

# DESPERADO TEXAS SAGE

## *Leucophyllum frutescens*



### Characteristics

- Type: Shrub
- Zone: 8 to 10
- Height: 5.00 to 8.00 feet
- Spread: 4.00 to 6.00 feet
- Bloom Color: Purple
- Bloom Time: Seasonal bloomer
- Flower: Showy
- Sun: Full sun
- Water: Dry to medium
- Maintenance: Low
- Texas Native

### Culture

Desperado Texas Sage (Ceniza) is very popular for its beautiful silvery gray-green foliage and lavender bell-shaped blossoms during the summer and fall. The foliage color is a real standout among the typical green leaves of other plants in the landscape. Their blooms are sensitive to humidity, and many people call Texas Sage the barometer bush because they seem to predict rainfall. Winter hardy to USDA Zones 8-10 where it is easily grown in alkaline, gravelly, dry to medium, well-drained soils in full sun. Add dolomitic limestone to acidic soils. Plants thrive in gritty soils with minimal moisture. Sharp drainage is essential. Overwatering or poorly-drained soils must be avoided. In areas of high rainfall, consider use of raised beds. Plants prefer low humidity, but have excellent tolerance for drought and heat. Do not fertilize plants. Once established, plants require minimal maintenance. Propagate by seed or cuttings.

### Noteworthy Characteristics

*Leucophyllum frutescens*, commonly called Texas sage, silver leaf or barometer bush, is a compact but loosely branched shrub that typically grows to 5-8' tall. Plants tend to sprawl with age unless pruned as needed. This shrub is native to rocky limestone slopes in calcareous soils in the Chihuahuan Desert extending from northern Mexico into Texas and New Mexico. Attractive silver gray leaves (to 1" long) with stellate hairs are close to being evergreen, but some leaf drop will occur in winter. Small, 5-lobed, tubular, purple flowers (to 1" long) bloom singly from the leaf axils at various times during the year but primarily from summer into fall. Flower bloom is typically triggered by rains or significant soil moisture, hence the common name of barometer bush. Flowers give way to 2-valved capsules. Genus name comes from the Greek *leucos* meaning white and *phyllon* meaning white for the whitish foliage. Specific epithet from Latin means shrub-like in reference to plant form.

### Problems

No serious insect or disease problems. Cotton root rot.

### Garden Uses

Where winter hardy, this plant is effectively grown as a hedge, windbreak or screen. Foundations. Borders. Lawn specimen. Large containers near patios or along driveways. Xeriscape plant.