**Phlox subulata**

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**Introduction**

The plant goes unnoticed during the year because it blends in with the grass and other surrounding parts of the landscape until flowers emerge in late winter and spring (Fig. 1). It is one of the signals that spring has arrived. Flower colors vary from red and lavender to pink and white, depending on the cultivar grown. Plants grow no more than about 6-inches-tall forming thick clumps and a good ground cover. The stiff leaves are narrow growing to about 1-inch-long and perhaps to 1/16-inch wide.

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**General Information**

**Scientific name:** Phlox subulata  
**Pronunciation:** flocks sub-yoo-LAY-tuh  
**Common name(s):** Creeping Phlox, Moss Pink, Moss Phlox  
**Family:** Polemoniaceae  
**Plant type:** perennial; annual; herbaceous  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 3B through 10 (Fig. 2)  
**Planting month for zone 7:** Jun; Jul  
**Planting month for zone 8:** May; Jun; Jul  
**Planting month for zone 9:** Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct; Nov; Dec  
**Origin:** native to North America  
**Uses:** ground cover; cascading down a wall  
**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

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**Description**

**Height:** .5 to 1 feet  
**Spread:** depends upon supporting structure  
**Plant habit:** spreading; prostrate (flat)  
**Plant density:** moderate  
**Growth rate:** moderate  
**Texture:** fine

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Phlox subulata  -- Creeping Phlox

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: not applicable
Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: pink; lavender; white; red
Flower characteristic: spring 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: reddish
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay;
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 12 to 18 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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**Use and Management**

Creeping Phlox is suitable for rock gardens, ground covers or for planting on top of a garden wall. Flowers and foliage will cascade down a container side making a nice compliment to an upright plant in the container. It makes a nice stabilizer for a sloping landscape.

Phlox should be located in the full sun for best growth. The plants benefit from fertilization, and from regular irrigation in dry weather during the growing season. Cut the foliage back after flowering to encourage denser growth and perhaps a weak second flower display.

Cultivars include: ‘Crimson Beauty’ - red flowers; ‘Emerald Cushion’ - pink flowers; Millstream’ - white with a crimson eye; ‘Millstream Daphne’ - dark blue flowers; ‘White Delight’ - white flowers.

Propagation is by division of non-woody stems in early spring. Stem cuttings may be taken in summer or fall.

**Pests and Diseases**

Mites cause the foliage to lose its green color, especially in dry weather. Heavy infestations form fine webbing. Leaf spots attack the leaves. Remove infected leaves as noticed. Powdery mildew is the most common diseases on this plant. The disease causes a white powdery growth on the leaves. Crown rot may cause rotting near the soil line. A white fungal growth forms on the stem bases. Remove infected plants.