



## ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM PLANT CARE INFORMATION

### Mexican Bush Sage or Salvia Real *Salvia leucantha*

**DESCRIPTION:** Mexican Bush Sage is a bushy evergreen subshrub in frostfree climates, and a returning perennial where it gets frosted back in winter. It grows in a loose, spreading mound up to 4' with its graceful arching stems and soft downy foliage. A shorter-growing, compact form is available. The young, fast growing stems are thick and conspicuously white-wooly. From autumn throughout winter (or until the first frost) Mexican Bush Sage blooms with white flowers 1-2" long that extend from velvety lavender-blue calyces. The bicolored inflorescences are borne in very showy elongated arching clusters 10" in length at the ends of erect, spreading stems. At any given time, there will be just a few actual flowers per cluster, but lots of pretty purple calyces. These inflorescences are profuse and extend way beyond the foliage, making this one of the most attractive of the salvias. Some cultivars of Mexican Bush Sage are 'Midnight' and 'Purple Velvet'. Native to Central America and Mexico.

**RECOMMENDED USE:** Use in mass as an accent or splash of color, border, enhanced desert landscape, or in a patio container. Give Mexican Bush Sage plenty of room. It grows and grows all summer long - and the foliage is attractive - but the real show doesn't start until autumn.

#### CULTURE:



**Hardiness:** Hardy to around 20°F.



**Sun tolerance:** Full sun is best, but Mexican Bush Sage can tolerate afternoon shade; it may tend to get leggy and top heavy, however, if it has to reach for the sun.



**Watering and feeding:** Mexican Bush Sage can tolerate some drought once established - better than most salvias. But performs best with regular watering. Feed several times during the growing season.



**Soil requirements:** Prefers well drained soil.



**Pruning:** As it flowers, the plant spreads outward and is subject to fall over and break off stems. Remove flower clusters as they age to reduce the weight on the stems. Prune back your Mexican Bush Sage in early summer to promote a bushier habit and to keep it from getting so top heavy that stems break off.