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The Best of Every Season

Blackbeard Beard Tongue

Penstemon 'Blackbeard'

Height: 30 inches

Spread: 24 inches

Spacing: 18 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 3

Other Names: Beardtongue

Description:

An impressive penstemon producing flowers in shades of lilac purple rising above deep eggplant purple foliage on equally dark stems; makes a beautiful visual impact when massed in the garden, along walkways, or in borders



Blackbeard Beard Tongue flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Blackbeard Beard Tongue has masses of beautiful spikes of lilac purple tubular flowers with white throats rising above the foliage from early to mid summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive glossy narrow leaves remain deep purple in color throughout the season. The deep purple stems can be quite attractive.



Blackbeard Beard Tongue in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Blackbeard Beard Tongue 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 butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Blackbeard Beard Tongue is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Blackbeard Beard Tongue will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 18 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!



Blackbeard Beard Tongue foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. 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 particular variety is an interspecific hybrid. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Blackbeard Beard Tongue is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.