



**Common Name:** PURPLE GIANT HYSSOP

**Scientific Name:** *Agastache scrophulariifolia* (Willdenow) Kuntze

**Other Commonly Used Names:** none

**Previously Used Scientific Names:** none

**Family:** Lamiaceae/Labiatae (mint)

**Rarity Ranks:** G4/SH

**State Legal Status:** Special Concern

**Federal Legal Status:** none

**Federal Wetland Status:** none

**Description:** Perennial **herb** up to 6 feet (2 meters) tall, often forming clumps, with erect, purple-tinged, 4-sided **stems** that have hairs only on the angles. **Leaves** up to 5 inches (13 cm) long with leaf stalk up to 2 inches (5 cm) long, opposite, oval or heart-shaped, with rounded base, pointed tip, and toothed edges; underside of the leaf is hairy mainly on the veins; leaves have a strong anise-like odor when crushed. **Flower spikes** up to 6 inches long (15 cm), erect at tips of stems, tightly packed with flowers and small, pinkish bracts. **Flowers** lavender, purple, pink, or whitish, with two lips, the lower lip slightly ragged; stamens extend directly beyond the lips; **calyx** is white, pink, or purplish, with 5 narrowly pointed lobes that are more or less the same size.

**Similar Species:** Germander or wood-sage (*Teucrium canadense*) is a smaller plant with pink or lavender flowers, often in a leafy spike, but its flowers have a very small upper lip and a much larger lower lip, with upward arching stamens; its stems are hairy throughout.

**Related Rare Species:** Yellow giant hyssop (*Agastache nepetoides*, Special Concern) resembles purple giant hyssop, but its stems are slightly winged on the angles, the lower surfaces of leaves are hairy, petals are yellow to white, bracts in the flower spike are green, and the calyx has short, broadly pointed lobes. It occurs in Murray and Chattooga counties, and flowers August–October.

**Habitat:** Rich woodland borders, sunny gaps in forested floodplains and on river terraces, especially over magnesium-rich soils.

**Life History:** Purple giant hyssop flowers in late summer and fall, and the fruiting stems persist through the winter. Leaf rosettes emerge as early as March. It is pollinated by a variety of insects, including bees, flies, and butterflies, and possibly hummingbirds. Some members of this genus are used for flavoring and perfumes; it is not known if purple giant hyssop has the potential for similar uses.

**Survey Recommendations:** Surveys are best conducted during flowering (August–October) and fruiting (September–October).

**Range:** Georgia, north to New Hampshire and west to Nebraska.

**Threats:** Logging and other clearing in hardwood forests and bottomlands. Invasion by exotic pest plants.

**Georgia Conservation Status:** Four populations are known although only 2 have been seen in the last 20 years; one population occurs on National Forest land, 3 others on private land.

**Conservation and Management Recommendations:** Avoid logging and other clearing in floodplains and rich hardwood forests. Eradicate exotic pest plants.

**Selected References:**

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**Date Compiled or Updated:**

L. Chafin, Sept. 2007: original account

K. Owers, Jan. 2010: updated status and ranks, added pictures

Z. Abouhamdan, April 2016: updated link

PURPLE GIANT HYSSOP  
*Agastache scrophulariifolia*



J.C. Putnam H.

calyx with 5 pointed,  
equal-sized lobes





Inflorescence