

Red Ruellia

Ruellia elegans 'Ragin' Cajun'

The red ruellia blooms attract butterflies and hummingbirds and last from May until frost. The plant tolerates a light frost, but dies back at about 28 degrees. It forms a 12 inch high by 24 inch in diameter mound of soft green, semi-fuzzy foliage. This is NOT *Ruellia simplex*, common name Mexican petunia, which is highly invasive and should not be used. The plant is described as an annual, but because it reseeds and spreads rapidly it is sometimes thought of as a perennial.

Type: annual; reseeds

USDA hardiness zones: 8b through 11a

Uses: mass planting; border; cut flowers

Origin: not native to Florida

Height: 8 to 24 inches **Spread:** 24 to 36 inches

Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Light requirement: full sun to part shade

Soil tolerances: high organic matter loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Invasive potential: may self-seed each year

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

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Photo: Scott Zona; NC State U