

May Plant of the Month - Prairie Verbena (*Glandularia bipinnatifida*)

By Sue Abernathy

Have you noticed a purple hue in the pastures or patches of vivid purple along the roadside as you are driving down country roads?

More than likely it is Prairie Verbena, *Glandularia bipinnatifida*, which is an early blooming native perennial. It is also known as Dakota Vervain, Purple Prairie Verbena, and Dakota Mock Vervain. It generally has purple, five petal clustered blooms, but the color can vary from a bluish purple to violet to pink. The blooms set on top of stems with highly divided leaves.



Prairie Verbena is drought tolerant and highly deer resistant. This native perennial can be found from Northern Mexico north to Oklahoma and west to New Mexico and Arizona. It thrives in full sun in open pastures and grasslands, often covering acres of ground, but will also tolerate partial shade. It is a low growing, trailing plant that likes dry to medium moist sites and well drained soils like sand, loam, clay, caliche and limestone.

Prairie Verbena's extended bloom time from March through October benefits both gardeners and pollinators. The blankets of purple flowers are an excellent nectar source for butterflies and bees.

It transplants easily from nursery stock or the pasture and can be started from seed and it is a great addition to any butterfly or pollinator garden. It is widespread throughout the state of Texas and can also be found in the Butterfly Garden at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge along the slope, behind the bench in the smaller pergola.



Sources:

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at <http://www.wildflower.org>

Native American Seed at <http://www.seedsources.com>

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