



Gulf Coast Penstemon

Penstemon tenuis

Height: 18 inches

Spread: 14 inches

Spacing: 10 inches

Sunlight: ☐ ☒

Hardiness Zone: 6b

Other Names: Brazos Penstemon, Sharpsepal Beardtongue

Description:

A pretty variety producing spikes of violet flowers with white centers in spring, then maybe again in fall; tolerates heat, wet soils, and poor drainage; great for the garden, along walkways, or in borders

Ornamental Features

Gulf Coast Penstemon has masses of beautiful spikes of violet trumpet-shaped flowers with white centers rising above the foliage from late spring to early fall, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its narrow leaves remain green in color throughout the season. The dark red stems can be quite attractive.

Landscape Attributes

Gulf Coast Penstemon is an herbaceous perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It is a good choice for attracting birds, bees and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Self-Seeding

Gulf Coast Penstemon is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



Gulf Coast Penstemon flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Gulf Coast Penstemon will grow to be about 18 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 14 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 10 inches apart. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It is quite adaptable, preferring to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.

Gulf Coast Penstemon is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a mass of flowers against which the larger thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.