



Firecracker Penstemon (*Penstemon eatonii*)

A perennial plant from the Figwort family, the Firecracker Penstemon is native to the western United States. The common name for penstemon is “beardtongue” as some appear to have an extremely hairy “tongue” filament in the center of the corolla.

Description: Growing up to about 3 feet tall, the firecracker penstemon displays an arching stem with many scarlet colored narrow, tubular flowers. The brightly colored blossoms bloom between May and August. Flowers grow in pairs adjacent to one another along the tall stem. Leaves are dark green and strong enough to be fire resistant as they hold onto sufficient amounts of water during fire season.

Uses: Strong and durable, firecracker penstemon plants are used in erosion management and landscape beautification. The showy tubular flowers provide a primary nectar source to hummingbirds and butterflies. The plant was used as treatment for spider bites, stomach aches, blood loss reduction, snakebites, and burns. In addition, firecracker penstemon plants contribute radiant coloration to desert gardens.



Location: Thriving in high elevation deserts below 8,000 feet, firecracker penstemon plants require dry soil without excessive irrigation. Plants grow well from the Rocky Mountains westward toward California. Furthermore, firecracker penstemons are found along dry slope and flats in regions near sage, pinyon juniper, and ponderosa pine populations.

Sources:

“Firecracker Penstemon in the Landscape.” *Utah State University*. 1 Feb. 2019. https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1009&context=extension_curgarden

“Firecracker Penstemon.” *Utah Native Plant Society*. 1 Feb. 2019. <https://www.unps.org/plant%20data%20base/plant%20sheets/pensteatonii.html>

“Firecracker Penstemon.” *California Native Plant Society*. 1 Feb 2019. [https://calscape.org/Penstemon-eatonii-\(\)](https://calscape.org/Penstemon-eatonii-/)

“Firecracker Penstemon.” *Desert Gazette, Mojave Desert*. <http://mojavedesert.net/wildflower/eatons-firecracker.html>