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(12) **United States Plant Patent**  
**Ault**

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(54) **ASTER PLANT NAMED ‘BILLOWING VIOLET’**

(50) Latin Name: *Aster hybrid*  
Varietal Denomination: **Billowing Violet**

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*A01H 5/02* (2018.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**  
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(58) **Field of Classification Search**  
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See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new cultivar of *Aster* plant named ‘Billowing Violet’ that is characterized by its capitula that are large in size, measuring up to 4.5 cm in width, its average of 31 ray flowers per capitula, its sticky, aromatic foliage that is not appealing to deer or rabbits, its inflorescences with ray florets that are violet in color, and its good resistance to rust, powdery mildew and lace bug predation.

**2 Drawing Sheets**

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**CROSS REFERENCE TO A RELATED APPLICATION**

This application is co-pending with a U.S. Plant Patent Application filed for a plant derived from the same breeding program that is entitled *Aster* Plant Named ‘Billowing Pink’ (U.S. Plant patent application Ser. No. 16,873,166).

Botanical classification: *Aster hybrid*.

Variety denomination: ‘Billowing Violet’.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to a new arid distinct cultivar of *Aster* of hybrid origin, botanically known as *Aster* ‘Billowing Violet’, and will be referred to hereafter by its cultivar name, ‘Billowing Violet’. ‘Billowing Violet’ is a new herbaceous perennial suitable for landscape plantings.

The new cultivar is the result of a controlled breeding program conducted by the Inventor in Glencoe, Ill. The intent of the program is to develop new cultivars of *Aster* that are hardy in U.S.D.A. Zone 5, disease resistant, unpalatable to deer and rabbits, provide a diversity of desirable flower traits and plant habits. The new cultivar arose from crosses made with an unnamed and unpatented seedling of *Aster oblongifolius* in September of 2012 as the female parent and pooled pollen from unnamed and unpatented plants *Aster* plants of hybrid origin from the Inventor’s breeding program as the male parent. The exact male parent is therefore unknown. ‘Billowing Violet’ was selected as a single unique plant from the resulting seedlings of the cross in October of 2015.

The new cultivar was first asexually propagated by shoot tip cuttings by the Inventor in Glencoe, Ill. in June of 2016. Asexual propagation by shoot tip cuttings and division has

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determined that the characteristics of this cultivar are stable and are reproduced true to type in successive generations.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and represent the characteristics of the new *Aster*. These attributes in combination distinguish ‘Billowing Violet’ as a unique cultivar of *Aster*.

1. ‘Billowing Violet’ exhibits capitula that are large in size, measuring up to 4.5 cm in width.
2. ‘Billowing Violet’ exhibits a low and dense mounding plant habit with few to no gaps.
3. ‘Billowing Violet’ exhibits an average of 31 ray florets per capitula.
4. ‘Billowing Violet’ exhibits inflorescences with ray florets that are violet in color.
5. ‘Billowing Violet’ produces sticky, aromatic foliage that is not appealing to deer or rabbits.
6. ‘Billowing Violet’ has shown good resistance to rust, powdery mildew and lace bug predation when grown in comparison trials with other cultivars of *Aster*.

The seed parent of ‘Billowing Violet’ differs from ‘Billowing Violet’ in having a larger height and width, more ray florets that are shorter in length, and capitula that are smaller in size. The possible pollen parents of ‘Billowing Violet’ all differ from ‘Billowing Violet’ in having larger capitula and either more open upright plant habits or lower, more dense and more rounded plant habits. ‘Billowing Violet’ can be most closely compared to *Aster oblongifolius* varieties ‘October Skies’ (not patented) and ‘Raydon’s Favorites’ (not patented). Both cultivars are similar to ‘Billowing Violet’ in having ray flowers that are violet in color and in producing sticky, aromatic foliage that deters rabbits and deer. ‘October Skies’ differs from ‘Billowing Violet’ in having capitula that are smaller in diameter, a plant size that is taller in height and



not as wide spreading, less capitula at peak bloom and susceptibility to powdery mildew. 'Raydon's Favorites' differs from 'Billowing Violet' in having capitula that are smaller in diameter with more ray florets, a plant height that is taller and not as widely spreading, and an irregular plant habit with gaps and stems that lodge over time. 'Billowing Violet' can also be compared to 'Billowing Pink' from the same breeding program. 'Billowing Pink' is similar to 'Billowing Violet' in disease and pest resistance, in producing sticky, aromatic foliage that deters rabbits and deer, and in having dense foliage. 'Billowing Pink' differs from 'Billowing Violet' most significantly in having ray florets that are pink-violet in color.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying colored photographs were taken in October and illustrate the overall appearance and distinct characteristics of 2-year-old plants of the new *Aster* as grown outdoors in a trial plot in Glencoe, Ill.

The photograph in FIG. 1 provides a view of the plant habit of 'Billowing Violet' in bloom.

The photograph in FIG. 2 provides a close up view of the inflorescences of 'Billowing Violet'.

The colors in the photographs are as close as possible with digital photography techniques available, the color values cited in the detailed botanical description accurately describe the colors of the new *Aster*.

#### DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The following is a description of one-year old plants of the new cultivar as grown outdoors in 2-quart containers in Glencoe, Ill. The description of the plant habit and mature height and spread were observed on 4-year-old plants of the new cultivar as grown in a trial bed in Glencoe, Ill. The phenotype of the new cultivar may vary with variations in environmental, climatic, and cultural conditions, as it has not been tested under all possible environmental conditions. The color determination is in accordance with The 2015 Colour Chart of The Royal Horticultural Society, London, England, except where general color terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used.

##### General description:

*Blooming season*.—Typically for 6 weeks commencing in early September to mid-October with some flowers being sporadically produced as early as in late July in northern Illinois.

*Plant type*.—Herbaceous perennial.

*Plant habit*.—Low and dense mounding plant habit with few to no gaps.

*Height and spread*.—3-year-old plants grown in the ground; average of 64 cm in height, 109 cm in width, 4-year-old plants grown in the ground; average of 55 cm in height and 150 cm in width.

*Hardiness*.—At least in U.S.D.A. Zones 4 to 7.

*Diseases and pest resistance*.—Has shown very good resistance to powdery mildew (*Golovinomyces asterum* var. *asterum*), rust (*Coleosporium asterum* and *Puccinia* sp. and lace bug (*Corythuca marmorata*) predation.

*Root description*.—Fibrous.

*Propagation*.—Shoot tip cuttings and division.

*Root development*.—4 to 6 weeks to produce a rooted cutting, a rooted cutting planted in June will produce blooming plants 24 cm in height and 52 cm in width in the same growing season.

*Growth rate*.—Vigorous.

##### Stem description:

*Stem color*.—New growth; 145A, mature growth; a blend of N199B and N199C.

*Stem surface*.—Young stems; matte and glabrous, mature stems; glabrous and glossy.

*Stem size*.—Main stem; about 30 cm in length and 6 mm in width, lateral branches; average of 17 cm in length and 1 mm in width.

*Branching habit*.—1 main stem with an average of 26 horizontal lateral branches, whorled arrangement.

*Branch internode length*.—Average of 1 cm between lateral branches.

##### Foliage description:

*Leaf division*.—Simple.

*Leaf shape*.—Linear.

*Leaf base*.—Truncate.

*Leaf apex*.—Acute.

*Leaf margin*.—Entire.

*Internode length*.—Average of 3 mm.

*Leaf venation*.—Linear, not conspicuous, midrib recessed on upper surface, color same as leaf.

*Leaf attachment*.—Sessile.

*Leaf arrangement*.—Alternate.

*Leaf number*.—Average of 20 per stem 15 cm in length.

*Leaf surface*.—Both surfaces glabrous, matte and slightly rough to the touch.

*Leaf color*.—Young and mature, upper and lower surface; 144A.

*Leaf size (fully expanded)*.—Up to 3 cm in length and 1 cm in width.

*Leaf fragrance*.—None.

##### Flower description:

*Inflorescence type*.—Composite, 1 to 3 capitula per flowering branchlet.

*Lastingness of individual capitula*.—Temperature dependent, under normal field conditions during the fall, typically last about 2 weeks.

*Fragrance*.—Slight and pleasant.

*Quantity of capitula*.—About 400 per plant in a 2-quart container.

*Capitula buds*.—About 6 mm in depth and 5 mm in diameter, oblong in shape, blend of 13A and 10D in color.

*Capitula size*.—Up to 4.5 cm in diameter and 5 mm in depth, disk about 6 mm in diameter.

*Peduncle*.—Held at about a 45° angle to flowering branchlet, surface is glossy and glabrous, an average of 2.5 cm in length and 0.8 mm in width, 144A in color, an average of 12 leaves that are similar in characteristics to branch leaves.

*Involucral bracts (phyllaries)*.—About 16, 137A in color, linear in shape, about 7 mm in length and 1 mm in width, inner and outer surface slightly glossy.

##### Ray florets (pistillate):

*Number*.—Average of 31.

*Shape*.—Oblanceolate.

*Aspect*.—Primarily horizontal to outward.

*Size*.—Average of 2.1 cm in length and 2 mm in width.

*Petal apex*.—Rounded.

*Petal base*.—Attenuate.

*Petal margins*.—Entire.

*Petal texture*.—Smooth, glabrous on upper and lower surface.

*Petal color*.—When opening upper and lower surface; base and mid-section 3C and 4D, tips 75C and 75D, when fully open upper surface; 84B, base 84A, when opening lower surface; 84C with slight undertones of 85C.

Disk florets (perfect):

*Quantity*.—Average of 40.

*Shape*.—Tubular.

*Size*.—About 3 mm in length and 0.05 mm in width.

*Color*.—16A.

Reproductive organs:

*Presence*.—Disk flowers are perfect, ray flowers are carpellate.

*Gynoecium*.—1 Pistil per disk and ray floret, style is 6 mm in length and 16C in color.

*Androecium*.—5 stamens per disk floret, fused into tube, anther is 16A in color with filament 11C in color, pollen was not observed.

*Fruit and seed*.—None observed.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Aster* plant named 'Billowing Violet' as described and illustrated herein.

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FIG. 1





FIG. 2