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A NEW VARIETY OF *PENSTEMON THURBERI*
(SCROPHULARIACEAE)

James L. Reveal¹ and Janice C. Beatley²

The Thurber Beard-tongue, *Penstemon thurberi* Torr. is currently known from the sandy desert regions of southwestern United States and northern Mexico ranging from the Sierra San Pedro Mártir in Baja California northward to the Providence Mountains of San Bernardino County, California, hence eastward into southern Mohave and Yavapai counties, Arizona, and across the southern tier of Arizona counties into western New Mexico. The recent discovery of a northern, disjunct population of *P. thurberi* from extreme northwestern Clark County, Nevada, in the near vicinity of the Nevada Test Site, has now been studied in detail and has proved to represent a distinct variant of the species which we hereby name.

Penstemon thurberi Torr. var. *anestius* Reveal & Beatley, var. nov. A var. *thurberi* floribus 8-9 mm longis (nec 10-15 mm longis) cum inferior labiis (1) 2-3 (3.5) mm longis (non 4-6 mm longis) et tubis (4) 6-7 mm longis (non 7-10 mm longis), capsulis 4-5 mm longis differt. Typus: NEVADA: Clark Co.: In deep volcanic sands on the upper bajada below the southwest end of the Buried Hills, east of Frenchman Flat dry lake, associated with *Larrea* and *Ambrosia*, at about 3800 feet elevation, 20 June 1973, *Beatley & Ackerman 13460*. Holotypus, US! Isotypi, 30 duplicates will be distributed from US.

Other Specimens Examined: All from the type area: 22 June 1971, *Beatley & Bamberg 12843* (MARY, NTS, US).

The var. *anestius* (from the Greek *anestios*, meaning homeless, alluding to its disjunct distribution) differs from var. *thurberi* primarily in the features of the flowers, which are smaller and less obvious than the flowers of the typical form. In var. *anestius* the flowers are 8-9 mm in length; those of var. *thurberi* are (10) 12-15 mm. The lower lip of var. *thurberi* is up to twice the length of that of var. *anestius*, whereas the tube of the Nevada plants is shorter than that of var. *thurberi*. The mature capsules of var. *anestius* are 4-5 mm long; those of var. *thurberi* are 6-9 (10) mm. Both forms occur in similar habitats and have the same general habit of growth, although the Nevada plants rarely exceed 5 dm in height. These features, coupled with the disjunct distribution pattern, have led us to recognize the Nevada variant as distinct.

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