



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Monarda punctata*¹

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Introduction

Horsemint, is a 12 to 18-inch-tall, upright, herbaceous perennial that has long been used by native Americans to make a “sweating tea” (Fig. 1). The branched stems of this plant bear opposite, lanceolate to oblong leaves that are 3 inches in length. These light green leaves have serrate to nearly entire margins. Horsemint produces fragrant, beautiful pink flowers which are held above the foliage in the summer and fall. It is native to moist, coastal upland sites in Florida.

General Information

Scientific name: *Monarda punctata*

Pronunciation: moe-NAR-duh punk-TAY-tuh

Common name(s): Bee Balm, Horsemint, Monarda

Family: *Labiatae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 4 through 9 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: ground cover; edging

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 1 to 3 feet

Spread: 2 to 4 feet

Plant habit: spreading



Figure 1. Bee Balm.

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: lanceolate; ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink
Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: unknown
Fruit color: unknown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

This herbaceous perennial may be used in the landscape as a summer ground cover in a small garden. It also presents a nice massed display in a perennial border.

Horsemint should be grown in full sun on a well-drained sandy soil with some moisture retentive capability. Provide occasional irrigation in drought if soil drains excessively. It is tolerant to some drought and is generally unscathed by freezing temperatures in Florida. *Monarda didyma* is sometimes grown in Florida but does not tolerate hot/humid conditions well. There are many other Bee balms native to north and central America.

Propagate *Monarda punctata* by division or from seed.

Pests and Diseases

The plant is tolerant of pests and diseases.