

KEY TO CULTIVATED BAPTISIA by Laurence Hatch

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There are approximately 50 species of *Baptisia* known, including since 2000 dozens of named hybrids. Some hybrids involve three, four, and possibly or more species depending on the taxonomic system one accepts. They will not key out well in general, especially with their complex bicolors and mixed morphology. The following key includes those taxa in general cultivation and far more than most horticultural treatments. It will be updated as other taxa appear in catalogs and collections.

1. Flower corolla white.....2

1. Flower corolla cream to yellow.....5

1. Flower corolla blue, lavender to violet purple...10

2. Plants 3-6 feet tall - Inflorescence an erect raceme and lupine-like....SOME COMMON.....20

2. Plants 1-2 feet tall - Inflorescence a horizontal raceme.....UNCOMMON (Texas native)....3

3. POSSIBLE ID=*Baptisia leucophaea*

5. Plants to 3 feet tall - Corolla cream to yellow - pods black....COMMON.....6

5. Plants 1-2 feet tall - Corolla yellow only - pods tan.....LESS COMMON (Texas native)....7

6. POSSIBLE ID=*Baptisia tinctoria*

NOTE: Florida native *B. megacarpa* is sometimes cultivated but it is thought to be only zone 7 hardy.

7. POSSIBLE ID=*Baptisia sphaerocarpa*

NOTE: *B. bracteata* is sometimes grown and is similar but with axillary racemes.

10. Plants 14-24" tall - Corolla bluish lavender.....11

10. Plants 14-24" tall - Corolla violet-blue.....11

10. Plants 24-48" tall - Corolla violet or blue.....12

11. POSSIBLE ID=*Baptisia minor* (*B. australia* var. *minor*, *Baptisia minor* var. *minor*). Once considered a botanical variety and even a cultivar this taxon offers compactness not seen in true *B. australis*.

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12. Corolla dusty purple - stems blackish-green at maturity.....13
12. Corolla violet-blue or blue - stems glaucous blue green (sometimes bronzed)....14
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13. POSSIBLE ID=Baptisia 'Purple Smoke'

14. POSSIBLE ID=Baptisia australis, selections, and hybrids. 'Exaltata' is an old cv. that is more robust and taller - though B. exaltata is considered a general synonym of the species by lumping botanists. 'Indigo' is more intensely deep violet-blue. This species being common and popular, there are hybrids which match these traits. One strain called 'Old Orchard' is based on australis, minor, and villosa and has some blue seedlings of this type.

20. New growth and calyx glaucous (frosted) black to rich black.....LESS COMMON.....21
20. New growth and calyx usually blue-green to bronze-green.....VERY COMMON.....22
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21. POSSIBLE ID=Baptisia pendula

22. POSSIBLE ID=Baptisia leucantha.

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