

Penstemon fruticiformis ssp. *amargosae* – Death Valley beardtongue

Family: Scrophulariaceae (figwort)

Bloom Period: April-May

Perennial: Shrubby, 2 feet tall

Leaves: Not lobed or toothed (entire), curled upward, lower leafstalks that attach leaves to stem (petioles) are winged, upper leaves have no leafstalks (sessile)

Flowers: Whitish to pale pink, upper petals lavender-blue with purplish lines into interior, tube petals strongly inflated, bearded stamens project from open flower, generally less than 10 flowers per plant, flower externally smooth but densely covered with hairs bearing glands upon their tips (glandular) within

Fruit/seed: Capsules with many seeds

Uniqueness: Densely bearded sterile stamen projected from flower in addition to shorter fertile stamens

Location it was first identified (type locality):
Amargosa Desert, Nye County, NV, April 27, 1907 by Marcus E. Jones (Keck 1937)

Associated Vegetation: Creosote, white bursage, shadscale saltbush, *Ephedra*, blackbrush



Stamen

Penstemons have a sterile stamen (pollen producing part of the flower) called a “staminode” that is typically hairy. This gives the common name of “beardtongue” from the flower resembling an open mouth with a fuzzy tongue. The staminode does not produce pollen, but plays a functional role in pollination. Death Valley beardtongue has a densely bearded staminode which projects from the flower.



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Habitat: Sandy or gravelly washes, limestone outcrops and minimal well-developed soils, in Striped Hills primarily found on rocky slopes with a few plants scattered in the bottom areas

Distribution: NV (Nye County and possible in Clark County), CA (Inyo and San Bernardino Counties)

Elevation: 3,100-6,330 feet

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Distribution on the NNSS: Striped Hills;
~2 acres of habitat

Threats on the NNSS: No threats on the
NNSS due to isolated location

Protection Status (NV): No federal or
state protections. Listed on the Nevada
Division of Natural Heritage At-Risk Plant
and Animal Tracking List and the Nevada
Native Plant Society **Threatened List**
(<https://heritage.nv.gov/documents/ndnh-current-tracking-list>)

Current Monitoring Goal: One known
location on the NNSS (northern
population on map) with a second just
offsite (southern population on map); the
California and Spring Mountain locations
make up majority of its range; long-term
monitoring will focus on visiting the two
Striped Hills populations once every five
years

Contact 702-295-0393 if
your activity might potentially
impact this sensitive species

