**Salvia leucantha**¹
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### Introduction

The Mexican Salvia is an herbaceous perennial which sends up tufts of gray-green foliage (Fig. 1). The upright stems are wooly and support the lanceolate, pubescent leaves. Leaves are soft to the touch. The inflorescence consists of numerous flowers arranged in whorls at each node. Flower color ranges from rose-purple studded with white to a uniform rose-purple. These beautiful flowers appear summer to fall and are very attractive to hummingbirds.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Salvia leucantha*  
**Pronunciation:** SAL-vee-uh loo-KANTH-uh  
**Common name(s):** Mexican Sage, Mexican Salvia  
**Family:** Labiatae  
**Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 7 through 11 (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  
**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** Feb; Mar; Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct; Nov; Dec  
**Origin:** not native to North America  
**Uses:** cut flowers; border; edging; mass planting; attracts butterflies; attracts hummingbirds; hanging basket; cascading down a wall  
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

### Description

**Height:** 1 to 2 feet  
**Spread:** 2 to 3 feet  
**Plant habit:** spreading  
**Plant density:** open  
**Growth rate:** moderate  
**Texture:** fine

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Salvia leucantha  -- Mexican Sage

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: whorled
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: lanceolate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: semi-evergreen
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: silver/gray
Fall color: not applicable
Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: rose-purple
Flower characteristic: fall flowering; flower season is longer in zones 9-11

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: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: gray/silver
Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay;
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches
Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

This perennial is charming when used in the landscape as a specimen in a container, or massed together in a landscape bed. The flowers are quite lovely when used in flower arrangements. They last several days as cut flowers.

Mexican Salvia prefers a bright position in the landscape and a rich, sandy, well-drained soil. It grows best and stays thick with regular watering but will tolerate periods of drought. Cut the plant back and irrigate during the summer if it becomes too leggy. The plant it killed to the ground by freezing temperatures in the northern part of its range.

The Mexican Salvia can be propagated by cuttings and division.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Leafspot may be an occasional problem.