

***Physostegia virginiana* – False Dragonhead**

COMMON NAME: False Dragonhead, Obedience Plant

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Physostegia virginiana* – Comes from the Greek word *physo* for “bladder” and *stegia* for “covering” referring to the appearance of the flowers.

FLOWER: Pink or pinkish purple

BLOOMING PERIOD: August to October

SIZE: Erect perennial from 2-5 feet tall

BEHAVIOR: Note the square stem with long, clone-forming rhizomes.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: This species like full sun to partial shade in moist to moderate slightly acidic soil.

NATURAL RANGE

SPECIAL FEATURES: The flowers are arranged in four neat vertical rows on a 2-6 inch tall terminal cluster with individual blossoms opening from the bottom to the top. The 5-parted blossoms resemble a snapdragon flower (probably the origin of “false dragonhead”). Note the square stem. Another feature is that if the stem is bent in some way, it is likely to stay in that position for several days – hence the name “obedience plant”.

SUGGESTED CARE: Divide clumps in early spring or use cuttings of young, tender shoots. Otherwise this plant needs little care. It is likely to spread more than desired!

COMPANION PLANTS: Combines well with late summer blue flowers, and adds a nice contrast to asters, sedum and coneflowers. In the wild look for it in damp woods or prairies where it may be found with stinging nettle, Virginia creeper and poison ivy.