

Plant Select[®]

Smart plants for the right places

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If you're new to our e-newsletter, cheers! For more than 25 years, our non-profit has tested and selected plants that thrive in the high plains and intermountain regions, so you can create waterwise landscapes that are stunning, low maintenance and have a positive environmental impact—no matter what your skill level.

Photo:

Plant Select Demonstration Garden in October
[The Gardens on Spring Creek](#)



Plant Select's goal is to create smart plant choices for a new American landscape inspired by the Rocky Mountain region

A warm welcome to our newest Plant Select members:

- Jeff Andersen – Individual Ambassador
- Judy Elliott – Individual Ambassador
- J Hilaire – Individual Ambassador
- Margaret Reeve – Individual Ambassador
- Paula Lea Cowen – Individual Ambassador
- Steve Origer – Individual Ambassador

And thanks to all who've renewed their memberships!

[Learn how to become a Plant Select member: Landscape Professional, Retail, Wholesale, Mail Order, Local Government or Individual Ambassador](#)

In the Garden With Grace

Explore the unsung heroes of fall gardens



Take a peek at plants that are an essential, but sometimes overlooked, element in garden design: ornamental grasses. They're having a moment!

Join Horticulturist Grace Johnson of [Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms](#) as she shares four of her fave Plant Select grasses and how they can elevate the look of your garden with almost no effort.

Watch Grace's video

Baby Blue rabbitbrush (aka, dwarf rabbitbrush)

A late-season pollinator plant with natural western beauty

Baby Blue rabbitbrush — *Ericameria nauseosus* var. *nauseosus* — is a compact shrub that's native to the high plains and Rocky Mountain region, including Colorado's Front Range.

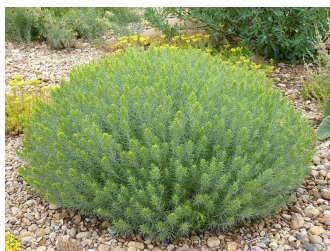
Baby Blue rabbitbrush has narrow, blue-tinted leaves and a western aesthetic. It thrives in the hot sun, tolerating our drying winds and western droughts.

In late summer, it's covered with yellow flowers that can last into fall, adding vibrant color when many plants have faded. Pollinators adore it, including native bees, honey bees and a variety of butterflies and moths.



Success tips:

- Plant Baby Blue rabbitbrush in hot, sunny locations.
- Water it until established (about one year) and then stop.
- Shear it annually (March/April) to encourage denser growth and more flowers.
- Deadhead and/or pull seedlings as needed. This shrub happily reseeds.



More about this dwarf western shrub

HOA tip: Navigating different perspectives on garden clean-up

As temps drop, you may soon have residents who want to cut back plants and clear leaves out of gardens. ("Keep it tidy!") But there are perks to waiting until spring to clean up*, such as feeding birds, housing beneficial insects and helping not-so-hardy plants survive winter.

What's one way to navigate this situation?

[View article >](#)

* If you live in a wildland-urban interface, check out [firewise guidelines for plant maintenance](#) (PDF).



Raise your winter garden game with bluemat penstemons

Are you familiar with bluemat penstemons? These low-growing penstemons keep their leaf color through fall and much of the winter, helping you create a prettier winter garden. Plus, they produce cute, trumpet-like flowers in early summer.

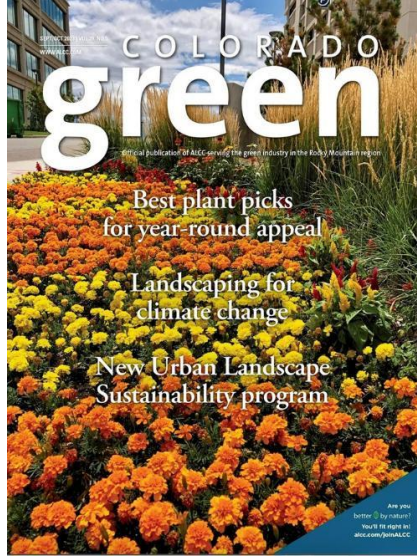


[WAGGON WHEEL® bluemat penstemon](#)



[TUSHAR bluemat penstemon](#)

In the past two years, Plant Select has introduced [WAGGON WHEEL® bluemat penstemon](#) (native to Colorado) and [TUSHAR bluemat penstemon](#) (native to Utah). Find out what makes each penstemon special in our *Colorado Green* article.



Bluemat penstemons: Western natives with year-round appeal



Native Western penstemon plants are flowering in garden centers in the lower mountain regions, and sales are spilling far west of Plant Select's east, small western footprint. North American natives WAGGON WHEEL (*Penstemon arizonae* TWIST) and TUSHAR (*Penstemon* spp.) bluemat penstemons. These penstemons are unique in the plant world and significantly different from one another.

WAGGON WHEEL has beautiful lily-like green foliage that is more persistent and vigorous, so it happily fills larger garden spaces. WAGGON WHEEL is hardier to 30-degree Fahrenheit. The TUSHAR bluemat penstemon requires full sun and is hardy to 20-degree Fahrenheit. It has blue, pointed, spoon-shaped foliage in very appealing proportions, making it a unique color in garden beds. It's a smaller plant, making it perfect for rock gardens, crevice gardens, or on smaller patios.

This group of penstemons is called "bluemats" because they grow in a grassland-like habitat with fewer colors than range from blue-purple to white. While the flowers of these penstemons are small, they are cute and joyful to see, and the bluemat flowers make quite an impact from a distance. WAGGON WHEEL flowers are lighter and more noticeable against its darker green leaves. They will appear like they grew scattered throughout the low rise of foliage. TUSHAR penstemon has a slender form that blends in more with the unique foliage, so it makes a quieter impact in the garden—but that may be a nice trade-off for the great foliage all year.

Both penstemons love full sun and low water conditions in hot heat, dry heat and rocky soil. Both plant selections are almost evergreen year-round. They drop some stems in March after new growth has begun to push out. Both penstemons are viable outdoors, in all penstemon.

These native low-lying bluemats make great plants for native plantings for 20 years. WAGGON WHEEL is native to Colorado, and TUSHAR is native to Utah (and found for the Tushar Mountains). [see plant select]

Plant Type: perennial
Height: 3-5 inches
Width: 15-18 inches
Flower Color: lavender/blue
Foliage Color: most bluemats to frosty, inflected green
Flowering Season: mid-May to July
Light: sun
Hardiness: USDA Zones 5-8
Water Needs: Dry, maximum irrigation is 1.5-2.0" per week for 4 months
Water Budget: 2 gallons of water per square foot per year

Design/Maintenance Tips

1. Perfect for softening flagstone patio edges and rocks in crevice gardens.
2. Plant an entire if using in turf conversions.
3. Rabbit and deer resistant.
4. Provides winter interest.
5. Clean up spent foliage in spring.
6. Plants in elevations up to 8,000 feet.
7. Pair with Snow Angel or Scandia Coral Bell, Blue Jazz dwarf conifer, Colorado Dwarf Blue Star, Half Pint, or Sheepshead dwarf penstemons.

—Contributed by Ross Shingley and Ben Shook for Plant Select

See the article

Both of these penstemons should be available at many [local garden centers](#) in the spring. Want to plan ahead? Look for [Tushar bluemat penstemon](#) on High Country Gardens. (You also can sign up to be notified when they have [WAGGON WHEEL® bluemat penstemon](#) in stock.)

Smart plants for the right places
Early fall beauty



Coral Baby Penstemon



UNDAUNTED® Alpine Plume Grass



ORANGE CARPET® Hummingbird Trumpet

Botanical names:
Penstemon barbatus 'Coral Baby'
Achnatherum calamagrostis 'PUNDO2S'
Epilobium canum subsp. *garrettii* 'PWWG01S' (formerly, *Zauschneria garrettii* 'PWWG01S')

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