

NATIVE PERENNIALS

Gentian, Bottle



Gentiana andrewsii

Native. Produces a closed blue flower in late summer to early fall. Needs moist soil. Good rain garden plant. 1-2 ft. tall.

Description: This unmistakable perennial forb is 12 to 28 inches tall. Stems are stout with shiny, opposite leaves. Roots are yellow. Few to several large, upright flowers, appearing in August and September, are clustered at stem tips and in the axils of the upper leaves. The corolla is tubular, 1 to 1-1/4 inches long, closed at the top and ranges in color from blue-violet to pink.

Distribution/Habitat: Closed gentian is an eastern North American species, ranging from Quebec and Virginia to the eastern Dakotas and scattered in sandy parts of Nebraska. It is confined to wet meadows, wet prairies, and wet woods. A few colonies exist in the Black Hills.

Comments: This rare find, also called closed gentian, is the tallest of the gentians and among the showiest. It appears to be pollinated exclusively by large bumblebees which force their way into the corolla tube where they are completely hidden while inside. At least one tribe used the root for snakebite. Roots have also been used to flavor beverages.

Credit: James E. Johnson & Gary E. Larson, Grassland Plants of South Dakota and the Northern Great Plains. SDSU, Brookings, SD. B-566 (rev.) August 1999. Page 196.



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