



ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Superb Penstemon

Penstemon superbus

DESCRIPTION: Superb Penstemon is one of the larger herbaceous perennial *Penstemons*, sending its spikes of peachy red flowers up 5' to 7'. Flowering may start by mid-March, and often can be extended into June, by keeping it watered. It can be found growing in rocky canyons and along washes in southeastern Arizona. Like most *Penstemons*, these are short-lived perennials, living 2-5 years. This *Penstemon* sets seed readily, although volunteers are not so common unless soil and weather conditions are just right. It sometimes it hybridizes with Parry Penstemon if both are grown together. Pollination is by hummingbirds, but hawkmoths, bumble bees, and carpenter bees are also attracted to it.

RECOMMENDED USE: Accent, flowers, rock garden, enhanced desert revegetation.

CULTURE:



Hardiness: Superb Penstemon is hardy to at least 22°F. However, if it is sending up flower spikes, or in bloom, the sensitivity to freeze is much greater.



Sun tolerance: It does best in full sun. Powdery mildew and floppy flower spikes can be problems if it is grown in too much shade, or in damp locales.



Watering and feeding: Occasional watering is necessary to help it persist through the hot, dry times of the year. If winter rains are weak, water it from November until blooms cease.



Soil requirements: Most soils will do, but it performs better and lives longer in sandier soils.



Pruning: Cut off finished flower stalks after fruit ripen. Additional flowers can be encouraged by not allowing seed pods to form.