



Indigo Bush (*Psoralea fremontii*)

There is nothing more violet in the Mojave desert than the indigo bush. In fact, its color is so brilliant that it has been turned into dye for thousands of years. Historically, paints and dyes from the plant indicated a powerful hue of royalty.

Indigo bush is still favored by many. In addition, the plant is often used in desert gardens as it attracts a variety of birds and butterflies.

Description: A perennial plant, the indigo bush grows up to 3 feet tall. Flowers are intense and violet-blue. Branches are thin. Leaves are thin, gray-green and hairy. Glands are not visible. Stems are long and wood-like. Indigo bush is a member of the Fabaceae family, which is also called the Leguminosae family. Both families include legumes such as soybeans, garden peas, and peanuts.

Location: Generally grown on dry hills and in valleys, indigo bush extends across the southwestern United States. It is native to Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah. Succeeding at elevations between 2,000 and 4,000 feet, the plant does well in extreme climates and substrate. Sandy and rocky desert terrain creates ideal soil for adequate growth.



Uses: Indigo bush is perfect for desert landscape because of its vibrant purple coloration and it being considered undesirable by wildlife. Although fruit is of the legume family, it is considered to be poisonous. Indigo dye has been extracted from the plant for centuries. Dyes are used in cloth, paint, and more.

Sources:

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