

Smooth Blue Beard-Tongue



Photo by W. C. McCalla

Smooth Blue Beard-Tongue *Pentstemon nitidus* Dougl.

Pentstemon is a large and fascinating genus that reaches its highest development and greatest variation in western America. Abrams in his **Flora of the Pacific States** described 91 species, while only 17 are found in the vast eastern area covered by the eighth edition of **Gray's Manual of Botany**. In size they range from low mats on rocks to shrubs with stems ten feet long, and in color of flower from blue, purple, red, yellow to white.

Eight species are described by A. C. Budd in his **Plants of the Canadian Prairies**, one of them the Smooth Blue Beard-tongue. In the Calgary area it blooms from late May well into June. It does well in a garden. I moved a couple of plants from a dry hillside and planted them on the south side of my house in sandy loam where they thrived. In a few years they had formed a colony with at least 200 flowering stems—a beautiful sight.