



Feb - Plant of the Month



### Plant Information

**Botanical Name:** *Hardenbergia violaceae*

**Common Name:** Purple Lilac Vine

**Native to:** Australia

**Plant Zone:** Hardy to 20 degrees F.  
USDA Zone 9.

**Exposure:** Full sun and light shade

**Mature Size:** Up to 15 feet tall and 10 feet wide, with support (trellis or fence)

**Characteristics:** Vibrant purple flowers appear in the middle of winter over attractive green foliage. While the flowers resemble a lilac's, they aren't fragrant. Does well when grown against a wall or fence, with a trellis for support. Does best in areas that receive some protection from the sun in west-facing exposures.



### Purple Lilac Vine (*Hardenbergia violaceae*)

Let's face it, the winter landscape can be fairly devoid of color, even in the low-desert's relatively mild winters, which is just one of the many reasons that I recommend adding this colorful vine to your plant palette.

Purple lilac vine waits until the dead of winter to produce its lilac-shaped flowers, which are simply stunning. The tiny flowers are a vibrant shade of purple and are arranged in clusters along stems, which maximizes their color impact. If you look closely, you'll notice that the flowers resemble sweet peas in their shape. Despite their resemblance to a lilac flower, they have no fragrance.

One of the mistakes that I see quite often in the desert garden is the absence of color in winter, which is sad, as there are several plants that will bloom in winter. Although purple lilac vine only blooms for a few weeks, it is worth it because of the welcome splash of color that it adds.

When not in flower, its narrow, dark green leaves add a visually cooling effect to bare surfaces. This vine is not invasive, but will need support in order to grow upward, which can be provided by a trellis along solid surfaces such as a block wall.

Like many vines, purple lilac vine takes about a year after planting to start growing above ground. The best time to find it at the nursery is in winter, close to its blooming period.

Plant in well-drained soil in a sunny area, but with some protection from afternoon sun. Fertilize in March and August with a slow-release fertilizer. Prune as needed to desired size in spring once the flowers have faded.

