

February 2026 Plant of the Month

Firecracker Penstemon, Eaton's Firecracker, Scarlet Bugler

Penstemon eatonii

Plant Form: Evergreen perennial

Water Use: Low

Mature Size: 2' tall & wide (flower stalks 2-4' tall)

Exposure: Full sun

Bloom Time: Late winter - spring (Feb - June)

Native to: S. California, Colorado, Utah, Arizona
(between 3000 - 9500 feet)

Hardiness: Cold hardy to 0°F

Firecracker Penstemon is irresistible to hummingbirds due to its nectar-filled, brilliant, scarlet flowers. It is among the first to bloom in spring, providing an early-season nectar source for hummingbirds. This low-growing, shrubby perennial produces a mound of rich, dark green leaves from which tall stalks of flowers emerge, the tubular flowers usually hanging to one side of the inflorescence. This plant grows best in well-drained soil with full sun, as shade can cause plants to sprawl. Overwatering may cause the plant to rot. Harvest the flowering spikes in summer when seed capsules are dry to scatter seeds to start new plants. The basal rosette of leaves will remain attractive year-round. Plant in masses for a stunning display (and to drive hummingbirds crazy), or as accents against cacti, boulders, or rock walls.

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