

# Palmer's Penstemon/Scented Penstemon

## *Penstemon palmeri*

**Size:**

Foliage 1' tall x 1' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Evergreen

**Water Needs:**

Low

**Exposure:**

Full sun to part shade

**Hardiness:**

-30 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Spring

**General:** Scented Penstemon is native to much of the southwest at higher elevations, from 4000-6000 feet, and is a great choice for colder areas. Foliage consists of one foot diameter basal rosettes of leathery, blue-green waxy leaves growing to about 5 inches in length. Spectacular 4 to 6-foot-tall spikes bear huge, tubular, light pink, fragrant flowers. It is best suited to part shade in low desert areas.

**Designer:** This is a great plant for use as a border in the garden or for planting in pots and beds. Use for a naturalizing effect in xeriscape, meadow, rock, woodland gardens. The flowers have a wonderful, rich fragrance as well as a very attractive form and combination of colors within each bloom.

**Maintenance:** Low. Remove spent flowers if desired, or can be allowed to go to seed. If allowed to do so, Scented Penstemon reseeds readily. When seed pods are ripe and open, flower stalks can be carefully removed and seed harvested or spread directly where desired. **Lightly work into top 1/4" of soil by raking** to improve germination rate. If the number of seedlings becomes more than desired, weed out unwanted plants.

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3433 Losee Rd. Ste 4  
Las Vegas, NV 89030

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Contractor License # 57280  
[www.schillinghorticulture.com](http://www.schillinghorticulture.com)



# Russian Sage

## *Perovskia atriplicifolia*

**Size:**

3-5' tall x 3-4' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Deciduous

**Water Needs:**

Low to moderate

**Exposure:**

Full sun, partial shade

**Hardiness:**

15 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Summer

**General:** Russian Sage is a sturdy, upright, shrubby perennial with finely cut silvery-green leaves topped with a haze of little, usually bluish-purple, tubular flowers in the summer time. This plant is sure to bring beauty, grace, and movement to your garden!

**Designer:** Provides a long summer bloom period for the perennial border. Stunning in color, both in flower and in foliage, but especially noteworthy because of the contrast between the two. The finely textured foliage lends an airy feel to plantings. Leaves are arranged in a very attractive pattern on individual stems. Plant with pinks and yellows for a particularly beautiful contrast.

**Maintenance:** Low. Cut back plants fairly hard in early spring before new growth begins, or wait until mid-spring and prune in response to new growth, removing all dead tissue. No serious insect or disease problems. Plants in shade and/or overwatered tend to sprawl or flop over as the summer progresses.

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# Chinese Pistache

## *Pistacia chinensis*

**Size:**

Up to 25-30' tall x 25-30' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Deciduous

**Water Needs:**

Low to moderate

**Exposure:**

Full sun

**Hardiness:**

0 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Spring

**General:** Chinese Pistache is one of the toughest and best-suited shade trees for the desert southwest. It has 4-6 inch long leaves that boast a rich green color in spring and summer, turning attractive bright red, yellow, or orange color in fall, and eventually falling to the ground in winter. Color varies by variety, the soils and the onset of cold weather. 'Red Push' and 'Sarah's Radiance' are particularly attractive varieties (new growth comes with a red hue). Both perform exceptionally well in the Southern Nevada.

**Designer:** Chinese Pistache offers a stunning color show in autumn, and good seasonal shade in the spring and summer months. Flowers are a light green color and insignificant. Female plants have clusters of red peppercorn-like seeds, turning to purplish-black color, and are favored by birds. This tree survives in urban climates, and is often used as a street tree, park tree, or parking lot tree in the southwest.

**Maintenance:** Low. As with all trees, it should always be pruned thoughtfully. No pest or disease problems have been noted or observed. Seed drop on female trees can be messy.

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# Variegated Mock Orange

## *Pittosporum tobira 'variegata'*

**Size:**

Up to 5-10' tall x 5-10' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Evergreen

**Water Needs:**

Moderate

**Exposure:**

Full sun to part sun

**Hardiness:**

20 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Spring

**General:** *Pittosporum tobira 'Variegata'* features pale gray-green leaves with irregular creamy white margins. This shrub has a dense growth habit. Can be kept as a shrub with lots of lower foliage or trained as a small tree. If trained as a tree, the bark is smooth, brown to gray in color and very attractive. Variegated Mock Orange has creamy white flowers that smell of orange blossoms. Performs fine in alkaline soils.

**Designer:** Glossy, creamy white and green variegated leaves, low maintenance care, and an open, round canopy make Variegated Mock Orange a great plant for moderate water-use garden areas. This is a great plant for use as a border in the garden or for planting as a foundation shrub or screen.

**Maintenance:** Low. Prune to shape if desired. Shearing damages finished look and often removes the majority of the fragrant blossoms. Spent flowers and seed pods do not need to be removed, as they will fall off naturally in time. Minimal litter.

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# Dwarf Mock Orange

## *Pittosporum tobira* 'Wheeler's Dwarf'

**Size:**

Up to 3-4' tall x 4-5' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Evergreen

**Water Needs:**

Moderate

**Exposure:**

Full sun or filtered shade

**Hardiness:**

10-15 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Spring

**General:** *Pittosporum tobira* 'Wheeler's Dwarf' is a dense low growing variety of *P. tobira*. It boasts the same rich green foliage as the species, but, unlike Mock Orange, this cultivar rarely produces flowers or fruit.

**Designer:** This is a great plant for use as a low border or possibly a large scale groundcover. **Wheeler's Dwarf** has exceptionally bright green color. The tight, dense form gives this plant a very soft, billowing texture in the garden.

**Maintenance:** Low. Prune only if plant becomes too large as continuous pruning ruins shape. Best pruned in late winter. Spent flowers and seed pods do not need to be removed, as they will fall off naturally in time. Minimal litter. Does not perform well in overly wet or poor draining soils.

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# Autumn Sage

## *Salvia greggii*

**Size:**

Up to 3' tall x 3' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Evergreen

**Water Needs:**

Moderate

**Exposure:**

Full sun to moderate shade

**Hardiness:**

0 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Spring, Summer, Fall

**General:** *Salvia greggii* is a small, evergreen flowering shrub. The leaves are small and dark green, and have a slightly sticky coating. Showy 1 inch long flowers appear on 6-10 inch long spikes. Autumn Sage is available in a wide range of flower colors, including fuchsia, red, purple, orange, yellow, salmon, and white. The hot pink or fuchsia-flowering plants seem to be the most heat tolerant.

**Designer:** The compact size, rich green leaves, long bloom period, and profusion of hummingbird-attracting flowers make Autumn Sage a favorite in many southwestern gardens. This is a great plant for use as a border in the garden, or for planting in areas specifically to attract hummingbirds.

**Maintenance:** *Salvia greggii* benefits from fairly heavy pruning in mid-summer and late winter. The new growth is susceptible to spittle bug, which looks like a white, gooey blob near the tips of the stems. This is easily controlled by pruning off the infected stems and discarding them, or by washing them off with blasts of water. While this plant has long been reputed to be a desert plant, it suffers when planted in rock mulch and hot, exposed locations, or under-watered. Conversely, it seems to thrive when given ample irrigation, organic mulch and/or some shade.

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# Lavender Cotton

## *Santolina chamaecyparissus*

**Size:**

1-2' tall x 2-5' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Evergreen

**Water Needs:**

Low

**Exposure:**

Full sun, light shade

**Hardiness:**

0 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Summer

**General:** *Santolina chamaecyparissus* forms a broad, dense mound of silvery gray-green. The small leaves are highly aromatic when crushed. The form can become open after flowering, but usually fills in well with new growth. Flowers appear on new growth as button-shaped yellow heads.

**Designer:** *Santolina* looks great in Mediterranean and English-style gardens, or as edging in a xeriscape garden. This plant is a valuable source of solid gray, and creates a real contrast with green foliage in the garden. It can be sheared for a more formal look, which will also keep the growth more dense. The natural growth habit is soft and billowing. The foliage has an attractive and unusual interesting form.

**Maintenance:** Low. Lavender Cotton is drought and salt spray tolerant. For best results, avoid fertilization as Lavender Cotton prefers dry, low-fertility soil. Prune in fall or winter after flowering occurs.

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# Gray Creeping Germander

## *Teucrium aroanum*

**Size:**

Up to 12" tall x 4-6' wide

**Evergreen/Deciduous:**

Evergreen

**Water Needs:**

Low

**Exposure:**

Full sun

**Hardiness:**

15 degrees F.

**Bloom Period:**

Spring, Summer, Fall

**General:** This species of germander is native to Greece. It is a low-growing, herbaceous, evergreen perennial with a woody stem at the base. The plant features evergreen, ovate to oblong, silvery green leaves (to 3/4" long) and whorls of two-lipped, 3/4" long, light purple flowers appearing in clusters.

**Designer:** Gray Creeping Germander looks sublime in rock gardens or herb gardens as a small scale ground cover. Its gray-green foliage and soft texture contrast well with bold forms and green foliage. The flowers form in exquisite tight circles that add extra beauty to this wonderful plant.

**Maintenance:** No maintenance is required except if needed to be pruned for size. No serious insect or disease problems are noted or known. It is best grown in average to somewhat gritty, dry to medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerates poor soils as long as drainage is good. Does not perform well in any areas other than in full sun or with only minimal shade.

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