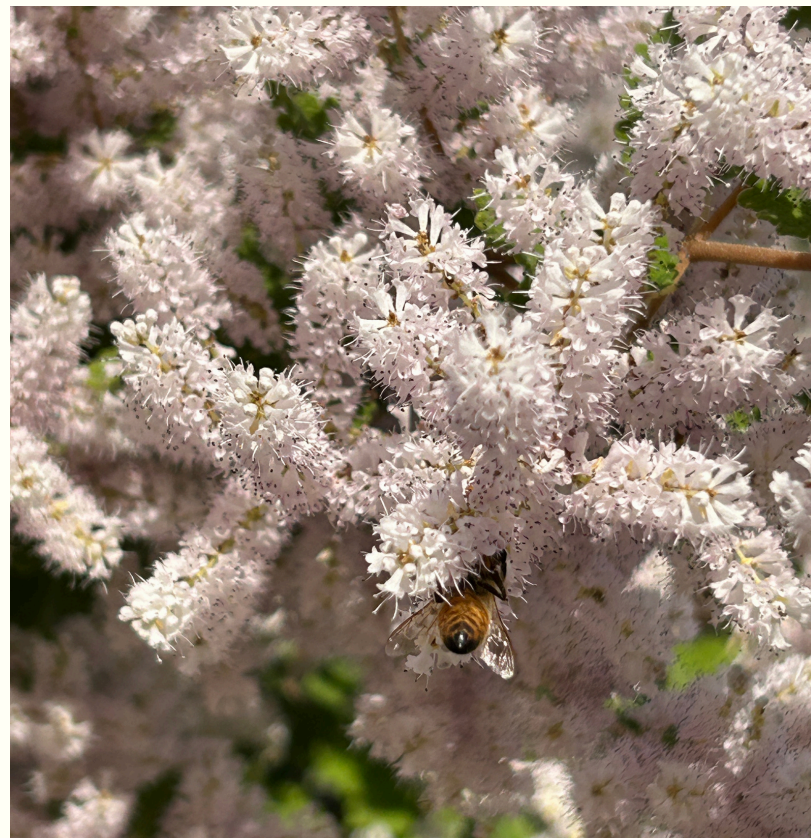


July 2026

# Plant of the month



## Misty Plume Bush



**Common Name:** Misty Plume Bush  
**Scientific Name:** *Tetradenia riparia* (Hochst.) Codd  
**Family:** Lamiaceae  
**Genus:** *Tetra* – four, *aden* – glands: Refers to glands in the leaf;  
**Species epithet:** *riparia* – on or near riverbanks, where plants are often found.

This plant is widely distributed and widely used in Southern Africa. It was formerly known botanically as *Iboza riparia*. *Iboza* is a Zulu word that refers to the aromatic and medicinal qualities of the leaves. They have been used in traditional medicine to treat chest complaints, headaches, diarrhoea, toothache, dengue fever and malaria. Scientific studies have shown that leaf extracts do inhibit the growth of bacteria and other research has shown compounds in the leaf moderate the malaria parasite in the laboratory.

*Tetradenia riparia* is a very popular ornamental shrub in warm temperate gardens, as it provides a spectacular show of lilac flowers in the depths of winter, when little else may be flowering. Like other members of the Lamiaceae or Mint family, the aromatic leaves are also a feature, releasing their scent when brushed against.

Plants respond well to a hard prune, cutting stems back by half, after flowering. This will prevent the plants becoming tall and leggy and stop brittle branches snapping in strong winds.

This is one of the plants propagated by volunteers from our Growing Friends Plant Sales team. It is available to purchase from Growing Friends Plant Sales: Monday-Friday 11am-2pm, Saturday-Sunday 10am-2pm.



### Join a guided walk

Scan the QR code to join a daily guided walk to learn more about our plants.

### Distribution

Eastern South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

### Native Habitat

Along riverbanks, forest margins, dry wooded valleys and hillsides, in areas with little or no frost.

### Description

An evergreen or deciduous shrub or small tree, 2-5 metres tall, with semi-succulent, brittle stems. Leaves are simple and heart-shaped with distinctive, bluntly toothed margins. They are covered with glandular hairs on both sides. The underside with whitish velvety hairs. Leaves are sticky and strongly aromatic, sometimes described as having a ginger smell.

### Flowers

Flowers appear on branched inflorescences at the end of stems. Individual flowers are about 3mm in diameter and range in colour from white to lilac, including some that are pink. Species is dioecious, meaning plants either bare pollen bearing flowers (male) or flowers that will form seeds after pollination (female).

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