**Setcreasea pallida** Purple Heart, Purple Queen

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**Introduction**

This sprawling, evergreen ground cover produces deep purple foliage and stems when grown in full sun (Fig. 1). The rather brittle stems, a foot or more high, have a tendency to flop over, creating a trailing effect that lends itself nicely to informal planting beds, rock gardens, or containers. It also cascades nicely over retaining walls and does well in a hanging basket. The rather inconspicuous, three-petalled, pale pink, one-inch flowers are produced from the tips of stems and last only one morning.

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**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** Setcreasea pallida
- **Pronunciation:** SET-kree-zee-uh PAL-lid-duh
- **Common name(s):** purple heart, purple queen
- **Family:** Commelinaceae
- **Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)
- **Planting month for zone 9:** year round
- **Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round
- **Origin:** native to North America
- **Uses:** container or above-ground planter; mass planting; naturalizing; hanging basket; suitable for growing indoors; cascading down a wall
- **Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

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![Figure 1. Purple heart](image)

![Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.](image)
**Description**
- **Height:** 1 to 1.5 feet
- **Spread:** depends upon supporting structure
- **Plant habit:** spreading
- **Plant density:** open
- **Growth rate:** moderate
- **Texture:** medium

**Foliage**
- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** ciliate
- **Leaf shape:** lanceolate
- **Leaf venation:** parallel
- **Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- **Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches
- **Leaf color:** purple or red
- **Fall color:** no fall color change
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**
- **Flower color:** pink
- **Flower characteristic:** year-round flowering

**Fruit**
- **Fruit shape:** unknown
- **Fruit length:** less than .5 inch
- **Fruit cover:** dry or hard
- **Fruit color:** unknown
- **Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**
- **Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable
- **Current year stem/twig color:** reddish
- **Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

**Culture**
- **Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun
- **Soil tolerances:** alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
- **Drought tolerance:** high
- **Soil salt tolerances:** unknown
- **Plant spacing:** 18 to 24 inches

**Other**
- **Roots:** not applicable
- **Winter interest:** no special winter interest
- **Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
- **Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant
- **Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

**Use and Management**
Growing in full sun to partial shade, purple heart thrives in a wide variety of soils. In north Florida, frost may kill back the tops, but in warm weather in the spring the plants recover quickly. Set plants on 12-inch centers for quick cover. Plants should be well-watered until established and then will only require attention during periods of extended drought.

Propagation is by stem cuttings, which root easily.

**Pests and Diseases**
No pests or diseases of major concern. Mites and chewing insects may occasionally cause injury.