

Penstemon fruticosus var. *scouleri*

[Synonyms : *Penstemon scouleri*]

SHRUBBY PENSTEMON is an evergreen shrub. Native to north-western North America (from northern Washington to northern Idaho and British Columbia) it has pale to deep purple flowers.

It is also known as Littleleaf bush penstemon.

Fruticosus is Latin (bushy, become bushy). *Scouleri* commemorates a Scottish surgeon, and naturalist, Dr. John Scouler (1804-1871) who was professor of geology at the Andersonian Institution (now the University of Strathclyde) in 1829 and from 1833-1853 professor of geology, zoology and botany at the Royal Dublin Society from 1833-1854. In 1824-1825, as ship's surgeon and naturalist employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, he accompanied the Scottish botanist, David Douglas (1798-1834) on board the William and Ann on the latter's exploration of the Columbia River on North America's north-western Pacific coast, as well as parts of Oregon. During the whole expedition Scouler collected botanical, mineralogical and zoological specimens and made ethnographical observations. Then, again as ship's surgeon, he sailed on a voyage to the Indian Ocean where, in addition to the Cape of Good Hope, he had a further opportunity to make a botanical collection for his herbarium. Returning to Glasgow he not only became a professor in 1829 but also curator of the Andersonian museum. After his 20-year Dublin professorial appointment during which he encouraged interest in fossils in Scotland and Ireland he retired to Glasgow and maintained his interest and involvement as a naturalist. He was a Fellow of the Linnean Society and, apart from some plant species and fossils, his name has also been given to a mineral.

The shrub had medicinal value for some of the North American Indian tribes, including the Okanagon and Thompson. A stem, flower or leaf decoction was used to soothe eye inflammation and was also taken to ease some kidney disorders.