



## Plants for Birds:

### Showy Fleabane (Aspen Fleabane)

- **Scientific Name:** *Erigeron speciosus* (Asteraceae Family)
- **Height:** 1 to 2 feet tall
- **Hardiness:** Zone 2
- **Wildlife Value:** Wonderful pollinator plant. Birds and small mammals eat the seeds.

**S**howy fleabane is a native perennial wildflower that is widespread in the western United States. It's a mound-forming plant and sometimes grows into colonies that produce masses of color. The woody stems have several flowers and each flower has hundreds of light purple to lavender-blue ray florets that surround a soft yellow disk. These flower colonies are favorites of pollinators such as butterflies and native bees and they attract a variety of other insects and spiders. With more than 90% of our songbirds relying almost entirely on insects to feed their young, it's important to plant flowers that will attract insects as a way to provide food for songbirds raising their young. Showy fleabane also provides seeds in the fall that are eaten by American goldfinch, pine siskin, and numerous sparrow species.

This plant grows in a variety of environments such as meadows, woodlands, dry slopes, grasslands, and open forests. Hundreds of these plants will carpet mountain meadows in the summer. Its hardy nature makes it useful for soil stabilization and the restoration of disturbed sites.

Showy fleabane prefers full sun to part shade and grows best in dry to moist sites with well drained soils. It tolerates a variety of soil types and, once established, is very drought tolerant. It grows 1–2 ft tall and 1–2 ft wide, is mostly disease free, and is great in beds, borders, and natural gardens. It is adapted to rocky sites and does well in parched south facing flowerbeds. Showy fleabane easily reseeds itself and is easy to propagate from seed.

Showy fleabane is a beautiful native plant that will add layers of lavender color to your garden, attract pollinators, and nourish birds and their families. If you would like to see mounds of showy fleabane blooming in July and August check out the Langhor Park Pollinator Garden as you walk the Gallagator Trail between East Mason and East Garfield Streets in Bozeman. ~ Leslie Eddington