

SUBGENUS: *PENSTEMON*

Section: *Fasciculus*

Subsection: *Perfoliati*

CULTIVATION OF EACH SPECIES

Table 14

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

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.”¹

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’.

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*, the stately *hidalgensis* and *amphorellae*. Occasionally they will surprise you and make an appearance the next spring.

¹ Lindgren, D. and Wilde, E. “Growing Penstemons Species, Cultivars and Hybrids.”

Species

hidalgensis
moronensis
perfoliatus



Penstemon hidalgensis



Penstemon hidalgensis



Penstemon hidalgensis seedling

Penstemon Fasciculus Perfoliati

Table 14. *Penstemon Fasciculus Perfoliati*

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 1/2" **large**=1-1 3/8" **medium**= 1/2 - 1" **small**= < 1/2"
 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>hidalgensis</i> 3-6' red-purple, lavender, purple EASY AS AN ANNUAL	unknown	very large flower tall, stately, attractive, an annual in the north; flowers covered with little hairs with a miniscule drop of "glue" on their ends (glandular); display of lavender bloom is memorable dense glandular foliage pollinated by bumblebees; begin seeds inside Nov-Jan, transplanting to the outdoors as weather permits; will bloom first year annual border, in small groups in cultivation : Guatemala, CO as annual; OR for 1-2 years; OH as an annual	porous	adequate water	 especially in arid areas	5900-7300 open forest, mountains	near Mexico City	unknown
<i>moronensis</i> 20" violet	July- Sept	large flower	may benefit from a scoria (volcanic material) supplement	NA	NA	open forest	Zacatecas, Mex.	NA
<i>(perfoliatus)</i> >3' blue-purple rare	July-Sept	very large flower	NA	NA	NA	high forest	s Oaxaca, Mex on one mountain	NA

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.