

SAXIFLORA

PLATE 16

Verbena pulchella var. Maonetti
(*Verbenaceae*)

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The verbenas comprise a very complex genus of 125 or more natural species and numerous cultivated varieties and forms. The species are natives of temperate and tropical America; one or two occurring also in the Mediterranean region and introduced elsewhere in the Old World. Some twenty-five or thirty species have been introduced into cultivation, but most of these are seen only in botanical gardens. Commonest in general cultivation is *V. hortensis*, a cultigen whose exact origin is in doubt, but which is thought to be a multiple hybrid between *V. phlogiflora*, *V. incisa*, *V. platensis*, and *V. peruviana*. In recent years the purple-flowered stiffly erect *V. rigida* and its lavender-lilac variety (*var. lilacina*) and the vividly scarlet-flowered prostrate *V. peruviana* have become increasingly popular.

Verbenas have been popular garden subjects for many years. During the middle of the last century, they were among the favorite flowering plants, particularly for bedding out in summer, and at one time as many as 300 cultivated varieties were catalogued. Sometime after 1880, however, the growing of verbenas became less popular in Europe and America, until in 1896, Mr. S. Henshaw, first head gardener of the New York Botanical Garden, felt moved to bewail the "discard" of the verbenas. Since then the group has enjoyed a revival of popularity, especially with the introduction or re-introduction of additional natural species from South America. The plants will grow quite readily in almost any kind of garden and in a great variety of soils and conditions. In propagating a special color form, like the one here pictured, the plants should be cut back early in September and well watered. In a few weeks there will be considerable new growth suitable for cutting.

The cuttings are then placed in flats or other well-drained containers using a soil that is half good loam and half sharp sand. A coldframe where shade and humidity can be controlled will provide an ideal environment until the cuttings are well rooted when they may be transferred until planting time into small pots using a richer compost.

In the colder regions the young plants must be protected from frosts in a cool light house during Winter. In mild Winter districts cuttings of early Summer growth will root in a sheltered and shady corner outdoors, by using sheets of glass, in lieu of a frame. In this way young plants can be had for permanent planting in time to be established before Winter.

The Italian verbenas, here illustrated, seems to have originated in Italy and was first noted in literature by Regel in 1855, who states that he received his plants from N. Rossi of Brescia. He notes that it is considerably more

hardy than *V. peruviana* and *V. phlogiflora* and is quite able to stand a mild winter with or without a covering of snow. It is said to be even more hardy than the parent form, *V. pulchella*, native to Uruguay and Argentina.

The white lateral margins of the corolla-lobes impart to the inflorescence a charming star-like appearance. Because of this and its wealth of flowers, rapid growth, low stature, handsome foliage and hardiness, it is an admirable plant for the rock garden, for sunny borders, or for covering a talus slope with a mat of color. Its prostrate branches root freely at the nodes, so that it is of value as a soil-binder on slopes.

The present drawing was made from material growing in the rock garden of the New York Botanical Garden, originating from the garden of Clarence Lewis, at Sterlington, N. Y.

The plant is a herbaceous perennial, with prostrate or decumbent stems which spread in all directions from the root. The branches are quite slender, four-angled, and ascending, rather sparsely short-hairy with whitish hairs. The numerous opposite leaves are protracted at their base into a narrowly winged stalk or petiole. The leaf-blades are distinctly and deeply three-parted and each of the parts is again divided into several acute, oblong divisions, whose margins usually are more or less turned downwards and rolled inwards on the lower surface. The whole leaf, like its stalk and the branchlets beneath, is rather densely sprinkled with short whitish hairs, which point forward (toward the apex of the leaf) and are closely appressed to its surface. The veins are distinctly sunken or impressed on the upper leaf-surface. The inflorescences are in the form of terminal dense-flowered spikes at the ends of the branches and stems, borne on slender peduncles several inches in length. The calyx is elongated and tubular, rather densely covered on the outside with short whitish hairs like those of the leaves. The five-parted salver-shaped corollas are about three-quarters of an inch long. In the typical form of the species, the lobes of the corolla are rose-violet throughout, but in our variety they are margined with a narrow band of pure white. There are four stamens, borne in two pairs on the corolla-tube and included by it. The pistil is solitary, with an elongated basal ovary, slender style, and unequally two-parted terminal stigma.

H. N. MOLDENKE

Verbena tenera var. *Maonetti* Regel, Gartenfl. 4: 373, fig. 142. 1855.

Verbena Maonetti Hort. ex Regel, Gartenfl. 4: 373, in syn. 1855.

Verbena pulchella var. *Mahoneti* Vilmorin, Fl. Pl. Terre 938. 1865.

Verbena Mahoneti Hort. ex Vilmorin, Fl. Pl. Terre 938, in syn. 1865.

Verbena pulchella var. *Maonetti* Regel, Gartenfl. 28: 372. 1879.

Verbena tenera var. *Maonettii* Hort. ex Cowen & Bailey in L. H. Bailey, Stand. Cycl. Hort. 6: 3445. 1917.