

Nipponanthemum nipponicum (Montauk Daisy)

Botanical Bytes by Bruner

By Gregory Bruner

Foliage Height: 18-24"
Foliage Width: 18-36"
Flower Height: 18-36"
Foliage Color: Dark Green
Flower Color: White
USDA Hardiness: 5-9
Moisture: Average to Dry
Light: Full Sun



The Montauk Daisy is native to the coastal areas of Japan. Botanists originally placed this plant in the genus *Chrysanthemum* and then eventually moved it to the genus *Leucanthemum*. Most recently, it became the only member of the genus *Nipponanthemum*. Because this reclassification has confused gardeners for years, one would hope that the Montauk Daisy will remain in the genus *Nipponanthemum* for the remainder of its gardening days.

The fact that this is a coastal native tells us this wonderful daisy thrives in sunny, well-drained locations and also enjoys a temperate climate in USDA Zones 5-9. The dark green, leathery leaves are so tough that the plant is able to survive and even thrive in harsh seaside conditions. This robust grower needs a place in the back of your flower beds because of its larger growth habit and size. It is often good to plant shorter perennials around its base, because the plant may lose some of its lower leaves during the heat of the summer.

The floral excitement begins in late summer but truly explodes onto the scene once fall begins and will continue until a frost brings the show to an end. The intensity of the flower show can be increased by trimming the plants back during mid to late spring when they reach around 5" tall to around 3"-4". Pinching may be done a second time if the plants look too leggy. Just make sure this is not done too late in the summer. (This is typically done in mid to late July.) This will create a more compact plant with more blooms. Deadheading will prolong flowering.

Butterflies are attracted to the Montauk Daisy, which is always a bonus to any garden. Deer and rabbits will occasionally nibble the new foliage in the early spring. However, because this is when the plants would normally be pinched, the damage is negligible. The local wildlife typically ignores the Montauk Daisy after this initial visit. The long stiff stems make it a natural for cut flowers.

Nipponanthemum nipponicum (Montauk Daisy) is one of the parents of *Leucanthemum x superbum* (Shasta Daisy). When creating the much-loved Shasta Daisy, plant breeders tapped into the Montauk Daisy's sparkling white flowers while keeping the compactness of the *Leucanthemum*. *Nipponanthemum nipponicum roseum* is a light pink flowering form of this garden favorite.

The explosion of bright white flowers coupled with its large mature size make this wonderful daisy an excellent addition to any sunny perennial garden where there is room to spread out.