



ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Heller's Penstemon

Penstemon triflorus

DESCRIPTION: Heller's Penstemon (aka Hill Country Penstemon) is 1½ to 2 foot tall evergreen, bushy perennial. It sends its spikes of brilliant red flowers up 5 feet, and each flower is 2 in. long, making it among the most showy of the genus. The two-lipped flowers also occur in pairs. Flowering may start by mid-March, and often can be extended into June, by keeping it watered. It is endemic to limestone hills and open areas on the Edwards Plateau in Texas. Like most *Penstemons*, these are short-lived perennials, living 3 to 5 years, but make an ideal landscape plant in Arizona. Pollination is by hummingbirds, but hawkmoths, bumble bees, and carpenter bees are also attracted to it.

RECOMMENDED USE: The small bushy stature, intense red and large size of its flowers set this *Penstemon* apart from others. It does well in low elevation xeriscape gardens.

CULTURE:



Hardiness: Heller's Penstemon is hardy to at least 15°F. However, if it is sending up flower spikes, or in bloom, the sensitivity to freeze is greater.



Sun tolerance: It does best in full sun to all-day light shade.



Watering and feeding: Low water use once established. Water only when it just starts to wilt. If winter rains are weak, water it from November until blooms cease. No fertilization is needed.



Soil requirements: Give it a perfectly well-drained site and it performs better and lives longer.



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