

**SUBGENUS: *SACCANTHERA***  
**Section *Saccanthera***  
**Subsection *Serrulati***

**CULTIVATION OF EACH SPECIES**  
**Table 31**

[subgenus]	<b>SACCANTHERA</b>	
[section]	<b>Saccanthera</b> (28)	<i>Bridgesiani</i> (1)
[subsection]	<b>Serrulati</b> (6)	<i>Heterophylli</i> (22)

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF PENSTEMONS IN SUBGENUS *SACCANTHERA***

Found in Utah, Nevada and California and are distinguished by the saccate or sac-like anthers which open across the top. The only red one is *Penstemon rostiflorus* .... [Those in Section *Serrulati*] have violet to lavender flowers and toothed foliage. [Those in Section *Serrulati*] have violet to lavender flowers and toothed foliage.

**Location** Utah, Nevada, California

**Habitat** Dry; mostly mountainous country

**Foliage** subshrub

**Shape** sometimes forms mats; stiff upright stems;

**Leaves** some grey-green and thick; serrate (toothed like a saw);



*Penstemon serrulatus*



*Penstemon venustus*

**Plant in bloom:**

**Corolla** (flower)

**color** violet to lavender

**shape** bell-like, except *Bridgesiani* which has a shark's head appearance (because lower lobes are sharply retracted)

**size** often large, 8" to 2 ½'



*Penstemon serrulatus*



*Penstemon venustus*

**Inflorescence** (arrangement of flowers along flowering stalk; all the flowers on the stalk) usually a panicle (inflorescence is branched), but sometimes mixed racemes (unbranched) and panicles



*Penstemon serrulatus*



*Penstemon venustus*

**Calyx** (sepals on underside of flower, collectively; outermost part of the flower) narrow

### Cultivation needs

**Ease of cultivation** may be difficult

**Moisture** prefers moist soil ; supplemental water in arid locations in modest amounts

**Sun** varies by species

**Heat tolerance**

**Cold tolerance**

**Shade** varies by species

**Soil**

**Drainage**

**Climate preference**

**Longevity**

### **Display recommendations**

**Pollinated by** 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. *Richardsonii* by hawk moth, bumble bees particularly.



*Penstemon serrulatus* seedling

**Species**

*P. diphyllus*    *P. richardsonii*    *P. triphyllus*  
*P. glandulosus*    *P. serrulatus*    *P. venustus*

**Table 31. *Saccanthera Saccanthera Serrulati***

**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	Soil	Moisture	Sun	Elevation and Habitat	Distribution	Reported Hardiness in cultivation
<i>diphyllus</i>  18” blue-purple	July-August	<b>small flower, two-leaved</b> shrubby, long bloom season; good garden filler;  inflorescence (bloom display) is branching and uncrowded  a few stems in a clump, woody base, more or less upright or sprawling;  unlike other penstemons that have leaves in pairs on the stem, often has leaves that alternate around the stem; irregularly toothed all found on bloom stems, lower leaves smaller than uppers; <b>dryland garden</b> cultivated in:	poor, well drained	some	☀	lower elevations and mountains; rocky slopes and cliffs in mountains;	se. WA, ID, w. MT 	zone 3

<p><b><i>glandulosus</i></b></p> <p>2 ½ “ x 7.8” wide</p> <p>lavender, purple</p> <p>EASY</p>	<p>May - July</p>	<p><b>very large flower</b></p> <p>exceptionally beautiful; praised by many;</p> <p>several stout, upright stems; inflorescence has 2-6 well-separated verticillasters (two cymes/stems bearing flowers , cymes arise from a node on the bloom stalk) composed of many flowers</p> <p>a “sticky” plant because of hairs that are gland-tipped;</p> <p>deciduous (herbaceous); leaves sticky., edges dentate</p> <p><u>varieties</u>  <i>glandulosus</i>  <i>chelanensis</i></p> <p><b>dryland garden</b></p> <p>Cultivated in: has excellent prospects, but not widespread; seeds may be difficult to find</p>	<p>lean soil, but gravel or quarry sand on w Pacific side</p>	<p>some, mostly in spring or fall; winter-covered troughs in w OR</p>	<p>half-day</p>	<p>up to 4,600’</p> <p>open rocky hillsides and canyons to scattered timber in the mountains; east Columbia Gorge</p>	<p>se. WA, ne. OR, cw. ID</p> 	<p>should tolerate 0°</p>
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<p><b><i>richardsonii</i></b></p> <p>12-24" 9.8" wide</p> <p>reddish-pink, lavender</p> <p>EASY</p>	<p>June-October</p>	<p><b>medium flower</b></p> <p>variable in growth habit, leaf shape and flower color; late, long bloom season; beautiful; everyone's favorite</p> <p>stems few to numerous in a bushy clump; can be lax and sprawling (give a pretty large stone); inflorescence a raceme (unbranched with each flower on individual pedicle attached to main stem) or mixed raceme-panicle (branched and dense)</p> <p>subshrub with attractive foliage; may be loose in shape; all leaves are cauline (on bloom stalks)</p> <p>self-sows but not a nuisance;</p> <p>long-lived;</p> <p><u>varieties</u>  <i>v. dentatus</i> 20" x 25" wide sprays of bright lilac pink flowers, favored by gardeners  <i>curtiflorus</i>  <i>richardsonii</i></p> <p><b>large rock garden or border</b></p> <p>Cultivated in: widely cultivated</p>	<p>adaptable; good drainage; longer-lived in pumice or gravel in w. OR</p>	<p>appreciates supplemental watering, particularly since it is a late bloomer</p>		<p>4,300-7,300</p> <p>rock slides, crevices in rock walls, cliff faces; rockslides;</p>	<p>Columbia River Gorge c. WA, OR, s. BC</p> 	<p>zone 5</p> <p>-20° F in Denver</p>
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<p><i>serrulatus</i></p> <p>10-28" x 10.1" wide, or as wide as tall</p> <p>purple-reddish violet, blue, occasionally white or pink</p> <p>EASY</p>	<p>June-July</p>	<p><b>medium flower</b></p> <p>attractive, bushy; vigorous, free blooming; reblooms if cut back;</p> <p>stems rise in a clump from a woody base flowers in globes (capitate);</p> <p>attractive foliage; attractive finely serrate leaf margins; all are cauline (attached to the stem)</p> <p>self sows</p> <p>may not be long-lived</p> <p><b>rock garden; plant in drifts</b></p> <p>Cultivated in: widely</p>	<p>acid to neutral; well drained; some compost, but slightly raised bed</p>	<p>needs moisture, particularly important during summer months; essential in CO</p>	<p>afternoon</p> <p> in all climates; essential in CO</p>	<p>sea level-6,000'</p> <p>on wetter western side of mountains on moist ground in forest openings; wooded slopes</p>	<p>s. AK, BC, WA, OR</p> 	<p>zones 5-6</p> <p>-20° F with some protection in CO</p>
<p><i>triphyllus</i></p> <p>2 ½'</p> <p>lavender</p>	<p>May-July</p>	<p><b>small flower</b></p> <p>variable species;</p> <p>numerous slender and brittle stems growing in a busy clump; inflorescence is open, scattered and mixed raceme and panicle (branched and unbranched)</p> <p>open subshrub; all leaves are cauline (grow on the stems) ; has three leaves per node, unlike other all other penstemons; thin leaves are linear to lance-shaped, irregularly toothed</p> <p>cut sharply back if straggly late in summer;</p> <p>long lived</p> <p><b>border</b></p> <p>Cultivated in: troughs in w. OR</p>	<p>rocky, lean</p>	<p>some</p>	<p></p>	<p>lower elevations;</p> <p>rocky talus and basalt cliffs along Snake River</p>	<p>e. ID, WA, OR</p> 	<p>probably not very hardy</p>

<p><b>venustus</b></p> <p>2 ½ ‘</p> <p>purple, blue, violet</p> <p>EASY</p>	<p>May-Aug</p>	<p><b>large flower</b></p> <p>lovely, graceful , long blooming, bloom continues from late summer into fall; reblooms in CO</p> <p>few to many stems, grow in large clumps, almost as wide as tall;</p> <p>inflorescence is a mix of raceme and panicle (branched and unbranched)</p> <p>leaves all cauline (on bloom stalk only), mostly dentate or finely serrate; lower leaves reduced; lance-shaped to oblong and acute at the tip</p> <p>may die back to ground over the winter;</p> <p>strong taproot and woody base; long lived,</p> <p><b>border</b></p> <p>Cultivated in: praised in dry and moist climates; widely grown; long-lived in WOR rock garden</p>	<p>well to moderately well drained soils, areas; it is not adapted to poorly drained soils.</p>	<p>some</p> <p>20 to 35 inch rainfall</p>	<p></p> <p>will tolerate part day shade</p>	<p>valleys to subalpine mountains; dry canyons; rocky cliffs, gravely or talus slopes, roadside cuts</p>	<p>e. OR, WA, w. ID</p> 	<p>-20° F in Denver</p>
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🎵 Help build this data base; post your gardening experiences on the Penstemon Blog

Quarry sand: sand that is ground from actual rock, not dredged from creek or river beds. It contains little or no soil, so it is similar to using pumice or other inorganic materials.

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>