

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS

Lindheimer Chapter

PLANT OF THE MONTH JANUARY, 2011

BIG RED SAGE, *SALVIA PENTSTEMONOIDES*



Close-up of Flower

Big Red Sage

This Month's "Plant of the Month" is dedicated to the Memory of Dr. Bill Ward

Big Red Sage was once thought to be extinct in the wild, but was "rediscovered" in the 1980's. Today it is found naturally in only a very few locations in the Texas Hill Country. Habitat loss and deer predation are a few of the reasons for this plants scarcity. Fortunately, it is easily grown from seed, and is a very rewarding garden plant.

Big red sage has purplish red flowers from June through October. Hummingbirds are attracted to the flowers. It grows from dark green rosettes to become about 3' to 5' tall. When found in the wild, it has usually been reported near the banks of streams in semi shady to sunny conditions. It will grow best in a loamy or clay loam soil that is moist but well-drained. Give the plant protection from deer.

For an informative and personal review of the history of Big Red Sage, see "On the Trail of Big Red Sage" by Dr. Bill Ward at the following website:

<http://npsot.org/wp/story/2009/1091/>