

Salvia greggii Cherry Sage, Autumn Sage, Cherry Salvia¹

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Introduction

Like many other salvias, this charming perennial is native to south and west Texas and grows into New Mexico and Mexico (Fig. 1). Cherry sage generally attains a height of 6 to 18 inches and blooms from spring to frost. Cherry sage is upright in habit and has dark green, fine-textured leaves. The tubular flowers of this plant come in colors of pink, red, white, salmon and coral. Plants with red flowers appear in the trade most often. These blooms are very attractive to hummingbirds. The small, red flowers are borne above the foliage but blend in with the leaves due to the open habit of the species. Cultivars have been selected with a tighter canopy.

General Information

Scientific name: *Salvia greggii*

Pronunciation: SAL-vee-uh GREGG-ee-eye

Common name(s): cherry sage, autumn sage, cherry salvia

Family: *Labiatae*

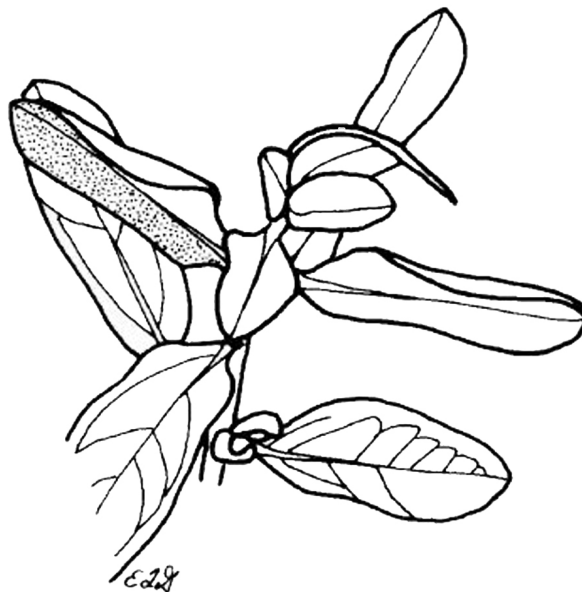


Figure 1. Cherry sage

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: Jun; Jul

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

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

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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

Origin: native to North America

Uses: cut flowers; border; edging; mass planting; attracts butterflies; attracts hummingbirds; hanging basket; cascading down a wall

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Spread: 1 to 2 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: pinnate; brachidodrome

Leaf type and persistence: semi-evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: not applicable

Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: pink; salmon; white; red; coral

Flower characteristic: summer flowering; fall flowering; spring flowering; flower season is longer in zones 9-11

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: unknown

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: reddish

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: moderate

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: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Cherry sage may be used as an edging plant and is quite lovely when massed together in large groups. Large beds of cherry sage make a splendid addition to any sunny landscape.

Grow cherry sage in full sun to partial shade. Some shade is preferred in the warmest climates. It prefers well-drained soils and cannot tolerate



Figure 3. Flower of cherry sage

excessive moisture. However, drought tolerance is good and plants usually come back the following year if the ground has not been disturbed. Freezing temperatures in the warmer parts of hardiness zone 8 usually do not kill the plant to the ground. The plant is treated as an annual in zone 7 and colder regions.

The cultivar 'Variegata' (desert blaze salvia) has creamy-white leaf margins. It is patented and trademarked.

Propagate cherry sage by cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Aphids will occasionally infest the foliage.