

*Liatriis spicata*

[Synonyms : *Lacinaria spicata*, *Liatriis callilepis*, *Liatriis montana*, *Liatriis pumila*, *Liatriis spicata callilepis*, *Serratula spicata*]

**BLAZING STAR** is a perennial. Native to eastern North America it has shaving-brush-like, heads of small, bright rose purple (occasionally changing to white) flowers.

It is also known as Backache root, Button snakeroot, Button snakewort, Colic root, Common gayfeather, Corn snakeroot, Dense blazing star, Dense button snakeroot, Dense gayfeather, Devil's bit, Devil's bite, Gayfeather, Kansas gayfeather, *Liatra klasnatá* (Slovak), *Liatriis*, Marsh blazing star, Prairie pine, *Rosenstav* (Swedish), Rough root, Saw-wort, Spiked saw-wort, Spike gayfeather, *Šuškarða klasnatá* (Czech), and Throatwort.

*Spicata* is derived from Latin *spica* (ear of corn, spike) meaning 'spiky, spiked or in spikes' with reference to the flowers.

The plant was a source of medicine for several North American Indian tribes. While the Menominee took the root as a remedy for some heart problems, the Cherokee used it to treat various lung disorders, fluid retention and wind – and to ease pain in limbs and back.

The leaf was used to flavour smoking mixtures.

It was introduced to Britain in 1732.

Medicinally, although the plant has been used in the past to treat venereal and kidney diseases and period problems, it is not employed much now. [A related species, *Liatriis chapmannii*, contains a substance that has exhibited anti-cancer qualities.]