

Pentas

Pentas lanceolata

Plant Description:

Pentas are herbaceous perennials that are often treated as annuals in north Florida. Many cultivars are now available, including dwarfs that grow to only 18 inches tall. Flower colors come in red, pink, white and lilac, but typically only the old-fashioned, unnamed varieties (red) are most attractive to butterflies and hummingbirds. When purchasing Pentas for butterfly gardens, it is buyer-beware since the newer varieties are often not nectar sources and are therefore purely ornamental for humans.

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| <u>Mature Size:</u> | 2-3 feet |
| <u>Growth Rate:</u> | Fast |
| <u>Plant Habit:</u> | Upright, Rounded |
| <u>Plant Spacing:</u> | 18 – 24 inches |

Ornamental Characteristics & Uses:

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| <u>Foliage Color:</u> | Green |
| <u>Flower Color:</u> | Red, Pink, White, Lavender |
| <u>Bloom Time:</u> | Spring – Fall |
| <u>Attracts Wildlife:</u> | Butterflies & Hummingbirds |
| <u>Uses:</u> | Landscapes, Containers, Cut Flowers |





Growing Requirements:

Cold Hardiness Zone(s): 8b - 11

Exposure: Full Sun; Partial Sun

Water Needs: Moderate

Soil Tolerances: Requires well-drained soils

Soil pH: Slightly acidic to slightly alkaline

Maintenance: Moderate

General Care & Growing Tips:

Pentas prefer fertile, well-drained soils, and regular moisture. Like most plants, a 2- to 3-inch layer of organic mulch is beneficial to retain soil moisture. Newer cultivars may require deadheading of spent flowers. Plants die to the ground during freezing temperatures. Heavy mulch applied over the crown of plants cut back to the ground may help plants overwinter in Baker County (hardiness zone 8b). Plants are easily rooted from cuttings which can be overwintered indoors and replanted the following spring.

Common Pests:

No pests or diseases are of major concern.



Reference: Gilman, E. F. and Shiffit, S. (1999). *Pentas lanceolata* Pentas. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fp465>

Photo Credit: Alicia Lamborn