

Tradescantia pallida

Setcreasea pallida Rose

Setcreasea purpurea Boom

Tradescantia pallida is a species of spiderwort native to the Gulf Coast region of eastern Mexico. The cultivar *T. pallida* 'Purpurea' is commonly called purple secretia, purple-heart,[2] or purple queen.[3] Edward Palmer collected the type specimen near Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas in 1907.[4][5]

The Latin specific epithet *pallida* means "pale".[6]

Tradescantia pallida is an evergreen perennial plant of a scrambling, climbing growth habit and vine-like stature. Small aerial roots will form along the stem, which root the vine further in-place and give greater stamina to the overall plant body. It is distinguished by vivid purple, elongated and slightly pointed leaves - generally a glaucous green, turning more vividly purple in full sunlight and times of drought - and bearing small, three-petaled flowers of white, pink or purple. Plants are susceptible to overwatering, moderate frosts, or any temperature below about 40°F (4.44°C); in times of cold-induced seasonal die-back, the rootball will remain sheltered underground, eventually sprouting again from the base.[7] In the coldest of regions, deadheading, fall pruning, mulching and placing the rootball just slightly higher than the planting hole—to ensure that pooling water beneath the roots is not a threat—are all key to the plant surviving cold and/or wet conditions.

The cultivar *T. pallida* 'Purpurea' has purple leaves and pink flowers.

Widely used as an ornamental plant in gardens and borders, as a ground cover, hanging plant, or - particularly in colder climates where it cannot survive the winter season - houseplant, it is propagated easily by cuttings (the stems are visibly segmented and roots will frequently grow from the joints).

As a houseplant, *T. pallida* has been judged exceptionally effective at improving indoor air quality by filtering out volatile organic compounds, a class of common pollutants and respiratory irritants, an effect known as phytoremediation.[8]

Numerous cultivars are available, of which 'Purpurea' with purple foliage has gained the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit.[9][10]

Leaves, superior aspect(*T. pallida* 'Purpurea')

Leaves, inferior aspect(*T. pallida* 'Purpurea')

Flower(*T. pallida* 'Purpurea')

Close-up shot of flower(*T. pallida* 'Purpurea')

Feral *Tradescantia pallida* growing in the sidewalk in Patra, Greece.

