

Mountain Beebalm in the Landscape

Monardella odoratissima

Description



This mound-forming perennial is typically seen in higher elevations in the interior West. The lavender or rose-purple flowers are attractive to insects, especially bees and butterflies. In the mint family, its stems are sturdy and erect, and it emits a fragrant aroma of mint when brushed. This plant is easy to establish and maintain in Intermountain West landscapes and is perfect for rock gardens.

Cultural Requirements

- **Native Habitat:** Typically in higher elevation, rocky areas at 6,000 to 11,000 feet.
- **Soil:** Dry, rocky or sandy well drained
- **Cold:** Tolerance Zones 3 - 8
- **Drought Tolerance:** Medium; water one time per month in most Utah landscapes.
- **Salt:** Tolerance Unknown
- **Sun/Shade Preference:** Full sun to part shade
- **Propagation:** From seed, stem cuttings, or division
- **Maintenance:** Clip off spent flowers for appearance and repeated bloom; prune lightly in fall for a more compact appearance.
- **Problems:** No known cultural problems

Landscape Value

- **Use in the Landscape:** Borders, accents, rock gardens, ground cover
- **Foliage:** Glossy, ovate leaves oppositely arranged on stems; vary in color from dark green to blue-green
- **Flowers:** Showy, lavender or rose-purple inflorescence (cluster of flowers) arranged in a flower head
- **Color:** May - June
- **Fruit (seedheads):** Smooth, brown nutlets (4)

- **Form:** Mounded, sprawling
- **Texture:** Fine
- **Ultimate Size:** 1 foot tall x 2 feet wide
- **Rate of Growth:** Fast; blooms in the first year.
- **Plant Community:** Subalpine, montane, foothills
- **Availability:** “Utah’s Choice” selection; (visit <http://www.utahschoice.org/natives/wheretobuy> for more information).
- **Cultivars:** None of ornamental value

Propagation

Cold-moist stratify seed for up to 90 days. Germinate in a soil-less, peat-based mix at a depth of ¼ inch. Fresh seed may not need cold-stratification to germinate. Plant can be propagated from stem cuttings. Divide plants every 3 to 5 years, as needed.

Additional Photos

References

- Bartow, Amy. 2008. Propagation protocol for production of *Monardella odoratissima* Benth. seeds; USDA NRCS - Corvallis Plant Materials Center, Corvallis, In: Native Plant Network. URL: <http://www.nativeplantnetwork.org> (accessed 3 January 2009). Moscow (ID): University of Idaho, College of Natural Resources, Forest Research Nursery.
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- Mee, W., J. Barnes, R. Kjelgren, R. Sutton, T. Cerny, and C. Johnson. 2003. *Waterwise: Native Plants for Intermountain Landscapes*. Utah State University Press, Logan, UT.
- Utah Water-wise Plants (Utah Division of Water Resources). 2008. URL: <http://www.waterwiseplants.utah.gov>

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