



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Verbena bonariensis¹

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Introduction

Verbena bonariensis is an 18- to 36-inch-tall perennial with an upright habit and rigid branching stems (Fig. 1). The habit is unlike many of the other, more common verbenas. The 2- to 3-inch-long, light green leaves are narrow and sharply toothed. Purple, panicle-like flowers appear on this plant in the spring, summer, and fall. These beautiful flowers may be cut for flower arrangements and are long-lasting.

General Information

Scientific name: *Verbena bonariensis*

Pronunciation: ver-BEEN-nuh boe-nar-ree-EN-sis

Common name(s): Purple Verbena

Family: *Verbenaceae*

Plant type: ground cover

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 10 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: edging; ground cover; attracts butterflies; mass planting; naturalizing

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

Description

Height: 2 to 3 feet

Spread: 2 to 3 feet

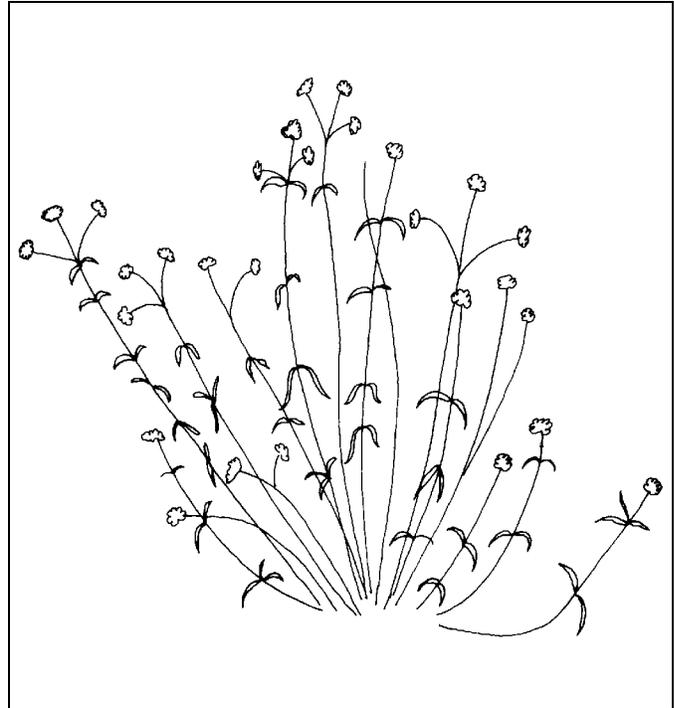


Figure 1. Purple Verbena.

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-597, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October, 1999 Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: purple
Flower characteristic: spring flowering; summer flowering; fall 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: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay;
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 18 to 24 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

Purple Verbena may be used in the landscape as an edging or ground cover and is lovely when massed. It can make a nice show in the perennial border, adding a light, airy touch to the garden.

Purple Verbena should be grown in full sun on a well-drained soil. It is very heat tolerant and can endure periods of drought. Periodic pruning will enhance this perennial's growth habit and blooming. Cut it back if it becomes too leggy and to promote another flower display.

Pests and Diseases

Verbena bonariensis is susceptible to powdery mildew and whiteflies.