer Snow' PP31,128

Botanical Name

Eupatorium maculatum 'Summer Snow' (technically *Eutrochium maculatum*, but the horticultural industry has not yet embraced this name change)

Family

Asteraceae (Aster family)

Origin

'Summer Snow' was developed from wild material collected in 2009 from a family farm in northern Boone County, Illinois, near the Wisconsin-Illinois border. The owner of the farm reported white-flowered plants among a natural population of *Eutrochium maculatum* growing in a fen on his property. Six plants with white flowers were observed on August 16, 2009, among a population of several hundred plants with the typical lilac-pink flowers of the species. Divisions were dug from three of the white-flowered plants on that date and then were grown in pots at the Chicago Botanic Garden until July of 2010, when they were planted in-ground under typical nursery conditions. The shortest plant in the accession was self-pollinated under controlled conditions in 2011. In 2012, 30 seed were sown for germination, producing five plants, which were planted in the nursery in June. In October of 2012, the new variety was selected out of the five plants for being conspicuously more compact and with cleaner foliage.

Hardiness

Likely cold-hardy to USDA Hardiness Zones 3 to 8.

Bloom Season

'Summer Snow' bloomed for five to six weeks from early July through mid- to late August under trials at the Chicago Botanic Garden (USDA Zone 5). Two comparable cultivars with white flowers trialed at the same site bloomed from late July to mid-September (*Eutrochium maculatum* 'Ivory Tower') and from mid-August to mid-September (*Eupatorium maculatum* 'Snowball').

Plant Habit

A robust, herbaceous perennial with unbranched, strongly upright, clumping stems. The overall shape becomes upright-rounded over time.

Growth Rate and Size

A vigorous growing selection. Two-year-old plants measured 47 inches tall x 31.5 inches wide with 10 stems each, and three-year-old plants measured 63 inches tall x 59 inches wide and with 20 stems each.

Ornamental Characteristics and Landscape Value

The white florets are on display for five to six weeks, from early July through mid- to late August, and like the species, attracts a variety of pollinators. Both the stout stems and the bold foliage are a handsome dark green that remains free of powdery mildew. The foliage also emits a faint vanilla fragrance. The robust plants, with their attractive blooms and bold foliage, definitely make a statement in the landscape. Use in the back of the moist to mesic perennial border, as either an individual accent or grouped screening plants, along moist waterways and pond edges, and in any comparable landscape featuring native plants.

Culture

Best grown in full sun to light shade in mesic to moist soils. Good air circulation helps prevent possible disease issues. Slight drought tolerance for short periods of time. Severely drought-stressed plants will prematurely go dormant. Plants will thrive with ample moisture; trial plants have even survived being flooded several times. Fairly easy care limited to an annual late fall removal of the spent stems. Stems can be pinched in late spring to encourage shorter, bushier plants, but the inflorescences will be delayed and smaller.

Pest and Disease Problems

This variety has exhibited excellent resistance to powdery mildew that beset several other Joe-Pye weed selections under trial at the same site. Occasionally browsed by deer prior to blooming.

Propagation

Readily propagated by shoot-tip cuttings taken in late May to mid-June in northern Illinois (USDA Zone 5). Adjust propagation date accordingly for different growing zones. Mid-stem cuttings may work as well, if they are not too mature. Provide a five-second treatment with 1,250 or 1,500 ppm K-IBA, and stick the cuttings in a standard, well-drained rooting medium. Resulting root systems are robust growing, so use a larger cell—such as an SVD 2.5-inch pot—for rooting. Rooted cuttings can be transplanted to SVD 4.5-inch or one-gallon pots for growing on and overwintering.

For more information about Chicagoland Grows®, contact the Plant Introduction Program, Chicago Botanic Garden 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, IL 60022 (847) 835-8244 jault@chicagobotanic.org chicagolandgrows.org/index.php

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