

Nepeta

'Walker's Low'



Hardiness

USDA Zones 3 to 8

Light

Best in full sun, but can tolerate shade in hot climates.

Soil

Prefers well drained soil and neutral pH.

Uses

Good companion plant for early and late blooming plants. Great for perennial borders, but can be used in herb gardens, rock gardens, as a ground cover, or as a container plant.

Unique Qualities

Will bloom continuously throughout the season if properly pruned. Great for attracting bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects, but is deer and rabbit resistant. Leaves release a wonderful aroma when crushed.

Perennial Plant of the Year[©]

2007



2007 Perennial Plant of the Year[©]

Nepeta 'Walker's Low'



Nepeta 'Walker's Low'

The Perennial Plant Association has awarded the title of Perennial Plant of the Year[©] 2007 to *Nepeta* 'Walker's Low'. Introduced in 1988 in Europe, *Walker's Low* catmint has become increasingly popular each year due to its lovely blue-violet flowers and their long bloom time, attractive grey foliage, ease of propagation, lack of pest or disease problems, and low maintenance requirements.

Background

Nepeta 'Walker's Low' is a member of the Lamiaceae, or mint family. The family is one of the most easily recognized with species having square stems and opposite leaves that are often aromatic. *Walker's Low* catmint is a selection in the Faassenii Group of *Nepeta*. Those catmints, related to *Nepeta* x *faassenii*, are thought to be a hybrid between *N. nepetella* and *N. racemosa*. First cited in the literature in 1784, Faaseen's

catmint has proven to be a stalwart garden performer.

Mrs. Patricia Taylor selected *Walker's Low* in an Irish garden in the 1970s.

Thus, its name reflects its origins, rather than (as many gardeners assume) its growth habit. Actually, its

height can be up to 36 inches tall, which makes it one of the largest cultivated nepetas. In 1988, Four Seasons Nursery

of Norwich, England, introduced it to the gardening public.

Appearance

Walker's Low catmint has crinkled, aromatic, silver-green foliage. Prolific, small, dark blue-purple flowers are clustered densely on upright arching stems creating a charming and colorful effect, even from a distance. It will bloom almost continuously throughout the season, from May until frost, if it is pruned back by two-thirds when the initial flowers fade. *Walker's Low* is 36 inches tall with a spread of 30 to 36 inches.

Landscape Uses

Walker's Low catmint has many landscape uses, based on its lovely color and vigorous, billowy habit. It is a good companion for both early summer and late season combinations, pairing well with previous Perennial Plants of the Year, like *Coreopsis verticillata* 'Moonbeam', *Salvia nemorosa* 'Mainacht' (May Night), or *Dianthus gratianopolitanus* 'Feuerhexe' (Firewitch). Interesting combinations may be made with purple-leaved sedums like 'Vera Jameson' or 'Black Jack' and short grasses, such as *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' or *Festuca glauca* 'Elijah Blue'.

Often cultivated in the herb garden, *Nepeta* 'Walker's Low' combines well with sages, thymes, and silvery plants like lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*). Catmint is a classic companion for roses – its soft, mounded habit camouflages the often-unattractive lower stems of roses. For a scene straight out of grandmother's garden pair it with foxgloves, peonies, pinks, and bearded iris.

In the wildlife garden, catmint constantly will be visited by an array of bees and butterflies. However, it is resistant to deer and rabbit foraging. As with all catmints, this plant contains the chemical nepetalactone, which is attractive to cats. Some anecdotal evidence supports the claim that 'Walker's Low' does not inspire extensive feline activity.

Use *Walker's Low* catmint as a border

plant to outline a walkway, to cascade in the rock garden, or as a ground cover in a sunny location. It is a colorful partner in a container. Try pairing it with salmon-yellow *Alstromeria* 'Princess Victoria' and dark blue salvia to accent a corner of the deck or patio.

Cultivation

Hardy in zones 3 to 8, *Walker's Low* catmint thrives in average, well-drained garden soil, preferably with a neutral pH. Once established, it is drought-tolerant, and along with the other catmints, salt-tolerant. This catmint should be cultivated in a sunny site, but will tolerate some shade in hot climates. Flowering will continue through the summer if pruned back by two-thirds when the initial flowers fade. *Nepeta* 'Walker's Low' has few pest or disease problems.



Achillea 'Moonshine',
Dianthus gratianopolitanus
'Feuerhexe' & *Nepeta*
'Walker's Low'



Nepeta 'Walker's Low' &
Achillea 'Moonshine'