**Introduction**

This sprawling evergreen groundcover produces deep purple foliage and stems when grown in full sun (Fig. 1). The rather brittle stems, a foot or more high, have a tendency to flop over, creating a trailing effect which lends itself nicely to informal planting beds, rock gardens, or containers. It also cascades nicely over retaining walls and does well in a hanging basket. The rather inconspicuous, three-petalled, pale pink, one-inch flowers are produced from the tips of stems and last only one morning.

**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** Setcreasea pallida
- **Pronunciation:** SET-kree-zee-uh PAL-lid-duh
- **Common name(s):** Purple Heart, Purple Queen
- **Family:** Commelinaceae
- **Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)
- **Planting month for zone 9:** year round
- **Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round
- **Origin:** native to North America
- **Uses:** container or above-ground planter; mass planting; naturalizing; hanging basket; suitable for growing indoors; cascading down a wall
- **Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

**Description**

- **Height:** 1 to 1.5 feet
- **Spread:** depends upon supporting structure
- **Plant habit:** spreading
- **Plant density:** open
- **Growth rate:** moderate
- **Texture:** medium

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** ciliate
- **Leaf shape:** lanceolate
- **Leaf venation:** parallel
- **Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- **Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches
- **Leaf color:** purple or red
- **Fall color:** no fall color change
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

- **Flower color:** pink
- **Flower characteristic:** year-round flowering

**Fruit**

- **Fruit shape:** unknown
- **Fruit length:** less than .5 inch
- **Fruit cover:** dry or hard
- **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:** medium

**Culture**

- **Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun
- **Soil tolerances:** alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
- **Drought tolerance:** high
- **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:** aggressive, spreading plant
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Growing in full sun to partial shade, Purple Heart thrives in a wide variety of soils. In north Florida, frost may kill back the tops but, in warm weather in the spring, the plants recover quickly. Set plants on 12-inch centers for quick cover. Plants should be well-watered until established and then will only require attention during periods of extended drought.

Propagation is by stem cuttings which root easily.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern. Mites and chewing insects may occasionally cause injury.