

## 2015 July *Guess that Plant*



*Lobelia spicata* Lam. Palespice Lobelia

The July *Guess that Plant* is a member of the Lobelia family, the Campanulaceae. It is a widespread native and a denizen of open, dry habitats throughout the State. Mary Hough (1983) and USDA Plants Database indicates the plant has a voucher from all counties with the exception of Salem and Gloucester. I know of no Palespice lobelia populations in either Salem or Gloucester, yet its widespread nature and preference for a very common habitat does not preclude it from being found here, as it is in all other New Jersey counties.

*Lobelia spicata* is differentiated from its relatives by its blue color, its flower size, the lanceolate-oblong leaf form and shape, stem hairiness location (base) as well as its preference for more mesic to dry, open habitat. The photo above depicts this dry open field habitat. The grass in the background is sweet vernal grass, an Oldfield vernal flowering non-native forage crop common to many open habitats. *Lobelia spicata* is more prevalent north of the Fall Line, yet it is visible throughout the State. It blooms in late June and early July. The color is a pale blue-purple, a distinct reddening hue from the clear blues of *L. inflata*, *nutallii* or the larger *L. siphilitica*.