

Plant of the Week
Limonium
perezii
Statice or Sea
Lavender



In recent years, *Limonium perezii* (Statice or Sea Lavender), has become a very fashionable garden plant in Sydney. This mauve-flowered perennial with leathery leaves is one species in a cosmopolitan genus of approximately 300 in the plant family Plumbaginaceae. Most are native to countries surrounding the Mediterranean spreading through into eastern Asia. There are two endemic Australian species¹. *Limonium perezii* is a native of the Canary Islands, off the north-western coast of Africa² and in spite of its recent rise in popularity, it has been grown by many generations of Sydney gardeners and known by an earlier name, *Statice*. This is a seriously tough plant which can survive roasting hot temperatures, full sun, low rainfall and salt spray. It has been prized for its papery flowers that are used for both fresh and dried arrangements. Look closely and you can see it is the sepals that are mauve; the less conspicuous flower petals are white.

In the early days of the university, a closely related annual species, *Limonium sinuatum*, a native of woodlands of the Mediterranean, was grown on campus by gardener David Melville who produced flowers for the administrative offices and the library. In Australia, *L. sinuatum* has escaped from cultivation and is widespread in South Australia, Western Australia, western Victoria and NSW³.

¹ Plantnet: <http://plantnet.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=gn&name=Limonium>

² Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limonium_perezii

³ Atlas of Living Australia: <http://bie.ala.org.au/species/urn:lsid:biodiversity.org.au:apni.taxon:394287>

Map: Modified from http://jimaifandis.com/ja_ iml06.htm



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