



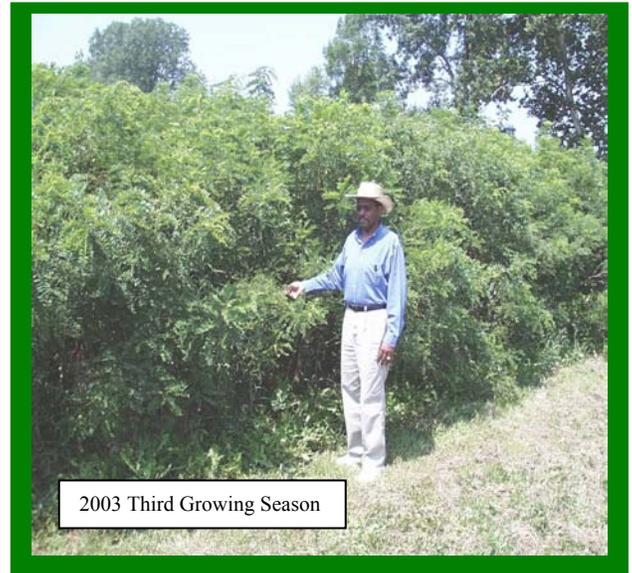
False Indigo Bush
Amorpha fruticosa
plant symbol = AMFR

Contributed by: USDA, NRCS, Plant Materials Program

Uses

Wildlife: The use of false indigo bush, *Amorpha fruticosa*, is for establishing wildlife food and cover on upland sites. A primary use will be for “Quail Covey headquarter” mixes on upland sites. Covey headquarters are clumps of dense shrubby cover with a canopy at least three feet in height. Quail need this type of patchy “escape cover” on a daily basis. The planting is small approximately 1500 sq. ft. (50 feet x 30 feet) in size. It is made up of short growing shrubs and legumes.

Erosion Control: False indigo bush will address erosion control along fluctuating shorelines, streams, and wetlands by establishing quickly and providing cover. The use of false indigo bush can enhance wetland riparian areas by providing a shrubby cover up to 10 feet in height.

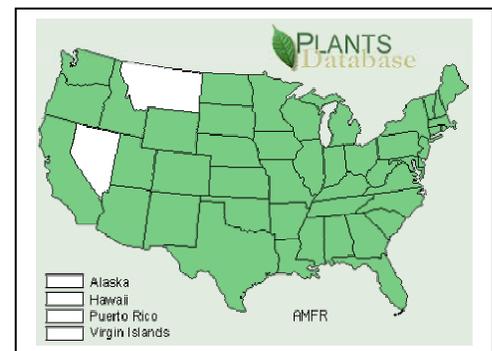


Description

False indigo bush, *Amorpha fruticosa* L., is a native legume that has growth form like a medium sized shrub up to ten feet in height. The general shape is an open canopy with the bulk of foliage and twigs in the upper 1/3 of the crown. The leaves are alternate, pinnately compound. Each leaflet is up to two inches long and just over one inch wide with a small, bristly like point at the rounded tip. The flowers are in dense spikes on the upper part of the plant, often several spikes clustered together. Each flower has dark indigo-purple petals with yellow-tipped stamens. Flowering time: late spring to mid-summer. Twigs are rigid, glabrous, red-brown or gray, often with an insect caused, long swelling near the tip. The fruit is a small, warty kidney shaped pod (1/2 inch long), with large glandular dots, in a crowded cylindrical cluster. The fruit persist on the shrub through winter. Found in more open areas along lakes and streams. May be found in upland areas where additional moisture is received.

Adaptation

False indigo bush occurs in moist prairie thickets and along streams and rivers in prairies throughout the tall grass region. It is found as far North as New Jersey, Minnesota, down to the Mexican border and does well throughout the U.S. False indigo bush likes full sun or light shade and thrives in moist soils that are poorly drained. It also performs well on silt loams to dry sands.



Establishment

Wildlife Planting Covey Headquarters can be attained using false indigo bush either by seeding or container plants. False indigo can be added to a “covey headquarter” seeding mix. A covey headquarter seeding mix is usually broadcast on an area of ground (usually 1500 sq. ft.) where the soil has been disturbed or exposed, by mechanical preparation for a seedbed. In a seeding mix the seeding rate for false indigo is 12# PLS/acre; this amount to 0.4# PLS for 1500 sq. ft.(0.03 of an acre) for a covey headquarters. After the seed has been broadcast it will need to be rolled for a firm seed to soil contact. Planting container grown trees into a site is another way false indigo bush can be added to a covey headquarters. When container plants are used for a covey headquarters, use approximately 30 (7' x 7') randomly planted plants for a 1500 sq. ft. area.

Seed Production Using Container Plants: False indigo bush can be established for seed production using container grown plants. These plants are started out in germinating trays and then transplanted to containers using potting soil mix. Potted false indigo bush should be at least 8-10 inches tall in height before transplanting to the field. The planting area should be competition free to have the best chance for survival. Plants should be 5-8 feet within the row and 12-15 feet between rows.

Seed Production from Seed: False indigo bush can also be seeded in rows (12-15 feet apart) at a rate of 9-12 PLS per linear foot (0.6 – 0.8 lbs. per acre). One pound of false indigo contains 59,200 seeds. The soil will need to be prepared by disking and harrowing or using chemical weed control for direct seeding. The seedbed will need to be firm and can be achieved by using a cultipacker or roller. The seed will need to be planted at least ¼ to ½ inch deep. False indigo bush can be direct seeded by using a no-till drill or billion-type seeder. These planters will insure good seed to soil contact. Once the false indigo trees emerge they should then be spaced out 5-8 feet within the row to allow for proper growth. This spacing can be achieved by mowing or clipping the trees when they are still in the sapling stage.

Management

During establishment year use a selective grass herbicide for control of annual and perennial grasses post emergence application. For container plants reduce weed competition by mowing or weeding around the base to reduce any shading for the establishing plants.

Pests and Potential Problems

False indigo bush often has an insect gall form on the stem just below the foliage. It can be pruned off while the tree is dormant. Spraying with imidacloprid (Merit) will also help prevent future insect damage from occurring.

Prepared By: USDA, NRCS, Plant Materials Program

Species Coordinator: USDA, NRCS, Plant Materials Center, Elsberry, MO

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