



# Chicagoland Grows®, Inc.



## Plant Introduction Program – Plant Release Bulletin #57

### *Baptisia* Hybrid 'Last Dance' False Indigo *Fabaceae* (Pea family)

After passing our rigorous selection standards at the Chicago Botanic Garden, another *Baptisia* introduction from Chicagoland Grows® has arrived! Among the many cultivars in the Garden's nationally accredited *Baptisia* collection, the aptly named 'Last Dance' has the latest bloom period of all. As such, it extends the bloom season of false indigos with its abundant flowers aging from white to creamy yellow. Beyond its vertical inflorescences, 'Last Dance' features dense, light green foliage and barelegged stems that remain upright all year. With its lively habit and bright flowers and foliage, 'Last Dance' will bring verve to any sunny site!

[chicagobotanic.org/collections/ornamental\\_plant\\_research/](http://chicagobotanic.org/collections/ornamental_plant_research/)  
[chicagoland\\_grows\\_plant\\_introduction](http://chicagoland_grows_plant_introduction)

[chicagolandgrows.org](http://chicagolandgrows.org)



## Origin

'Last Dance' was discovered as a chance seedling resulting from an open-pollinated cross in the breeding beds of the Chicago Botanic Garden in the spring of 2003. After a few years of superior performance, it was selected as a potential introduction in 2006. Based on proximity, the seed parent is believed to be an unnamed, unpatented *Baptisia* hybrid. Based on phenotype, the pollen parent is believed to be a nearby accession of *Baptisia leucantha*.

## Hardiness

USDA Zones 4-8.

## Bloom Season

In northern Illinois (USDA Zone 5b-6a), 'Last Dance' blooms for most to all of June, lasting three to four weeks.

## Plant Habit

Thanks to its upright form and many stems, 'Last Dance' has a vivacious yet composed presence. Its barelegged stems give it a deceptively columnar appearance, but it ultimately grows as wide as tall. No stem lodging has been observed.

## Growth Rate and Size

One-year-old plants grew to 18 inches tall and 12 inches wide. After roughly four years, plants grow to their final size of 42 inches tall and wide.

## Pest/Disease Issues

No disease or pest issues have been observed. Seed weevils may consume seeds within their pods, but this does not affect the plant's health or display.

## Culture

'Last Dance' performs best in full sun and well-drained soils. Consistent moisture helps promote growth, but plants are fairly drought-tolerant when they mature. Beyond this, 'Last Dance' is adaptable and requires no maintenance during the growing season. Stems and leaves will quickly blacken after the first hard frost in fall. Stems should be cut to the ground in early winter, as they are prone to breaking and becoming tumbleweeds.

False indigos are known for developing prominent root systems that make transplanting difficult once established. Plants should be spaced with their full size in mind to avoid overcrowding.

## Propagation

Shoot tip cuttings can be taken from pliable stems in late spring or early summer. Cuttings are dipped in 1,000 ppm KIBA, then stuck in a mix of two parts perlite and one part peat in 2.5-inch pots and placed in a fog greenhouse with bench heat at 75-degrees Fahrenheit. Roots initiate after six weeks, and rooted cuttings are potted up to 4-inch or 1-gallon pots in potting mix after nine weeks. Some plants will bloom the year after rooting, while all will bloom the second year.

## Ornamental Characteristics/Landscape Value

Among the *Baptisia* cultivars we've collected, 'Last Dance' is intermediate in size and quite versatile. Depending on what it is paired with, it can be placed in the middle or back of beds. Its barelegged habit allows for interplanting with smaller plants, which works especially well with spring bulbs that finish flowering by the time 'Last Dance' branches out. The white to light yellow flowers pair well with most other flower colors as well. Once it finishes blooming, 'Last Dance' remains attractive throughout the year. Its foliage remains vibrant green during the summer, then quickly turns deep black following the first frost, providing a dramatic fall display.



Chicagoland Grows® is a nonprofit corporation of the Chicago Botanic Garden, The Morton Arboretum, and the Ornamental Growers Association of Northern Illinois (OGA). The Chicagoland Grows® Plant Introduction Program is dedicated to the evaluation, selection, production, and marketing of recommended and new plant cultivars. Plants selected for the program have proven to be adaptable to the Midwest and are made available to the commercial and retail landscape industry through an international network of growers and propagators. ©2024 Chicago Botanic Garden