



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Salvia splendens*¹

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Introduction

Scarlet Sage is a popular bedding plant used primarily to add a splash of brilliant color in the warm season (Fig. 1). The various types of *Salvia* bear spikes of red, purple, pink, salmon, white or bicolored flowers. Reds are most common. Plants usually grow 12 to 18 inches tall and about 12 inches wide but heights range from 6 to 36 inches, depending on the cultivar. Flower spikes are held well above the dark green foliage. *Salvia* produces one good flower display for several weeks, then stops flowering. Cut the old flower spikes to produce another flush of growth and more flowers. If dead flowers are left on the plants, flowering stops and the landscape bed looks ragged and unsightly.

General Information

Scientific name: *Salvia splendens*

Pronunciation: SAL-vee-uh SPLEN-denz

Common name(s): Red Salvia, Scarlet Salvia, Scarlet Sage

Family: *Labiatae*

Plant type: annual

USDA hardiness zones: all zones (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: Jun; Jul

Planting month for zone 8: May; Jun; Jul; Aug

Planting month for zone 9: Mar; Apr; Sep; Oct

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: Mar; Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct; Nov

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; mass planting

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

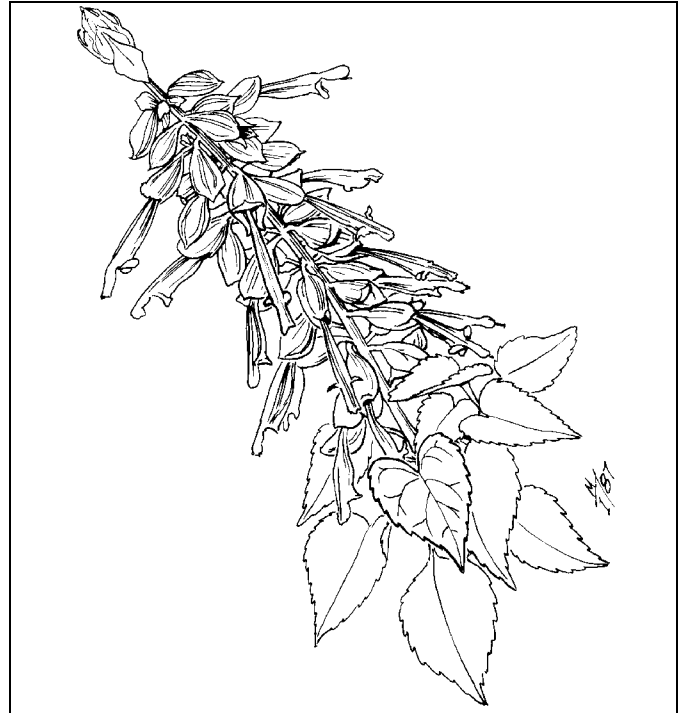


Figure 1. Red Salvia.

Description

Height: 1 to 3 feet

Spread: .5 to 1 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: bowed
Leaf type and persistence: not applicable
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: not applicable
Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: white; salmon; purple; pink; red; bi-colored
Flower characteristic: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: no fruit
Fruit length: no fruit
Fruit cover: no fruit
Fruit color: not applicable

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: clay; sand; acidic; loam;
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: not applicable
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

Flower production and growth are best in full day sun. Irrigation is needed to maintain good quality plants. Space plants 8 to 12 inches apart to create a solid mass of color.

There are more than twenty cultivars listed varying in flower color and plant size.

Pests and Diseases

Slugs eat foliage and can lead to poor growth and poor flowering.

Aphids can suck plant juices and may coat leaves with sticky honeydew.

Sweet potato whitefly causes moderate to severe infestation.