Homestead Gardens Plant Finder

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Firecracker Penstemon

Penstemon eatonii



Firecracker Penstemon flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 18 inches

Flower Height: 3 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Spacing: 18 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8a

Other Names: Firecracker Beardtongue, Eaton's Penstemon

Description:

An outstanding variety with tall, arching stems; stunning red flowers, rising above dark green foliage, makes an explosive visual impact when massed in the garden, along walkways, or in borders



Firecracker Penstemon in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Firecracker Penstemon has masses of beautiful spikes of red tubular flowers rising above the foliage from late spring to mid summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its narrow leaves remain dark green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Firecracker Penstemon 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.

Firecracker Penstemon is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Firecracker Penstemon will grow to be about 18 inches tall at maturity extending to 3 feet tall with the flowers, 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!

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 somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.

Firecracker Penstemon 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. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.