



Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Castilleja indivisa

Educating people about the environmental necessity, economic value, and natural beauty of native plants

4801 La Crosse Avenue
Austin, Texas 78739-1702
(512) 292-4200
www.wildflower.org

Common name
Indian paintbrush

Range
Wet sandy loam soils throughout the Coastal Plain and the eastern half of Texas. Nine species are native to Texas. From the gravelly limestone soil of the Edwards Plateau west to the Trans Pecos desert, *C. integra* is a perennial species that is normally orangish-red but is sometimes yellow. *C. purpurea*, lemon paintbrush, is native to North Central Texas south through the Edwards Plateau and into West Texas. Another perennial, *C. purpurea*, includes three different colored varieties.

Life cycle
Annual

Bloom period
Spring, beginning in early March and peaking mid-April.

Soil preference
Dry, well-drained sandy loam.

Exposure
Sun

Propagation
Seed in open, sunny sites for best results. Indian paintbrush seed may require a cold wet period in the winter to germinate. Seeds are exceptionally small (4 million seeds per pound), so it's best to plant the seed in the fall by lightly pressing or raking them into loose topsoil to ensure good seed/soil contact.

Seeding rate
Seeds are formed in capsules at the base of each flower. Seed capsules may be carefully collected by hand in April – May when the capsules are dry and brown. Seeds are commercially available, and depending on the previous year's seed crop can be expensive—approximately \$110 per 1/4 pound. The recommended seeding rate in 1/4 pound per acre.



Maintenance
After flowering ceases, allow seeds to completely mature before mowing for reseeding or collecting to plant in a new area. Since *C. indivisa* is an annual, it is essential that this species be allowed to reseed for an abundant display for the following year.

Miscellaneous
Indian paintbrush has a reputation for being unpredictable. In some years, when bluebonnets (which flower at approximately the same time as Indian paintbrush) are especially colorful, paintbrush will have only an average flowering year. Other years, paintbrush is spectacular. Some speculate that wet, cold winter can result in a higher than usual seed germination. It is believed that the Indian paintbrush is hemi-parasitic, using the Bluebonnet to get its nitrogen fix. You often see the two species growing together.

Castilleja is an unusual member of the Scrophulariaceae, the snapdragon family. Its vivid “flower” color is actually provided by bracts – not flower petals – which are grouped around and under each of the inconspicuous flowers located on the upper third of the plant.