



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Verbena rigida*¹

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Introduction

Verbena rigida is a very short, ground cover with spiky flowers. It may reach a height of 12 to 24 inches and has an erect growth habit. Rigid branching stems support 2- to 3-inch-long, narrow, sharply-toothed leaves. Dense spikes of purple flowers appear in the spring, summer and fall. These flower spikes are 1 to 3 inches long and are part of a terminal panicle. They are often cut for flower arrangements and are long-lasting. Vervain is an excellent ground cover or edging plant. Vervain is easily grown in full sun on a well-drained soil. It is very heat tolerant and will endure a moderate period of drought. Periodic pruning enhances blooming and improves the plants growth habit.

General Information

Scientific name: *Verbena rigida*

Pronunciation: ver-BEEN-nuh RIDGE-jid-duh

Common name(s): Vervain

Family: *Verbenaceae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous; ground cover

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 9 (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 7: Jun; Jul

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

Planting month for zone 9: Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: mass planting; ground cover; attracts butterflies; cascading down a wall; hanging basket; naturalizing

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 1 to 1.5 feet

Spread: 3 to 5 feet

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: dentate

Leaf shape: oblong; obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: semi-evergreen; evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: purple

Flower characteristic: spring flowering; summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

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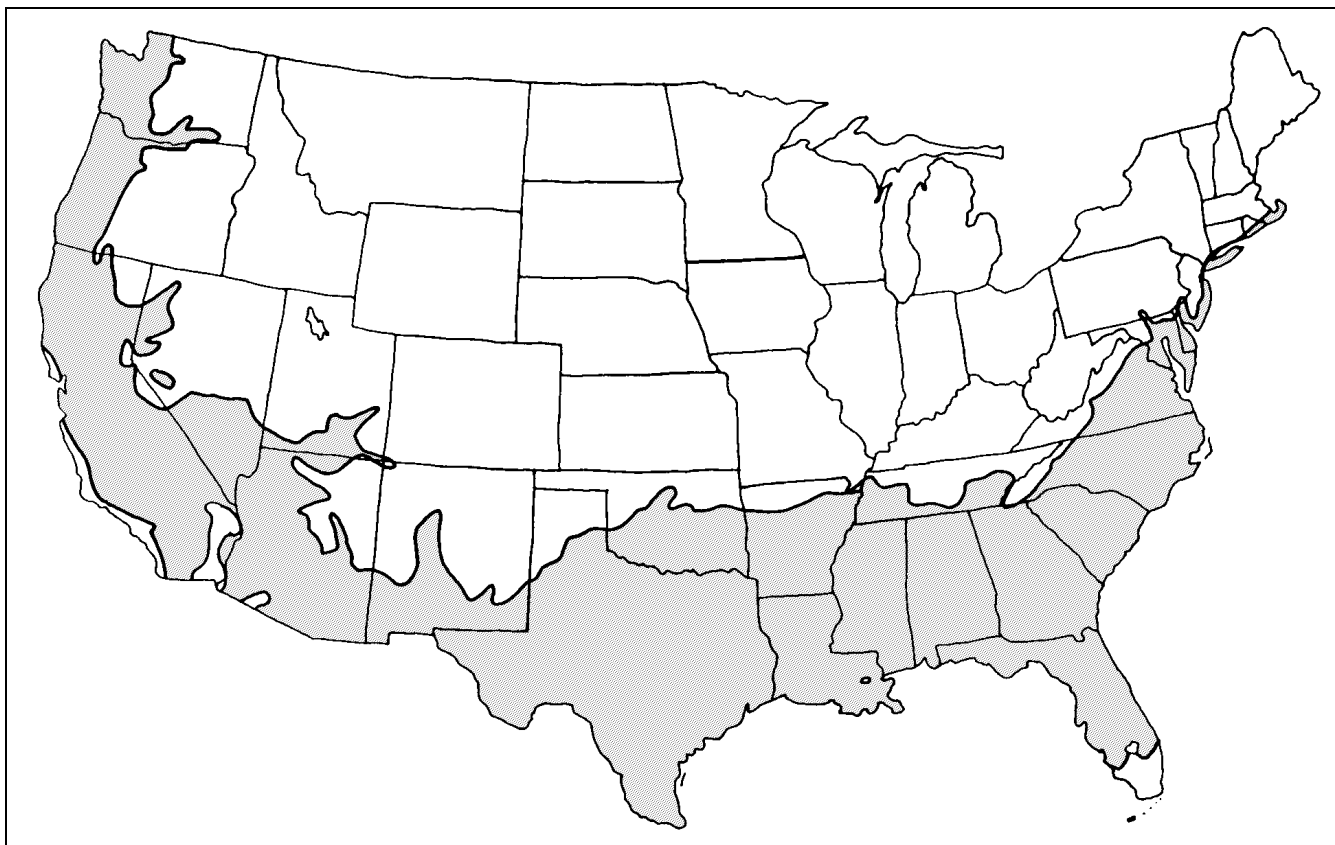


Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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: green
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: 24 to 36 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: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Cuttings of Vervain will root in mild climate areas. However, seeds germinate quickly, and it blooms the first year from seed.

Pests and Diseases

This plant is susceptible to powdery mildew and white flies.