

August 2015 Plant of the Month



Scutellaria integrifolia L. Hyssop or Larger Skullcap

The *Plant of the Month* for August is a widespread native mint, the hyssop skullcap. This plant is visible from mid-July to the end of August in open, moist meadows, rights of way and open woodlands. All counties have vouchers indicating a presence, yet this plant is more prevalent on the richer soils of the Delaware Bay-shore communities, Inner Coastal Plain and Northern Piedmont, Highlands and Valley and Ridge provinces. Mary Hough (1983) identifies New Jersey as approaching the plant's northern limit of distribution.

Hyssop skullcap is distinct. It has a blue-purple colored flower with a distinct bilabiate corolla. Paired, entire ovate leaves provide another key distinction for this plant. It differs from other skullcaps by its narrow leaves and preference for open habitats. Fernald (1950) describes skullcaps as bitter herbs. This bitterness has use by Native Americans, specifically for anti-diarrheal tonics as well as for cold remedies.

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