

# Colorado State University

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### From the Desk of Dr. Klett



The Colorado State University Annual and Perennial Trial Gardens have been transformed from bare soil in beds to full color in these beds in the last four weeks. Our student annual and perennial student coordinators and student workers with the help from Larimer and Weld Count Master Gardeners have been extremely busy planting the over 1,000 annual varieties and 110 plus new perennial introductions. This year we have had five planting days with volunteers again which has made the process run a lot smoother and efficient. All of us are pleased to have just about all the trial varieties in the ground and now doing some final planting and getting all the signage up in the garden. Visitation has again been really high already this season and we expect it to continue to surge throughout the summer.

All of us are excited to be getting somewhat back to “normal” and looking forward to having most of you visiting on Tuesday, August 3, 2021 for our evaluation day. Currently most restrictions from COVID will be lifted on August 1, 2021 on the campus. We plan on serving lunch again and a special invitation will be sent by e-mail requesting your presence in the next couple of weeks.

Thanks again for your continual support for the 2021 season. Any questions feel free to contact me at [jim.klett@colostate.edu](mailto:jim.klett@colostate.edu) or e-mail [jim.klett@colostate.edu](mailto:jim.klett@colostate.edu)





Volunteers from the Master Gardener Program help CSU staff get 2021 entries in the trial beds.

## "Best Of" Winner *Spotlight* - Penstemon 'DAKOTA™ Burgundy' from Terra Nova Nurseries



### Penstemon 'DAKOTA™ Burgundy' (*Penstemon digitalis* 'TNPENDB')

At CSU, the dark burgundy foliage was a key reason for the superior rating. Multiple shades of burgundy added interest to the dark foliage and help make the white/lavender flower color really stand out. Blooms are very prolific with a long flowering period. It was noted that although the flowers are very impressive,

the plant looks very showy even when not in flower due to the attractive dark foliage that remained clean all season and never had got “floppy ear”. Plants were very reliable and had 100% survival over three seasons.

Terra Nova also describe it as a hardy perennial with having glossy, purple black leaves. It is tough and long lived. Flowering begins in June and the blooms are loved by hummingbirds. This cultivar is unique in that is shorter and much more compact than Penstemon ‘Dark Towers’ or ‘Mystica’. Flowers are more lavender to violet rather than pink. The showy dark seed heads in fall can also make attractive cut “flowers”. Has resistance to deer and is drought tolerant.

Height: 12” (plant), 24” (flower)

Spread: 18”

Growth Habit: Mounding

Bloom time: Begins in June and peak is July, August

Hardiness Zones: 3 – 8

Exposure: Full sun to part shade

Water: Dry moderately between waterings

Soil pH: 5.0 - 7.5

Crop Time Gallons: 6-8 weeks

Day Length for Flowering: Day neutral

Fertilization (ppm N): 150-200 PPM

EC: 1.8 - 2.2

Crop Time Gallons: 6-8 weeks

Comments: Can get crown rot if over watered or over mulched. Has no major insect problems.

Grower Notes: Growing-on temps- 65°F-75°F / day & 60°F-65°F /nights. Vernalization does not impact flowering.

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