

**SUBGENUS: *PENSTEMON***

**Section: *Fasciculus***

**Subsection: *Racemosi***

**CULTIVATION OF EACH SPECIES**

**Table 15**

[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) <b><i>Racemosi</i></b> (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.”

**I**n 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.

### **Species**

*amphorellae*

*salterius*

*tenuifolius*

*vulcanellus*

**Table 15. *Penstemon Fasciculus Racemosi***

**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 Suggetions	Cultivation Needs			Elevation and Habitat	Distribution	Reported cold hardiness in cultivation
			Garden Soil	Moisture	Sun			
<i>amphorellae</i> 16" pale blue	July-Sept	<b>medium or large flower</b> (reports vary) attractive, blooms first year (CO beginning in Sept through frost hard frost)  blooms sparse giving a delicate, airy appearance  linear (straight and narrow) stem leaves  reseeds;  one year only in w. OR <b>low border; dryland garden, covered trough</b> cultivated in: CO	sandy, gravelly	supplement	tolerates half day	highlands	c. and n. Mexico	-20°F in protected spot Denver  normally Zone 8
( <i>salterius</i> ) ~12" blue-purple	Aug-Sept	<b>large flower</b>	NA	NA	NA	open pine woodlands	Durango, Mex.	NA

<i>(tenuifolius)</i> 14" lavender, pale pink to purple	unknown	<b>large flower</b> NA	NA	NA	NA	central plateau	Puebla to San Luis Potosi, Jalisco, Zacatecas, Hidalgo Mexico	NA
<i>(vulcanellus)</i> 12" lavender, blue-purple	July	<b>medium flower</b> NA	NA	NA	NA	rocky, volcanic soil	Durango, Mex.	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.

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>



*Penstemon amphorellae* courtesy: Ginny Maffitt



*Penstemon amphorellae* seedling