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Penstemons



Synopsis

With some 270 species, *Penstemon* is the largest genus endemic to North America, with examples to be found in every state in the continental U.S. *Penstemons* are particularly beloved by rock gardeners, but as Panayoti Kelaidis points out in his foreword, they belong in every garden, since "one *penstemon* or another will thrive in virtually any microclimate a garden can contrive, from hot, desert exposures to dank shade."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is of great merit for some potential readers, but is not useful for the majority of gardeners, for a number of reasons:1) The bulk of the book is textual and technical species descriptions, useful only for botanists and those aiming to collect from the wild.2) The photos are a very limited selection compared to the above and they are inconveniently placed in two "plates" sections in the middle of the book (an understandable decision as it keeps production costs down).3) The species descriptions and especially the photos are very heavily focused on the Western semi-desert, mountainous and scree-living species. That may reflect the reality of the *Penstemon*'s origins, but I think many, if not most potential purchasers of a book on *Penstemons* would be interested in more coverage of plants useful in a conventional garden scheme. But such plants and their cultural requirements take up maybe 5% of this book. In short, if you are a Western-highland gardener looking for species xeriscape plants, this book will prove useful. If you are a botanist, or if you aim to collect, breed and hybridize *Penstemons*, then this book is of even greater value. But if you want to

add Penstemons to a more conventional garden scheme, then it is close to useless.

I bought this book because my boss has a copy of it. However, he must have an older copy because this contained NO color photographs. It is difficult enough to identify penstemons with color photos, but it is almost impossible without. This wouldn't help in the identification process at all.

Packed with color photos and botanical illustrations is this intriguing guide to penstemons, outlining a wide range of species both common and rare. Enjoy a range of choices which can be used in both dry and marshy gardens across the country, concluded by a mail order source guide.

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