

Monarda bradburiana Eastern Beebalm

Monarda bradburiana (Eastern Beebalm) is a compact native herbaceous perennial with showy orbs of pale lavender, tubular flowers and herbal-scented foliage. This plant emerges in early spring to prepare for its early bloom time, May to June, much earlier than other Monarda species. Even young foliage emits a strong minty oregano scent when touched, bringing a refreshing, hopeful aroma in spring. Leaves are stalk-less and opposite, a medium green color with purple on the margin, and finely haired. The tubular pale pink flowers form rounded showy wreaths around a mounded green center. Shorter than most Monarda species, Monarda bradburiana only reaches 1-2' tall and wide. Flower petals often have delicate purple dotting and a general purplish tint. This species of Beebalm is upright and bushy, with showy purple square stems with purple bracts at the base of the flower cluster. The tubular flowers attract numerous long-tongued native bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and moths. Monarda bradburiana persists through rhizomatous vegetative reproduction, so it will slowly spread outward. It is native to savannas and open prairies, and prefers full sun to partial shade, and often grows on poor, rocky, dry soils. Its aromatic foliage deters most mammal herbivores. Winter seed heads turn brown and provide architectural interest in winter. Small finches and other songbirds eat the seeds.

Botanical Name: Monarda bradburiana

Common Name: Eastern Beebalm

Family: Lamiaceae

Nativity: US Native

USDA Zone: 3 to 8

Light Type: Full Sun to Light Shade

Soil Type: Loam, Sand

Soil Preferences: keep well-drained to enhance resistance to powdery mildew. Foliage loss with prolonged drought.

Soil Moisture: Dry to Moist

Typical height (ft): 1-2'

Typical width (ft): 1-2'

Foliage: Medium texture, gray-green with purple margins

Bloom Time: May, June

Bloom: Pale purple, lavender

Ecological features: Attracts native bees, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds.

Tolerance of: Drought; Mammalian herbivores; rocky, poor or disturbed soils.

Additional notes: Lovely scented foliage and flowers; more compact and formal than *M. fistulosa*; pollinator magnet; seed heads of winter interest.

Companion plants: Bluestars (*Amsonia* spp.), Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) (*Coreopsis* spp.), Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), Dense Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*)

For more information see:

<http://www.newmoonnursery.com/plant/Monarda-bradburiana>

https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/savanna/plants/bradbury_balm.htm

<https://www.midwestgroundcovers.com/plant/Monarda-bradburiana>

<https://www.americanmeadows.com/wildflower-seeds/native-rare-wildflower-seeds/bradburys-bee-balm-monarda-seeds>

Images of Monarda bradburiana



Monarda bradburiana.jpg

Pale purple flower cluster in full bloom with purple bracts



Monarda bradburiana (14248823679).jpg
leaves green with purple margins, flower single head



Monarda bradburiana - Flickr - peganum.jpg
flower beginning bloom



Monarda bradburiana - Flickr - peganum (1).jpg
purple bracts at the base of the flower cluster



Monarda_bradburiana_-_Flickr_-_peganum_(2).jpg

Fine pubescence on aromatic leaves.

Image choices for narrative:

Choice 1:

Monarda bradburiana.jpg

Pale purple flower cluster in full bloom with purple bracts

Choice 2:

Monarda bradburiana - Flickr - peganum (1).jpg

purple bracts at the base of the flower cluster