



Photo: Missouri Botanical Garden

Common Names:
Beardtongue,
Foxglove Beardtongue

Plant Type:
Perennial

Light Requirements: Full Sun

Height: 2-5 ft.

Bloom Time: Late spring/early summer

Hardiness Zone: 3-8

Penstemon digitalis

Penstemon digitalis is an herbaceous perennial in the plantain family (Plantaginaceae). The species is native to the eastern and southeastern United States, and grows particularly well in prairies, fields, and open woods. It is a clump-forming perennial that typically spreads by seed. Penstemon is commonly called beardtongue because the stamen inside the flower has a tuft of small hairs.

Because of hybridization, many different cultivars exist. These hybrids are often bred for different characteristics such as height, flower color, and foliage color. Foliage is medium green on the species, while many cultivars have foliage that emerges bright red or purple, aging to a purple green as the season progresses. Some varieties boast beautiful fall color and interesting seedheads that persist through winter. The tubular-shaped white or pink flowers are favorites among hummingbirds and bees.

Penstemon grows best in full sun and well-drained soil. It can tolerate clay soil and is quite drought tolerant once established. Roots can rot in overly wet soil. Penstemon is easily transplanted and is generally considered deer resistant.

References:

<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/penstemon>

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/penstemon-digitalis-husker-red/>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/penstemon-digitalis/>