

**SUBGENUS: *PENSTEMON***

**Section: *Fasciculus***

**Subsection: *Campanulati***

**CULTIVATION OF EACH SPECIES**

**Table 12**

[subgenus]	<b>PENSTEMON</b>
[section]	<i>Ambigui</i>   <i>Baccharifolii</i>   <i>Chamaeleon</i>   <i>Coerulei</i>   <i>Cristati</i>   <i>Ericopsis</i>   <b><i>Fasciculus</i></b> (27)   <i>Peltanthera</i>
	<i>Penstemon</i>
[subsection]	<i>Campanulati</i> (8)   <i>Fasciculi</i> (12)   <i>Perfoliati</i> (3)   <i>Racemosi</i> (4)

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF PENSTEMONS IN SECTION FASCICULUS**

The Section *Fasciculus* consists of species from Mexico with red or purple flowers that have generally not yet been widely brought into cultivation in the United States. The exception is *Penstemon pinifolius*, found also in New Mexico and Arizona, a low plant with very narrow scarlet flowers and needle-like foliage, that is widely grown across this country and in other countries.”<sup>1</sup>

The hallmark of this group is that most (not quite all) species have small bundles of leaves called fascicles in each leaf axil (upper angle formed between two structures or organs, such as a leaf and the stem from which it grows). These can grow into branches after seed pods form, each bearing fascicles, forming a very bushy plant. Rarely do they have basal leaves. Most have extremely narrow, toothed leaves that are stemless and evergreen. Long-blooming flowers are in the red to purple group, sometimes with white throats, drooping and bell-like. Heights range from 20” to 4 ½’.

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<sup>1</sup> Lindgren, D. and Wilde, E. “Growing Penstemons Species, Cultivars and Hybrids.”

In recent years, some gardeners have enjoyed growing a few of these species as annuals. Start them in your windowsill and transplant to the out-of-doors as soon as possible. You should get several months of bloom, for example from *kunthii*, *isophyllus*, *hidalgensis* and *amphorellae*. Occasionally they will surprise you and make an appearance the next spring. Seeds often are available.

### Species

*bolanius*  
*campanulatus*  
*coriaceus*

*gentryi*  
*hintonii*  
*kunthii*

*potosinus*  
*tepicensis*



*Penstemon kunthii*



*Penstemon kunthii*

**Table 12. *Penstemon Fasciculus Campanulati***

**Key**  
 Column 1 SPECIES: \_species name; plant height when in bloom; color(s) of flower; fill in lavender  =popular; parenthesis = not reported in cultivation  
 Column 3 CULTIVATION SUGGESTIONS:  
 Row 1 SIZE OF FLOWER: **very large**= >1 ½ “ **large**=1-1 3/8” **medium**= ½ - 1” **small**= < ½ “  
 Row 2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION  
 Row 3: DISPLAY SUGGESTIONS  
 Row 4: WHERE SPECIES HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY CULTIVATED OUT OF NATIVE HABITAT  
 full sun  partial shade

Species	Bloom Season in Native Habitat	Cultivation Suggestions	Cultivation Needs			Elevation and Habitat	Distribution	Reported cold hardiness in cultivation
			Garden Soil	Moisture	Sun			
<i>bolanius</i> 2' purple <b>rare</b>	Aug-Oct	<b>medium flower</b> flowers bulge on one side (ventricose)  few stems covered with minute white hairs  leaves elliptic, sharply pointed and serrated at the tips;  culture similar to campanulatus, a close relative  cultivated in: unknown	gravelly, sandy, well drained	monthly in w OR		dry uplands	Jalisco, Mex.	

<p><i>campanulatus</i></p> <p>2 ½ ' to 1' wide</p> <p>shades of purple with white on underside</p>	<p>Apr-Oct</p>	<p><b>large flower</b></p> <p>has been in cultivation since the 19<sup>th</sup> century; beautiful; can be grown as an annual; two of the varieties have been described as potentially hardy</p> <p>many stems with large bell-shaped flowers</p> <p>narrow curved leaves; dense bushy effect</p> <p>self sows; easily hybridizes and sometimes hybrids are sold under the name "<i>P. campanulatus</i>", easily propagated from cuttings</p> <p>long lived; attracts bees and butterflies</p> <p><b>raised well-drained beds</b></p> <p>cultivated in : widely grown in US; particularly west coast with bloom for 6 months; CO, NM, PA, VA</p>	<p>ph 5-7.5 sandy to clay raised, well-drained beds with gravel and pumice in w OR</p> <p>pH 5-7.5</p>	<p>dry to normal; tolerates heat and humidity; don't over water</p>	<p>part shade to full sun</p> 	<p>widely distributed</p> <p>zone 7-10</p>	<p>below 0° F, best in warmer climate USDA Zones 7-10</p>
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Most penstemons are visited by several bee species including honeybees and bumblebees. While hummingbirds prefer red penstemons, they commonly are seen at most penstemon species.



*Penstemon campanulatus* [Wild] courtesy Eric Gouda  
Seeds from: Mexico, just below the summit of Cerro Potosi at 3800 m Alt

<i>coriaceus</i> 3' deep red-purple	July-Sept	<b>large flower</b> similar to <i>P. baccharifolius</i> with similar care;  branched subshrub with short, leathery, thick leaves cultivated in: not reported in the US	limestone, gravelly, well-drained	dry soil in winter or becomes cold sensitive		4900-8200' rock crevices	Central Mexico: San Luis Potosi, Aguascalientes, Zacatecas, Jalisco, Mexico	NA
<i>gentryi</i> 2' pale lavender, white throat	Aug-Oct	<b>large flower</b> similar to <i>P. campanulatus</i> very narrow leaves <b>raised bed or trough</b> w. OR	gravelly, well-drained raised bed or trough				Chihuahua, Sonora, Mex.	
<i>(hintonii)</i>  purple <b>rare</b>	Aug-Oct	<b>large flower</b> NA	NA	NA	NA		Guerrero, Mex.	NA
<i>kunthii</i> 3-4' dark red	July-Oct	<b>large flower</b> late, long blooming; willowy, hardy in much of U.S.; blooms first year; prolonged bloom season  a bit sprawling, but among rocks the effect is lovely <b>annual dryland garden,</b> <b>small border</b> cultivated in: CO	sandy loam	ample water for seedlings		sometimes over 10,000'	w. and c. Mex. to Oaxaca	
<i>(potosinus)</i>  to 40" red-violet	early July	<b>large flower</b>	NA	NA	NA	mountains	Guanajuato, San Luis Potosi, Mex.	NA
<i>(tepicensis)</i> 16" purple <b>rare</b>	unknown	<b>large flower</b> <b>could be a trough subject</b>  NA	NA	NA	NA	mountains	Nayarit, Mex.	NA

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for more photos go to:

1. this website, Library tab
2. <http://plants.usda.gov/gallery.html>
3. <http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/spgm-1.4.4/gal/Penstemon/index.php?name=Penstemon%20-%2034k>