

## Mystic Spires Salvia

By Tera Marshall, Bexar County Master Gardener

I am passionate about feeding our pollinators and have developed, over the years, an extensive pollinator garden. There are so many great plants to feed our bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, but if I could only have one, it would be Mystic Spires Salvia. And Mystic Spires is a Texas Superstar, for good reason.

**Size:** They grow from 18-30 inches tall, with long, bright blue spikes of flowers that appear all summer long until the first freeze. On the years we do not have a hard freeze, they will bloom right through the winter, too. Mystic Spires are perennials and will come back from the roots, even after a severe freeze of 10°.

**Planting:** Mystic Spires is available in nurseries right now, in 4-inch pots and gallon sizes, and now is a great time to plant it. It does not produce viable seed, so the only way to propagate it is through cuttings (which is very easy to do).

Plant them in full sun. They will tolerate partial shade but will perform best in full sun. After planting, water them every 3-4 days until they are well established. After that, they are pretty drought tolerant, requiring water every week or 10 days in the heat of the summer. Adding a little balanced fertilizer will help them get a good start. They are not picky about soil.

**Pinching:** You will be surprised at how fast they grow. Mystic Spires is one of the plants that will benefit from frequent pinching early in the spring. Pinching the tips, as shown in the photo, will cause the plant to put out a lot more stems and a lot more blossoms. The plant will grow larger and bushier. This method can be used with many types of plants.

**Cutting Back:** After many months of blooming, if the plant starts looking leggy and faded (usually August), just cut it back to half its size and water well. Soon, it will put on new growth and a new batch of blossoms.

After a hard freeze, the plants will die back to the ground. As part of your spring cleaning, just cut all the dead growth to 1-2 inches from the ground, and in spring, they will regrow.



Photo credit: Tera Marshall



Photo credit: reddit.com



Photo credit: Gardenia.net

If you don't have any Mystic Spires Salvia, please do try them this year! You won't be sorry!