

# *Salvia greggii* Cherry Sage, Autumn Sage, Cherry Salvia<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Like many other salvias, this charming perennial is native to south and west Texas and grows into New Mexico and Mexico. Cherry sage generally attains a height of 6 to 18 inches and blooms from spring to frost. Cherry sage is upright in habit and has dark green, fine-textured leaves. The tubular flowers of this plant come in colors of pink, red, white, salmon, and coral. Plants with red flowers appear in the trade most often. These blooms are very attractive to hummingbirds. The small, red flowers are borne above the foliage but blend in with the leaves due to the open habit of the species. Cultivars have been selected with a tighter canopy.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Salvia greggii*

**Pronunciation:** SAL-vee-uh GREGG-ee-eye

**Common name(s):** cherry sage, autumn sage, cherry salvia

**Family:** *Lamiaceae*

**Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous

**USDA hardiness zones:** 7B through 11 (Figure 3)



Figure 1. Full Form - *Salvia greggii*: Cherry Sage, Autumn Sage, Cherry Salvia

Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

**Planting month for zone 7:** Jun; Jul

**Planting month for zone 8:** May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep

**Planting month for zone 9:** Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** Feb; Mar; Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct; Nov; Dec

**Origin:** native to North America

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**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Uses:** cut flowers; border; edging; mass planting; attracts butterflies; attracts hummingbirds; hanging basket; cascading down a wall

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 2. Leaf - *Salvia greggii*: Cherry Sage, Autumn Sage, Cherry Salvia  
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 3. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 1 to 2 feet

**Spread:** 1 to 2 feet

**Plant habit:** round

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval)

**Leaf venation:** pinnate; brachidodrome

**Leaf type and persistence:** semi-evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** not applicable

**Fall characteristic:** not applicable

## Flower

**Flower color:** pink; salmon; white; red; coral

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; fall flowering; spring flowering; flower season is longer in zones 9-11

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** unknown

**Fruit length:** unknown

**Fruit cover:** unknown

**Fruit color:** unknown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

**Current year stem/twig color:** reddish

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** thin

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**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

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

Cherry sage may be used as an edging plant and is quite lovely when massed together in large groups. Large beds of cherry sage make a splendid addition to any sunny landscape.

Grow cherry sage in full sun to partial shade. Some shade is preferred in the warmest climates. It prefers well-drained soils and cannot tolerate excessive moisture. However, drought tolerance is good, and plants usually come back the following year if the ground has not been disturbed. Freezing temperatures in the warmer parts of hardiness zone 8 usually do not kill the plant to the ground. The plant is treated as an annual in zone 7 and colder regions.

The cultivar 'Variegata' (desert blaze salvia) has creamy-white leaf margins. It is patented and trademarked.

Propagate cherry sage by cuttings.

## Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

Aphids will occasionally infest the foliage.