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THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE OF TEXAS

WILDFLOWERS

TEXAS HIGHWAYS

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THE *Wildflower* ISSUE

This month's issue has been a long time in the making; some might say too long. Ever since *Texas Highways* became a travel magazine in 1974, the April issue has traditionally reigned as a reader favorite. It tends to outsell other months on the newsstand, and every spring, readers await it with anticipation. But the April 2002 issue is the first one devoted *entirely* to wildflowers.

As you go through the magazine, you'll see that Texas wildflowers offer more than a botanic feast for the eyes. They can feed the imagination with fact, fantasy, folklore, and festivals.

At least a dozen **wildflower festivals** take place this month. Writer **Rosemary Williams** highlights two, the Official Bluebonnet Festival of Texas in **Chappell Hill**, and the 19th Annual Bluebonnet Festival in **Burnet**. Also celebrated this month is the 51st anniversary of the **Ennis Bluebonnet Trails Festival**, Apr. 19-21. Sponsored by the Ennis Garden Club, the "Official Bluebonnet Trail of Texas" features 40 miles of mapped trails, the oldest such trails designated in Texas.

As naturalists **John and Gloria Tveten** discuss in their story, gardening with the right **native wildflowers** can provide nourishment and shelter for **wildlife**. And in his story, **Howard Garrett** advocates planting **native flowering trees, shrubs, and vines** in addition to more-traditional wildflowers. Because alien-species invasions are a major cause of declines in our native animal and plant populations, these authors recommend selecting natives to ensure the health of the planet. As they emphasize, with proper plant selection, you can enjoy spring and summer blooms, colorful autumn foliage, and winter berries, and provide sustenance for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.

In her story on **Wildseed Farms** near **Fredricksburg**, it's clear that writer **Jan Edwards** was awed by the profusion of flowering

plants, and she enjoyed poking around the farm's Market Center and discovering Wildseed's versatile and useful *Wildflower Reference Guide & Seed Catalog*. For another story, associate editor **Lori Moffatt** toured the **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center**, where she refreshed her ecological sensibilities and knowledge of native plants, and met a group of accommodating people who love their work and want to get the word out about the marvels of

native plants. Both stories should prove outstanding sources of wildflower wisdom.

We couldn't have put together this issue without the help of **Dr. Karen Clary**, a botanist with the Texas Department of Transportation. The issue also includes **your wildflower memories**, compiled by associate editor **Nola McKey**, little-known facts about **lesser-known wildflowers** by **Steven Schwartzman**, a heart-pounding **rock climb** with **Patricia Parent** at Enchanted Rock, and a **list of resources** for further information on wildflowers and other plants.

Speaking of information, you'll notice that the experts don't always agree on things. They differ on the optimal time of year to sow wildflower seed and debate the merits of planting native versus introduced species. And, of course, everyone has differing opinions on the best places to view bluebonnets.

But we can all agree on the wonders of wildflowers. Whether we use them to help stabilize our soils, attract animals, or simply make us smile, there's no doubt that wild-

SIGN THAT WINTER'S NEARLY OVER -



© KATIE AND PETE MARATTA

flowers enhance the quality of our lives....

Photography editor **Michael Murphy** and art director **Jane Wu Knapp** got bleary-eyed looking at wildflower transparencies this month. "I've never received so many photographs for any single issue as we have for this one," said Mike. He got envelopes of transparencies from more than 75 photographers, and looked at thousands of images. From that initial pool, Mike pruned the number down to a couple hundred images, and then enlisted Jane's help to do some further trimming. Then Jane designed the wildflower portfolio (pages 28-43), which includes only 29 images. That left a lot of beautiful wildflower images on the cutting room floor, which means there are some frustrated photographers out there....

But enough gloom. Enjoy the season. Enjoy the magazine. Get out and smell the flowers.

Jack Savory

TEXAS HIGHWAYS

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2 Multicolored Memories

Yesterday's wildflowers still bloom in the recollections of many, including those who sent us their "favorite Texas-wildflower memories." Their reminiscences may stir some of your own.

4 Speaking of Lesser-Known Texas Wildflowers

Some wildflowers—even those with intriguing names like rain lily and puccoon—get less press than others. A photographer with a keen eye presents some often-overlooked Texas flora. TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVEN SCHWARTZMAN

8 Wildseed Farms: Fields of Dreams

At this Fredericksburg-area venture, you can revel in row upon row of wildflowers, as well as buy seed and learn how to plant your own little piece of heaven. Flower-fans find this site highly palette-able. BY JANET R. EDWARDS, PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHAN MYERS

12 Going Native with Howard Garrett

The gardening guru makes a distinction between wildflowers and *wild flowers*, which he defines as our native flowering trees, shrubs, and vines. The latter play a key role in his concept of return-to-the-native landscaping. BY HOWARD GARRETT

20 Inspiration from the Wild

Austin's 180-acre Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center offers visitors demonstration gardens, hiking trails, seminars, plant sales, and more, but most importantly, it encourages "ecological citizenship." BY LORI MOFFATT

28 Wildflower Fields Forever

Our annual April photo feature showcases wildflowers across Texas. The armchair traveler can also learn a thing or two, like which wildflowers have potent scents, and why a wildflower isn't necessarily a native plant. BY JACK LOWRY AND ROSEMARY WILLIAMS

44 Wildscaping for Birds and Butterflies

Want to attract some of the state's most colorful creatures to your yard? Two nature-lovers (and ace photographers) give planting tips on creating a haven for this wild bunch. STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN AND GLORIA TVETEN

50 Adventure Tour: Climb the Rock!

For a great view of Hill Country wildflowers, a climb to the top of Enchanted Rock, near Fredericksburg, can't be beat. No climbing experience? Just hire an instructor, and learn the ropes. BY PATRICIA CAPERTON PARENT, PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURENCE PARENT

52 Bloomin' Fun: Bluebonnet Festivals

What's blue and white and popular all over? Bluebonnets, of course. Several festivals this month celebrate the state flower, with activities that include airshows, cookoffs, and musical entertainment. BY ROSEMARY WILLIAMS

67 Wildflower Resources

Need more information? Here's where to find it, from books and Web sites to the best wildflower-viewing sites.

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About Our Covers

[FRONT] Springtime color washes over a Hill Country setting near Inks Lake, echoing the hues in a sunlit sky. To see more beautiful shots of Texas wildflowers, you can turn to almost any page in this issue, but our annual 16-page photo feature starts on page 28. Photo © Joe Lowery

[BACK] Purple paintbrush (*Castilleja purpurea*) enlivens a field along US 287 in Wise County, north of Fort Worth. Photo © Michael Hardeman

**SPECIAL ISSUE BONUS:
 WILDFLOWER CARTOONS**
 Nationally-published cartoonists **Katie and Pete Maratta** explore the funny side of wildflowers. Their work appears on the facing page, and on pages 7, 66, 67, and 68.

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WHEN WE ASKED you last April to send us your favorite Texas-wild-flower memories, we knew we'd receive some wonderful anecdotes. Of all the things that Texans treasure—and non-Texans admire—the state's spectacular wildflowers have to be near the top of the list, and we felt sure these botanical gems figured prominently in many people's recollections. As you can see from the poignant reminiscences that follow, our instincts proved correct. (We received many more than we have space to print in this issue; look for others in *Talk to TH* over the next few months.) Our thanks to everyone who wrote and shared their prized memories.

When I was in second grade in 1936, my mother made a red, yellow, and green crepe-paper costume for me so I could be an Indian blanket in an end-of-school skit about the legends of the wildflowers. Other children were bluebonnets, daisies, winecups, etc. As a result, I've always loved wildflowers, especially Indian blankets.

DORIS WALL PHILLIPS
Spicewood

In the spring of 1940, I took a botany course at Paschal High School in Fort Worth. One assignment was to compile a notebook of pictures and samples of specific wildflowers, telling where I found each one.

In early May, my family made a trip to Belton. I was very excited to see, growing along the roads, many flowers needed for my notebook. Every time I spotted some, I begged my dad to stop and let me get one. He patiently granted my requests time after time. When my notebook was finished, I was proud of the 35 different blossoms and leaves I had mounted.

I enjoyed this project so much that I have kept my notebook all these 62 years. This experience sparked a lifelong interest in identifying the flora of Texas. I still love to stop along the highways, not to pick the flowers, but to revel in their beauty.

ALICE KING GREENWOOD
Odessa

My grandpa (George Waters) and I would go riding through fields of buttercups when I was a little girl. He'd get off his horse, pick a flower, and show me how it held water in its yellow cup. These happy times took place in Wilbarger County, close to the Red River, in the late 1930s.

CHAROLYN GOULDY
Wildorado



This 1936 photo shows Doris Wall (far left, middle row) and her schoolmates in front of the Spicewood Baptist Church, which was next to the Spicewood School. "Most of us portrayed wildflowers," she says. "The older girls in the back were Mother Earth, Sun, Rain, and other things needed to make flowers grow." Doris still attends services at the church; the old school is now a community center.

In the spring of 1942, when I was five years old, I returned with my mother and grandmother to our home in Calvert, following a weeklong trip to Georgia for a family emergency. My daddy met us in our driveway, picked me up, and carried me to a field next to our house. In our absence the field had erupted

with Indian paintbrush, prickly-pear blooms, primroses, winecups, etc. The memory of being back in my daddy's arms and the two of us sharing that scene is still special to me—a time I will never forget.

EDITH TOWNS
Calvert

From the 1930s to the 1970s, we lived in the rural community of Maxdale, in southwest Bell County. Once each spring, at first light of day, Daddy would walk to the back of the pasture to the big flat that looked like a sea of bluebells. He would gather an armload and would arrive home with his bouquet for Mama just as she finished cooking breakfast. This was a yearly event. They are both gone now—John and Zell Hunt. With love to both of you.

DOROTHY REAVIS
Oakalla

COURTESY DORIS WALL PHILLIPS

plus years ago, I went onto the front porch, where my basket was always placed, and it was filled with colored boiled eggs and chocolate bunnies. Something caught my eye, and I saw a cottontail hopping from near the wooden porch into catbriar and tall weeds to safety. What an impression this made! I tell the story to my children and grandchildren and anyone else who believes in the Easter Bunny!

DOROTHY JACKOWSKI
Moulton

I wore a new engagement ring as my husband-to-be and I drove along FM 1235, west of Abilene, on Palm Sunday in 1953. For the first time, he was taking me to Sunday dinner at his grandparents' home. (Sunday dinner included his parents, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins.)

Buffalo peas [a.k.a. scurfy peas] blanketed the roadside in purple, and their light, sweet perfume filled the car as we approached the last turn off the farm-to-market road. "They are blooming just for you," he said.

Ever since, as spring approaches, I watch and wait for "my flowers" to appear on that same roadside as I make the last turn up the road where my husband and I built our home. I miss them when they are not there, but when they reappear the next year, the fragrance and beauty of the buffalo peas never cease to remind me of the wonders of God's creation.

JERA STEPHAN
Abilene

Growing up on a farm (near Moulton) as a child was great! My mother and I would take our yearly walk in the pasture to pick fresh wildflowers for my Easter basket. Bluebonnets, Indian blankets, buttercups, and grass were the filling for a plain, woven basket.

One special Easter morning, 50-

My wife and I were married on Saturday, April 8, 1995. The entire week before was dreary, rainy, and cold. The drizzling finally subsided by Thursday night, but an overcast Friday showed no promise of a cheerful wedding day. Although the ceremony was to be held in the beautiful New Sweden



Bluebonnets filled the fields surrounding the New Sweden Lutheran Church, east of Austin, when Daryl Swenson and his wife, Stephanie, said their wedding vows there seven years ago.

COURTESY JULIE BEACH

those glorious bluebonnets are recalled at each family gathering.

DARYL SWENSON
Arlington

My favorite Texas wildflower memory is of picking wild violets in the early 1930s with my mother and two brothers. The violets grew along the right-of-way of the Texas & Pacific Railroad, about two miles north of Marshall. They had no fragrance, but were long-stemmed beauties. We also enjoyed picking sweet william in the same location when it was in bloom.

CYNTHIA FOSTER
BLACKBURN
Edgewood

It was high noon as my husband and I drove west along US 190 between Jasper and Livingston and stumbled upon a glorious field thick with coreopsis. They took our breath away. For one intoxicating moment, the yellow carpet seemed to wave and lift, reflecting glory to its Creator. What an indelible memory!

VILMA RAMALY
Houston

I loved my great-aunt Mary Virginia Neal Middleton for as long as I can remember, although we were never together until I was grown and married. Because I was her only namesake, from her vantage as a career secretary in Washington, D.C., she sent me lovely, unusual, and elegant gifts throughout my growing-up years. At last, elderly, widowed, childless, and unable to care for herself, she came to live with my mother in Jasper, in East Texas.

During her first spring here, I was determined that she see Texas'

famous bluebonnet display. As we reached fields of blue in the Hill Country on Easter weekend, she suddenly cried out, "Stop the car!" Hastily pulling over, I gasped, "Aunt Gin, are you all right?" She turned to me a face of rapture, tears spilling down her wrinkled, loved cheeks, eyes shining, struggling for words. "I have never been so thankful to God that I have eyes! Why didn't you tell me it would be so beautiful? But how could you? Even seeing it, its magnificence is unbelievable!" She died before the following spring.

MARY VIRGINIA STONE SANDERS
Jasper

My favorite Texas wildflower memory is of a day in the 1980s, at our family's ranch near Crawford. My Uncle Harold, Aunt Jeanette, my mother, and I went out and rode a small tractor-trailer around amidst the bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush.

That day stands out as one of the most enjoyable days of my life!

RONALD ALLAN EASTER
Waco

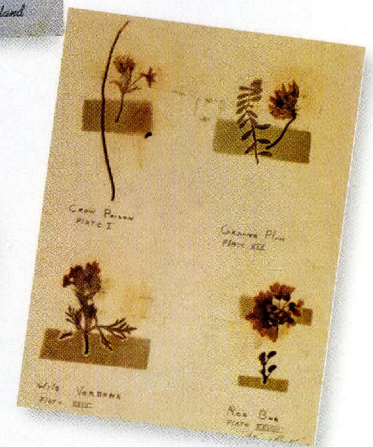
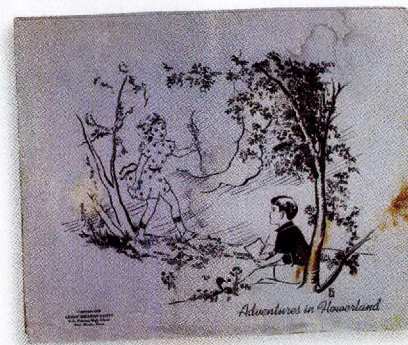
I grew up in Austin in the '20s and '30s. My favorite memory is of looking forward every spring to the blanket of blues—the University of Texas campus at that time was a mass of bluebonnets, as was nearly every vacant lot all over Austin. And the fragrance was unforgettable.

DOROTHY BERG
Longview

My favorite Texas wildflower memory dates to my childhood days of the 1930s, living in Brown County, near Blanket. In the spring, we walked across the pasture to see the lovely wildflowers when we went to visit a neighbor. There we spotted Texas bluebonnets, buttercups, winecups, rooster tails, wild daisies, mountain pinks, poppies, larkspurs, phlox, Indian blankets,

and coreopsis. It was a lovely sight to see. My mother, sister, and I often took different trails across the pasture to find sweet william and cactus apples [cactus pears].

RUTH INMAN
Ballinger



A high school assignment sparked Alice King Greenwood's interest in wildflowers. Her original notebook contains specimens collected on a trip to Belton in 1940.

Rain Lily

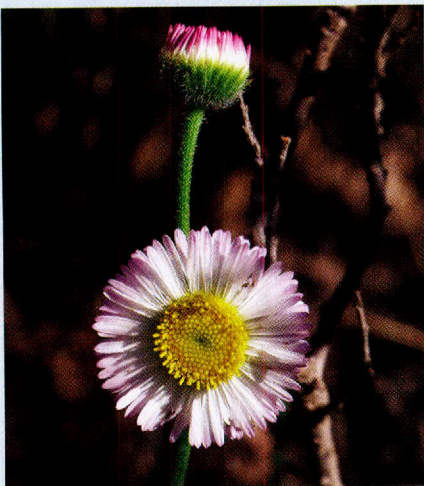
RAIN LILIES ARE OPPORTUNISTS; from mid-spring through late fall, they wait for the soil to get a good dousing from the sky, and then within a few days they appear, standing at their full height (five to nine inches). We hardly ever see rain lilies growing up—they're just suddenly there.

Among the most delicate and graceful of our native wildflowers, rain lilies can be pure white, but more commonly are tinged with pink or violet. Each flower has six tepals, which, when fully opened and viewed from above, reveal a star. (Tepal is the term for petals and sepals considered collectively; sepals are leaf-like segments often mistaken for petals.) A delicate, lovely fragrance wafts upon the air when rain lilies bloom.

Two species of rain lily grace our state. *Cooperia pedunculata*, or giant rain lily, has a shorter flower tube (but a larger flower) than the other species and generally blooms in the spring. *Cooperia drummondii* usually blooms in the late summer and fall. That's straightforward enough. How to classify the rain lily is another matter. As the plant's English name implies, botanists originally placed it in the lily family. (In Spanish, the plant is called *cebollita*, or "little onion," and onions are in fact members of the lily family.) Later, and



Loveliest of flowers, *Cooperia drummondii*, one of Texas' two species of rain lily, honors 19th-Century Scottish botanist Thomas Drummond, who collected plants in the state in 1833 and 1834.



The generic name of fleabane daisies, *Erigeron*, comes from the Greek *eri*, meaning "early," and *geron*, "old man," a reference to the plant's early-flowering habit and the blooms' hoary appearance.

for decades, the rain lily was designated as a member of the amaryllis family. Now that people have adjusted to that incongruity, some scientists are once again calling the rain lily a lily after all.

If scientific classifications are sometimes short-lived, the rain lily is *always* ephemeral, rarely lasting more than a couple of days.

Fleabane

Fleabanes belong to the aster family (more familiarly called the sunflower family). As with their cousins the sunflowers, these composite plants bear what appears to be a single flower surrounded by petals. But it is actually a collection of many small flowers

of two types. The flowers of fleabane, more commonly known as fleabane daisy, resemble ordinary daisies but have many more ray flowers (sometimes hundreds) than daisies. They can resemble the ruffled collars seen in portraits of wealthy Elizabethans of the 16th Century. As the name suggests, the plants were believed to repel fleas.

Philadelphia fleabane (*Erigeron philadelphicus*) grows in the eastern two-thirds of the state. The closely related *Erigeron modestus*, called plains or prairie fleabane, changes appearance as it grows. Initially, the flowers appear on stalks that are mostly leafless, except at the base, which is ringed by lobed leaves. Later, the basal leaves vanish, the stems branch, and unlobed leaves grow



Fringed puccoon (*Lithospermum incisum*) is also known as narrow-leaf gromwell. The genus, *Lithospermum*, which translates as “stone seed,” refers to the plant’s hard, tiny seeds.

higher up. In autumn, the branches tend to fall over, and in this last stage, the leaves are small and narrow.

Puccoon

With its numerous, conspicuously crinkled, bright yellow or yellow-orange flowers, fringed puccoon (*Lithospermum incisum*) proves distinctive. A member of the borage family, this plant typically grows from eight to 12 inches tall, with narrow leaves up to four inches long. In the spring, puccoon produces its first flowers, which are trumpet-shaped and as much as an inch-and-a-half long. The long, slender tube of the trumpet flares out into five petals so extravagantly crinkled that they look fringed. In late spring or summer, the plant produces a second set of inconspicuous flowers that pollinate themselves—no insects or hummingbirds need apply as pollinators here—and never open.

The word “puccoon” comes from a Virginia Algonquian word meaning “red.” If that seems strange for a plant whose flowers are bright yellow, a look beneath the ground reveals thick roots that are distinctly red. In fact, Native Americans used them to make a red dye.

Jimson-weed

UNLIKE MOST FLOWERS, Jimson-weed usually unfolds its bright white or slightly yellow flowers at night, when nocturnal hawk moths pollinate them. And what grand flowers they are. Initially appearing

in long, rolled-up tubes with only a hint of cream-colored spiral visible at the ends, the flower has five united petals that eventually unfurl into a large funnel or “angel’s trumpet” up to nine inches in length and six in width, with five slender “teeth” around the rim.

The plant, which can easily grow to four feet tall, has leaves that are downy, especially along the veins on their undersides, and stems that are stout, coarse, and often purplish. The round fruit is distinctive: an inch or two in diameter, covered with hard prickles less than a half-inch long, and with a turned-back rim. Erect when it first forms, this so-called thorn-apple gradually turns downward in preparation for the dispersal of its large seeds (when the pod walls split open).

Jimson-weed belongs to the genus *Datura*, part of the nightshade family. Although the plant itself has an unpleasant smell, the flowers may exude a wonderful perfume. But beware: All parts of the plant are highly toxic, and a susceptible person can get a rash just from touching the leaves.

The common name originated more than 300 years ago. In 1676, a certain Nathaniel Bacon led a rebellion against the British in Jamestown, Virginia; contributing causes were high taxes, low prices for crops of tobacco (which, coincidentally, also belongs to the nightshade family), and special privileges given to friends of the governor. Soldiers sent to quell the rebellion happened to cook and eat the greens of a species of *Datura*, after which they hallucinated and acted strange for several days. From then on, the plant was known as Jamestown weed. Over time, the word was altered to Jimson.



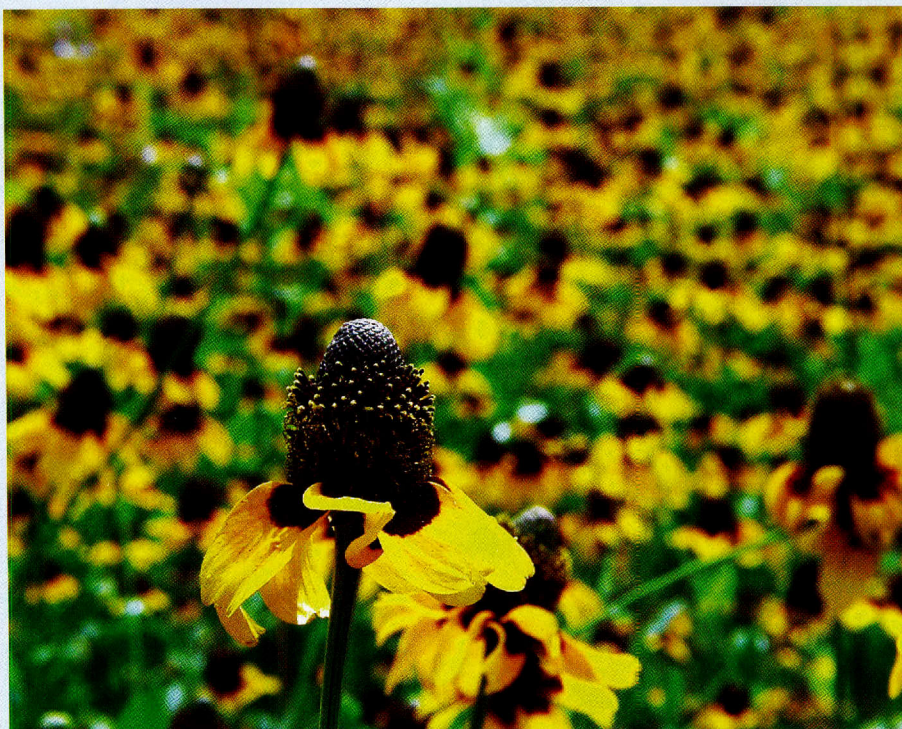
Beautiful but deadly, all parts of Jimson-weed contain hallucinogenic alkaloids that can cause serious poisoning, coma, or death. The plant’s more-beneficent claims to fame include a mention in the song “Back in the Saddle Again” and representation in paintings by Georgia O’Keeffe.

Clasping-Leaf Coneflower

SOMETIMES THE BEST WAY to describe something is to tell what it isn't. That's true for the clasping-leaf coneflower (*Dracopis amplexicaulis*), which a casual observer can confuse with other native Texas wildflowers, such as Mexican hat and prairie coneflower (both *Ratibida* spp.) and brown- or black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*). All belong to the Asteraceae, or aster family, whose members typically have a central group of disk flowers surrounded

by ray flowers that point outward. (Some sources classify them as members of the Compositae, or sunflower family; the two family names are interchangeable, but Asteraceae is the valid one.) Of these flowers, only clasping-leaf coneflower does well in poorly drained areas such as ditches and bottomlands. Most important, only the clasping-leaf coneflower has leaves that "clasp" the stems on which they grow; hence, the name. The species name, *amplexicaulis*, translates literally from the Latin as "embraces the stem."

The plant typically grows two to three feet tall and can form large colonies that produce acres of flowers in late spring. Numerous brown disk flowers cover the central "cone," and five to 10 yellow-orange ray flowers droop from it. The plant grows in the eastern two-thirds of the state on moist ground, and may be found in coastal states as far east as Georgia.



Clasping-leaf coneflower can produce acres of blossoms in late spring.

Yellow Stonecrop

The old saying that the best things come in small packages is exemplified in West and Central Texas by the diminutive plant known as yellow stonecrop. So inconspicuous is it—typically growing only a few inches tall—that many people don't know it exists. Yet its bright yellow, star-like blooms are lovely indeed.

As its name implies, the plant tends to grow on very shallow, stony ground—in Texas, usually limestone. The scientific name, *Sedum nuttallianum*, comes from the Latin word meaning "to sit" (a reference to the way the plant "sits" low and attaches itself to a rock) and the English-born botanist Sir Thomas



Colonies of low-growing stonecrop help hold soil in place, allowing larger plants to grow.

Nuttall, who immigrated to America in 1786.

Stonecrop is an annual. When its new growth begins in early spring, its light-chartreuse-and-peach leaves look like something out of a cubist painting: The crowded, pod-like leaves are almost as thick as they are wide. In fact, stonecrop is one of the very few native plants in Texas that belong to the succulent family. Stonecrop stores water in its fleshy leaves, which have a waxy coating designed to minimize evaporation of moisture during the long Texas summer. By drawing on the water stored in the leaves, the flowers can keep growing and blossoming for as long as two weeks after being cut, even if not immersed in water.



Poverty weed is also known as false willow, and in Spanish as *jara dulce*, or "sweet willow," because of its narrow, willow-like leaves. Its leaves and flowers can be used to produce a yellow dye.

Both the leaves and the stems are edible, either raw or after being boiled, steamed, or pickled. Problem is, the plants are so small that you'd have to consume quite a few to derive any significant nourishment from them. Far better to let stonecrop sit where it is and provide visual nourishment to its admirers instead.

Poverty Weed

In Texas as elsewhere, plants exist that many people have no use for, and quite a few of those have the word "weed" in their names—for example, bindweed, strangleweed, camphorweed, ragweed, pigweed, and bitterweed. But of all the "weed" plants, poverty weed—also called Depression weed, Roosevelt weed, and New Deal weed—seems multiply cursed. The names come from that difficult period endured by the nation in the 1930s, when decades of over-cultivation and neglect allowed much of the Great Plains topsoil to blow away in raging dust storms. As people abandoned their farms and fields, this opportunistic plant

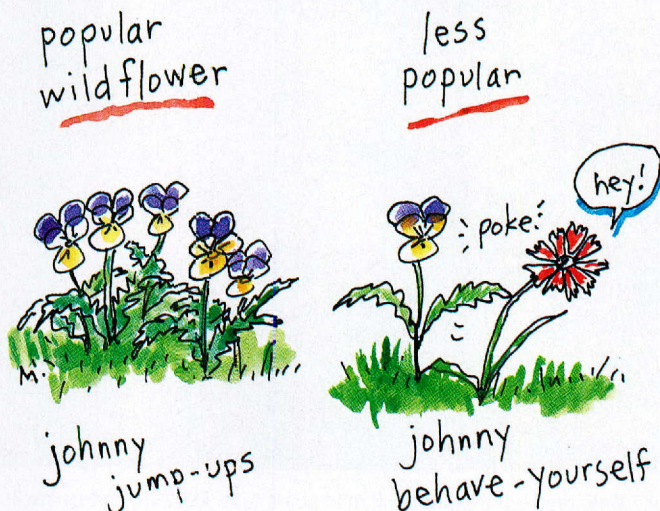
sprang up where crops once had grown.

Botanists know poverty weed as *Baccharis neglecta*, one of some 400 *Baccharis* species in America. The genus name comes from the Greco-Roman god of wine and dance, Bacchus. But the god also represented the fertility of the earth, and, predictably, this plant grows readily across the state. Another

member of the species-rich aster (or sunflower) family, poverty weed is most likely to appear on disturbed ground, and especially where limestone is a significant part of the soil mix. With its long, narrow leaves and pliable branches, the plant as a whole is weak and sometimes slight and small, but under favorable conditions it can grow into a substantial, 10-foot-tall bush.

Most of the year, *Baccharis neglecta* is inconspicuous and largely ignored. Not so in the fall, when the female plants produce their many flowers, and each flower gives rise to a seed with a long hair attached. The hair catches the wind, which disseminates the seed. There's no fairer sight in late autumn, when the conventional wildflowers have mostly disappeared, than a large poverty weed bush covered in white down, seemingly frost-fringed, a herald of the snow and ice soon to sweep down the plains from the land of true winter to the north.

A native New Yorker with a background in Romance languages and mathematics, STEVEN SCHWARTZMAN moved to Austin in 1976. His interest in photography began when he was a Peace Corps worker in Honduras.



© KATIE AND PETE MARATTA

WILDSEED FARMS



"Poppies, my pretty!" Well, there's no yellow brick road nearby, just US 290, and no Wicked Witch of the West, Dorothy, or Toto, either. But the fields of Wildseed Farms can project a magical, Oz-like aura. Horticultural entrepreneur John Thomas (facing page) doesn't stand behind a curtain like the Wizard. He's too busy cultivating wildflowers for Texas and the whole world to enjoy.



BY JANET R. EDWARDS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHAN MYERS

DOTTED with vibrant, mid-April color, the limestone hills west of Austin echo the bucolic artistry found in countless paintings of a Central Texas spring. Eschewing winter's gray-toned decor, nature dusts her palette with cobalt sprinklings of bluebonnets, accented by fiery-orange paintbrush and lemon-yellow Engelmann daisies.

Seven miles east of Fredericksburg, on US 290, the scene changes. The oak-studded skyline breaks away to ruddy, fertile soils, and the landscape blazes with vast acres of crimson, lilac, pink, yellow, maroon, and white. Center-stage amidst this wild cornucopia of native and exotic flowers stands a country-style, two-story building bearing the name Wildseed Farms.

Pull in for a visit? You bet! This is a people-pleasing place. You'll find some 175 species of gorgeous plants growing in imperial profusion, plus a plant and garden center and beguiling gift selections in the farm's retail store.

Few other spots in Texas, be it Hill Country slope, verdant dale, sunny roadside, or open meadow, can compete with Wildseed Farms' expertly cultivated riot of spring regalia. Synonymous with successful wildflower planting, harvesting, and distribution since 1995 (when this 200-acre treasure-trove first opened), the farm now attracts each year some 250,000 flower aficionados from all over the nation and various parts of the globe.

Wildseed Farms bloomed to life on 800 acres at Eagle Lake in 1983, the dream-come-true of horticultural entrepreneur and longtime wildflower-enthusiast John Thomas. From this location, John and his wife, Marilyn, built a business that soon gained recognition as a

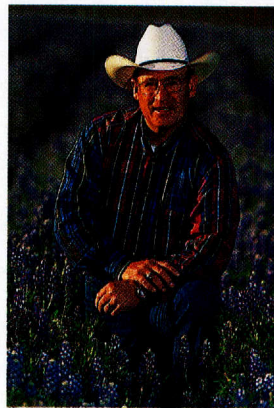
world-renowned supplier of bulk seed for Texas bluebonnet, Indian blanket, paintbrush, and primrose.

But when bad weather wiped out the farm's bluebonnet crop in 1990, John decided to find a second farm site in a non-coastal region of the state. "Having all our eggs in one basket proved to be impractical. Bluebonnets in particular do not like to keep 'wet feet,' and we needed a place to grow them where conditions were drier and the soil more porous," says John.

Searching much of the central and western portions of the state for just the right location, the couple eventually happened upon the town of Fredericksburg.

"This is it!" exclaimed Marilyn, who instantly felt at home in the quaint and friendly town. Six months later, the family moved there, initially leasing 50 acres east of Fredericksburg.

In 1995, the venture purchased 200 acres, which now boast the farm's popular



Market Center, a barn-like building about midway between Fredericksburg and Stonewall. Currently encompassing some 1,200 acres

FIELDS OF

Dreams

(augmented by lands owned by contract growers in Texas and other states), Wildseed Farms is the world's most prodigious supplier of wildflower seed to individuals and wholesale customers, including the transportation departments of Texas, Florida, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Mississippi, and a dozen other states.

"We ship wildflower seed—including Texas natives, traditional favorites like petunias, and exotics—all over the country and the world, including Canada and Europe," says John.

According to John, you can grow wildflowers successfully as long as you plant at the right time of year and under the right environmental conditions.

"We make a special effort to explain these 'rules of thumb' to anybody with an interest in growing wildflowers," he says.

True to his word, John, along with Marilyn and their son Ryan, assists customers throughout the day (the Market Center opens seven days a week) with questions about seed production, harvesting, planting, and wildflower-site maintenance. But there's more.

"What we've tried to do is reduce the dependence on luck," says John. "We've been able to help a lot of people who've had big trouble growing wildflowers. In the past, they've either planted at the wrong time of

Synonymous WITH SUCCESSFUL WILD-
FLOWER PLANTING, WILDSEED FARMS ATTRACTS EACH
YEAR SOME 250,000 FLOWER AFICIONADOS FROM ALL
OVER THE NATION AND VARIOUS PARTS OF THE GLOBE.



© FRED LABOUNTY

"...the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth..."
—from the *Song of Solomon*.

year, or they didn't plant enough seed, or they planted the wrong seed in the wrong site.

"Our guidebook [called the *Wildflower Reference Guide & Seed Catalog*] helps take away a lot of the guesswork," continues John. "For example, bluebonnets—pretty much everybody's favorite—are fairly finicky to grow. You need a location with at least six to eight hours of sun and very well-draining soil, preferably on a slope. Here in Texas, you must plant bluebonnet seed (and most other types of wildflower seed) in autumn, not spring, and if you can't irrigate, you have to pray the fall rains will be generous and timely enough to get good germination so the plants can develop adequate root systems before cold weather sets in. Also, avoid planting in areas where winter rye and other competitive, cool-season grasses could choke the flowers out.

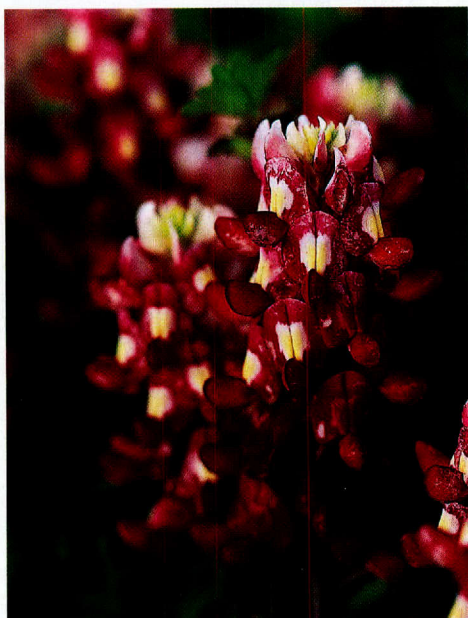
"If you follow these guidelines, you may get about a 60 percent yield, which is quite good for bluebonnets. It does take patience,

but the time spent waiting is well worth it."

Some new customers arrive with ambitious plans to plant lots of wildflower seed over a broad area. But John recommends starting small and building up.

"If you have land that's never been planted in wildflowers before, set aside about a 4,000-square-foot section, and spend about \$50 for seed. Try a blend, like the Wildseed Texas/Oklahoma mix, which contains 26 species of wildflowers, including Texas bluebonnet, lemon mint, plains coreopsis, and Indian blanket. Over a one- to two-year period, you can keep track of which species do well. When it's time to reseed, you'll already know at least eight to 10 varieties that will grow and look good."

John's catalog features color photographs of both seedling and mature stages of nearly 100 different flowers, including the Texas bluebonnet (*Lupinus texensis*), Indian paintbrush, and Drummond phlox. Tips for the best time of year to plant (which varies



Wildseed Farms' fragrant flowers possess the power to please.

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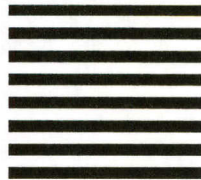
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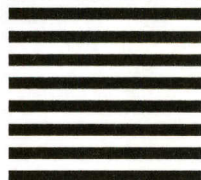
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from region to region across the United States), site selection, and method of planting are also given for each species, along with descriptions of flower traits and the approximate success rate of each type. Customers also appreciate the guide's listings of the average number of seeds per pound for each wildflower type, along with advice about the number of pounds of seeds to plant per square foot and per acre.

Wildseed allows guests to take self-guided tours in designated areas of the growing fields, where they can revel in row upon row of exuberant colors and velvety textures, inhale an assortment of fragrant scents, and snap photos of family and friends amidst beautiful blossoms.

Some folks find themselves fascinated by the farm's seed-planting process (assisted by John's invention, the "J-Thom 42 Wild-seeder," one of the industry's first "no-till-drill-seeder" machines) and seed-harvesting methods (done with yet another of John's inventions, called a Vacuum Seed Retriever). Other visitors can't wait to snip samples of flowers for take-home arrangements. They fill containers with larkspur, black-eyed Susans, Texas bluebonnets, sunflowers, and cornflowers selected from the farm's Pick-Your-Own-Bouquet field.

Best times to visit?

"April, May, and June are the prime time for wildflowers in the Hill Country," says John. "You might think that business would slow down during these months, since wildflowers are in season along the highways. But the opposite is true. People love color, and they want to be where the wildflower colors are most abundant and diverse. We try to give them just what they ask for."

Four shades of bluebonnets (white, pink, red, and blue, all of which were originally discovered in nature and grown on the farm from collected seeds) illustrate what John calls "killer color," and his fields of traffic-stopping red poppies, sunny coreopsis, purple larkspur, and yellow cosmos expand the farm's tempting smorgasbord of visual delights. And while seasonal weather fluctuations can produce both "good" and "lean" years for wildflowers along Texas highways, Wildseed Farms' irrigation system and expert management help ensure that something colorful will be

in abundant bloom almost year round.

If and when you can tear yourself away from the farm's mesmerizing mélange of outdoor color, take time to explore every nook and cranny of the 6,000-square-foot Market Center. Completed in 1997 with the help of John's friend Peyton Vaughn, the center garners nearly as much attention for its rustic design and rugged construction as for its engaging, flower-themed, consumer-oriented contents. The edifice, made of local limestone and native, aromatic cedar, is modeled after a replica of the historic 6666 Horse Barn at the Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock.

Beyond alluring displays of wildflower seeds, the Market Center offers a large selection of stylish, flower-adorned products, including books, china, decorative wreaths, stationery, T-shirts, photographs, bookmarks, and clothing. Those who like to cook (and those who enjoy eating) will appreciate the center's diverse collection of cookbooks and gourmet foods, including Texas wines, candies, and seasonal local produce, such as pecans and peaches. When tummies start to growl, head to the Brew-Bonnet Biergarten, where beverages and flavorful food abound.

Catering to the wildflower aficionado with such a multitude of sensual attractions has

not escaped national acclaim. And plans for the future continue to germinate.

"We invest a good deal of time and effort, not to mention growing space, doing research [often in partnership with other seed companies and universities] on promising new wildflower and garden-variety species for commercial production," says John Thomas. "One of these we're working on—a reseeding petunia, which is a traditional favorite—will hopefully be able to withstand our hot, dry Texas summers."

When it comes to growing, and flourishing, wildflowers definitely have a "mind of their own." But if anyone has successfully interpreted their thoughts, it would be John Thomas and his devoted, flower-savvy crew of family and friends. So, if the wildflowers that have started popping up along Texas roadsides in galleries of kaleidoscopic color have given you the wildflower bug, head to Fredericksburg. For if there were such a thing as a sure bet for a great show of spring wildflowers, Wildseed Farms of Texas would surely be at the top of the list. ★

JAN EDWARDS muses on the merits of the mayhaw in next month's magazine.

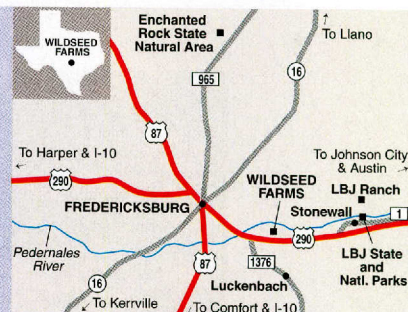
Photographer STEPHAN MYERS says the proliferation of rye grass has curbed wildflower growth in many Texas landscapes.

ESSENTIALS Wildseed Farms

LOCATED on the north side of US 290, Wildseed Farms lies 7 miles east of Fredericksburg and 7 miles west of Stonewall and the LBJ State and National Historical parks. Watch for a small highway sign saying "Wildseed Farms." But if you miss it, keep an eye out for the Market Center, a two-story building situated about 200 yards off the highway.

Hours: Daily 9:30-6 (winter 9:30-5). Admission: Free. Food and drinks can be purchased on site, or you can bring a picnic and dine under a covered pavilion near the windmill. Special events are scheduled throughout the spring, including "on-the-ground" tastings of Dutch oven-style snacks prepared by chuck-wagon cooks. A **Spring Wildflower Celebration**, Apr. 8-21, 2002 (when most of the fields are in bloom), will feature free musical entertainment every weekend. During **Bluebonnet Planting Days**, Sep. 14-22, 2002, visitors may attend free seminars (2-4 p.m.) on planting Texas bluebonnets and other wildflowers.

To obtain a free copy of the **2002 Wildflower Reference Guide & Seed Catalog**, or to place an order for seeds, call 800/848-0078, or write to Box 3000, Fredericksburg 78624-3000. For hours of operation and more information on planting wildflowers, visit www.wildseedfarms.com, which also includes photos and names of flowers currently in bloom (updated weekly), a chart showing status (in percentages) of bloom progress for each flower species (updated every 4 days), and online shopping.



THE SELF-STYLED "DIRT DOCTOR" MAKES HIS CASE FOR LANDSCAPING WITH TEXAS' FLOWERING TREES, SHRUBS, AND VINES

GOING *Native*

WITH HOWARD GARRETT

BY HOWARD GARRETT

TEXAS is a proud state. Besides a rich heritage, it has tremendously varied natural treasures. Its physical beauty ranges from mountains and deserts to swamps and prairies, to forests and beaches. Also ranking high on the "wow" list—and providing one of our greatest bragging rights—are our dynamic and constantly changing wildflower displays. The Hill Country, West Texas, South Texas, North Texas, and East Texas all have gorgeous wildflower shows in the spring and sporadically throughout the year.

However, there are wildflowers and there are wild flowers. The native plants that I call "wild flowers"—our native flowering trees, shrubs, and vines—are also one of Texas' greatest natural resources. These are not just the low-grow-

ing annuals and perennials that provide pleasing color, but all sorts of flowers, colorful foliage, and berries that also flaunt colorful displays. All of these wild flowers are effective in residential and commercial landscapes as well as along roadsides.

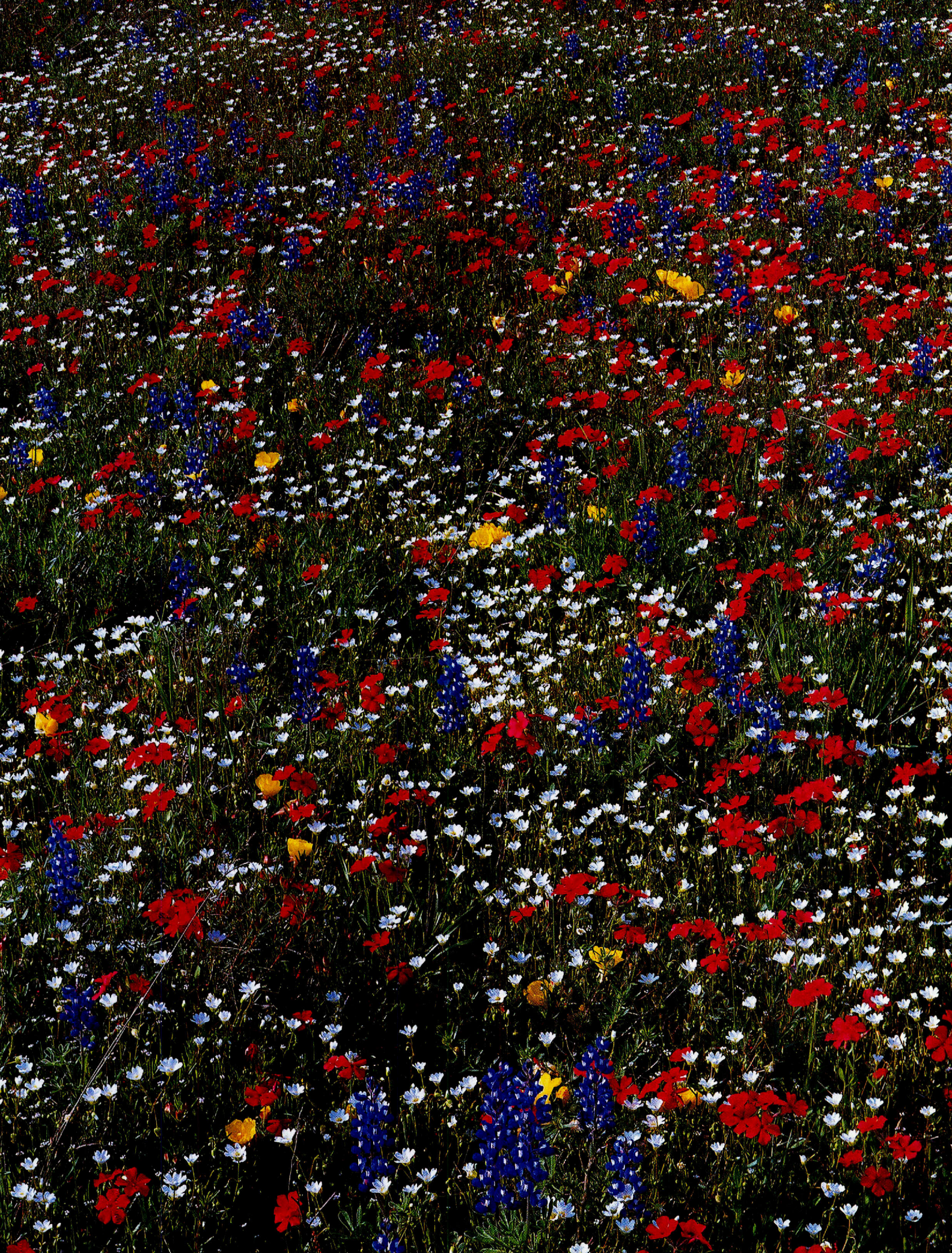
Landscape design philosophy that is simple is best. If you set in place natural conditions and native plants, the result will be long-lasting beauty, fragrance, and interest for the least amount of trouble at the most appropriate cost.

Taking advantage of color from wild native plants has many advantages. With careful selection of plants, gardeners and landscapers can have spring and summer flowers, fall foliage color, and striking winter berries and seed pods. Such plants are not only reasonably priced but also easier to maintain and longer-lasting than the cultivated exotic annuals and short-lived perennials that have



© SERGIO PULMATTI

Gardening guru Howard Garrett doesn't say we should give up wildflowers in our yards. After all, who could resist colorful displays like the black-eyed Susans above or the sea of scents evoked by the Gonzales County meadow at right? Rather, he says that by diversifying our home and business landscapes with other flowering natives—trees, shrubs, and vines—we help the environment *and* can enjoy glorious colors and textures during all seasons of the year.





The usual RECOMMENDATION IS TO PLANT THE SPRING-BLOOMING WILDFLOWERS IN THE FALL. HOWEVER, BETTER ESTABLISHMENT AND COLOR RESULT FROM PLANTING IN THE SUMMER. WHY? THAT'S WHEN MOTHER NATURE DOES IT.



© SERGIO PIUMATTI

become too much the norm in the nursery and landscape industry. Natives are the best choices for organic management programs.

Rather than just bragging about the natural show of color, we can make it even better. One new technique for doing this is to change the timing of planting wildflower seeds. The usual recommendation is to plant the spring-blooming flowers in the fall. However, better establishment and color result from planting in the summer. Why? That's when Mother Nature does it. It's the natural thing to do. Probably has to do with sunlight, heat, and soil microbes.

I suggest buying and using unscarified seed. It isn't natural for all the seed to germinate at once, and scarification can result in crop loss. Better long-term results come from allowing seeds to germinate over a period of years.

I also recommend a changeover to wildflowers—our many flowering trees, shrubs, and vines—which can provide year-round color and interest. When planting trees, shrubs, vines, and other woody permanent plants, dig a wide, rough-sided, saucer-shaped hole. Set the plant so that the top of the root-ball is slightly above the ground grade, and backfill with nothing but the soil from the hole. *(continued on page 18)*

DOING AWAY WITH

Introductions

*N*onnative wildflowers have become somewhat popular, and although these poorly adapted introductions are sometimes showy the first spring, **they don't last well and don't return to provide more color each year as natives do.** (Red poppies top this list.) Using nonnative wildflowers is simply a bad investment, not to mention bad horticulture. They are a strange-looking, out-of-place, cosmetic blemish. Come to think of it, their short life is a good point.

—Howard Garrett

[FACING PAGE] Yuccas punctuate a McCulloch County field of Indian blankets, coreopsis, bluebonnets, horsemint, and primroses.

[ABOVE] An inviting domestic setting, complete with yard swing and proverbial picket fence, blazes with coreopsis.

TREES

COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	COLOR/SPECIAL FEATURES
Black cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	White spring flowers
Desert willow	<i>Chilopsis linearis</i>	Light pink to violet or white orchid-like summer flowers
Flowering dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>	Pure white, pink, or rose flowers in spring
Rough-leaf dogwood	<i>Cornus drummondii</i>	White flower clusters and white fruit
Eve's necklace	<i>Sophora affinis</i>	Wisteria-like pink flowers in spring
Fragrant ash	<i>Fraxinus cuspidata</i>	Fragrant white spring flowers
Madrone	<i>Arbutus xalapensis</i>	Creamy white to pale pink flowers in spring; raspberry-like fruit in fall
Mexican buckeye	<i>Ungnadia speciosa</i>	Clusters of lavender spring flowers
Mexican plum	<i>Prunus mexicana</i>	Fragrant small white spring flowers
Native hawthorn	<i>Crataegus</i> spp.	Small white spring flowers
Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	White or lavender spring flowers
Rusty blackhaw	<i>Viburnum rufidulum</i>	White spring flowers, red fall color
Scarlet buckeye	<i>Aesculus pavia</i> var. <i>pavia</i>	Red spring flowers
Texas mountain laurel	<i>Sophora secundiflora</i>	Fragrant violet wisteria-like flowers in spring
Wild olive	<i>Cordia boissieri</i>	Brilliant white flowers with yellow throats year round

GROWING

Native



Desert willow

SHRUBBY PLANTS

COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	COLOR/SPECIAL FEATURES
Agarita	<i>Berberis trifoliolata</i>	Yellow flowers in spring, small red fruit in summer
Cactus	Many species	Yellow or red flowers; purple prickly pear even has purple pads
Turk's cap	<i>Malvaviscus arboreus</i>	Red flowers in summer followed by red fruit
Yucca	<i>Yucca</i> spp.	White flowers in spring
Yucca	<i>Hesperaloe parvifolia</i>	Red flowers in summer



Turk's cap

VINES

COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	COLOR/SPECIAL FEATURES
Clematis	<i>Clematis texensis</i>	Distinctive lantern-like red or purple flowers in spring
Coral honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Thin red flowers in the summer, excellent for attracting hummingbirds
Crossvine	<i>Bignonia capreolata</i>	Yellow and/or red trumpet-shaped flowers in spring
Wild roses	<i>Rosa</i> spp.	Fragrant in various colors; edible hips

WILDFLOWERS

COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	COLOR	SPECIAL FEATURES
American basketflower	<i>Centaurea americana</i>	Lavender spring blooms	Good for attracting butterflies, dove, and quail
Bluebonnet	<i>Lupinus texensis</i>	Blue-and-white flowers in early spring	Poisonous to horses
Butterfly weed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Orange flower clusters in summer	Primary host plant for monarch butterflies
Columbine	<i>Aquilegia</i> spp.	Small red and yellow summer flowers	Will even grow in solid rock
Coreopsis	<i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i>	Red-and-yellow blooms	Flowers provide a yellow dye for use on wool. Plants used to repel insect pests.
Crimson clover	<i>Trifolium incarnatum</i>	Dark red spring flowers	Flowers are delicious in salads. Leaves of all clovers must be cooked before eating to prevent bloating.
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White summer flowers	Herb tea is made from the flowers.
Engelmann daisy	<i>Engelmannia pinnatifida</i>	Yellow summer flowers	Has been used as an excellent foliage for livestock
Evening primrose	<i>Oenothera</i> spp.	Pink spring flowers	Can be invasive but quite showy in late spring. Attracts beneficial ground beetles.
Gayfeather	<i>Liatris</i> spp.	Dramatic purple spikes	Wonderful cut flower. Color lasts well in dried arrangements. Harvest sparingly, taking care not to hurt the crown of the plant.
Horsemint	<i>Monarda citriodora</i>	Lavender spikes	Fresh or dried flowers and leaves can be used as insect repellent. Too strong for tea use.
Indian blanket	<i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	Red-and-yellow flowers in late spring	Legend says an old blanket-maker was honored by the Great Spirit by replicating his burial blanket with this beautiful flower.
Indian paintbrush	<i>Castilleja indivisa</i>	Red-orange spring flowers	Biological activity and even the roots of other nearby plants are important for the growth of paintbrush.
Indian paintbrush	<i>Castilleja purpurea</i>	Reddish-orange, yellow, or purple spring flowers	Perennial form of Indian paintbrush
Maximilian sunflower	<i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>	Yellow summer flower	A perennial sunflower with edible roots similar to but smaller than Jerusalem artichoke
Mexican hat	<i>Ratibida columnaris</i>	Red and yellow flowers with drooping petals	Tough perennial that often doesn't bloom until the second season
Purple coneflower	<i>Echinacea</i> spp.	Purple summer flowers	All species of <i>Echinacea</i> provide the immune-system-enhancing properties.
Snow-on-the-mountain	<i>Euphorbia marginata</i>	White-edged leaves and summer flowers	Good for cut-flower use. Irritating to some people.
Tahoka daisy	<i>Machaeranthera tanacetifolia</i>	Lavender daisy-like blooms, primarily in summer	Long-lasting blooming period
Verbena	<i>Verbena</i> spp.	Purple summer flowers	Several varieties available
White yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	White summer flowers	Good roadside wildflower and excellent contrast for other flower colors
Winecup	<i>Callirhoe involucrata</i>	Wine-red flowers in late spring	Easy-to-grow perennial



Purple coneflower



Texas has three native redbuds (*Cercis* spp.): Texas redbud, Eastern redbud, and Mexican redbud. Even when the trees are not blooming along their branches, their heart-shaped leaves, distinctive leathery seed pods, and smooth bark prove eye-catching.

CHOOSING *Favorites*

It's hard for me to choose favorites, but here are my first thoughts: For the Hill Country, Texas mountain laurel and bluebonnets; for West Texas, fragrant ash and perennial Indian paintbrush; in South Texas, wild olive and evening primrose; in East Texas, scarlet buckeye and coreopsis; and in North Texas, rusty blackhaw and purple coneflower.

—Howard Garrett

Water thoroughly, and let the weight of the water settle the soil—no tamping, in other words. Mulch the disturbed area with shredded native-tree trimmings—native cedar (*Juniperus* spp.) is the best choice. Do not wrap the trunks, stake, or prune to thin out these plants. Very few losses will occur if you follow this cost-effective program.



Flowering dogwood lends its graceful, almost ethereal, presence to a woodland scene. This tree requires highly acid soil and plenty of moisture. Another species, rough-leaf dogwood, is drought-tolerant and grows easily in any soil.

© RICHARD REMOUDS

© HOWARD GARRETT



Each two pairs of crossvine's opposite leaflets form an x or cross; hence the name. In his helpful tome *Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of the Southwest*, the late Robert Vines calls crossvine "one of our most beautiful native vines" and urges that it be more extensively cultivated.

One of the most powerful changes we can make in the management of roadsides, parks, and other natural areas is to work with Mother Nature rather than trying to control her. (It can't be done, so why try?) The most impressive roadsides in Texas exist where smart management has been applied. It is no accident that in areas where herbicides have been avoided, native grasses, wildflowers, and wild flowers have flourished. That's most easily seen in Central and West Texas. More and

Grass-roots ADVICE

As a final note, let's not forget the native grasses. They offer graceful foliage through the summer and decorative seed-head displays. Those that should be used more in the landscape include sideoats grama, eastern gamagrass, switchgrass, Indiangrass, big and little bluestem, blue grama, inland seaoats, Lindheimer's muhly, Texas bluegrass, and buffalograss.

—Howard Garrett

more people are learning that native Texas plants work well along highways, on parks and golf courses, in the home garden, and in commercial landscaping. Maintenance costs and water availability become bigger issues every year for all of us. The thoughtful use of these drought-tolerant wild flower plants can go a long way toward relieving the problems.

Wild flowers, available in the forms of annuals, perennials, shrubs, vines, and trees, have wonderful flower displays and in many ways are much easier to grow and more dependable year after year than wildflowers. Not that bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, and evening primroses aren't impressive; it's just that we have many more choices. As the list on pages 16-17 reveals, landscaping that is beautiful, colorful, not overly hungry or thirsty, and easy to maintain can be accomplished with many different kinds of native Texas plants. ★

A landscape architect by training, HOWARD GARRETT has a three-quarter-acre home garden. He says he got interested in organics when his daughter, Logan, was a toddler and began putting things in her mouth.

ESSENTIALS Landscaping The Natural Way

HOWARD GARRETT, a.k.a. the Dirt Doctor, hosts *The Natural Way*, a gardening talk show, on WBAP in Dallas (AM 820) Sat. and Sun. mornings. His column "The Natural Way" appears in *The Dallas Morning News* each Fri. Call 866/444-DIRT to receive free handouts. Howard's Basic Organic Program contains instructions on such things as selecting plants, mulching, composting, feeding, doctoring sick trees, and controlling pests, as well as formulas for plant foods like Garrett Juice and Tree Trunk Goop. Write to Box 140650, Dallas 75214; 817/695-0817 (voice mail); fax 214/365-0608; www.wbap.com or www.dirtdoctor.com. Email: howard@dirtdoctor.com.

Look for Howard Garrett's books in your library, bookstore, garden center, or feed store, or order from the Dirt Doctor online: *Howard Garrett's Texas Organic Gardening*, *The Organic Manual*, *Dirt Doctor's Guide to Organic Gardening*, *Plants for Texas* (see page 57), *Plants of the Metroplex*, *Texas Organic Vegetable Gardening*, *Texas Bug Book*, and *Herbs for Texas*.

THE LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER

Inspiration

FROM THE WILD

LET'S TALK ABOUT BEGINNINGS: A glimmer of inspiration...a spark of interest...a tiny seed planted. Oftentimes, grand things start so small we might hardly notice them at first. And then a whole new world opens up.

KEVIN B. STILLMAN



In 1998, the National Wildflower Research Center changed its name to honor Lady Bird Johnson, who cofounded the center in 1982. Laura Bush joined Lady Bird at the rededication.

BY LORI MOFFATT

And so it began with my garden. On a whim, I planted a tiny *Salvia greggii* seedling in my front yard. I kerplunked it into the middle of a decaying tree trunk, arranged a bit of soil around its roots, watered it, and soon became distracted by other things. Within a few months, despite my utter disregard for its well-being, the little guy flourished and flowered, and soon became a veritable delicatessen for nectar-seeking bees and butterflies. Other Texas natives followed—fuschia-flowering cenizo, fluffy-edged blue mistflower, purple prairie verbena, cheery Turk's cap, and many others—all of which did just fine without fertilizer, pesticides, or undue pampering. Could it be that my thumb was indeed green?

It turns out, I could have saved myself a lot of disappointment over the years—as I watched finicky exotics like Gerbera daisies and begonias keel over at the first dry spell or fall prey to hungry plant pests—had I simply planted natives in the first place. Maybe I simply needed to understand my little corner of Austin better, and to take my cue from nature.

“That is the beginning of what we call ecological citizenship,” says Dr. Robert Breunig, the executive director of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, a 180-acre native-plant botanic garden and research center in Austin. Founded in 1982 by Lady Bird Johnson and actress Helen Hayes to educate people about the environmental necessity, economic value, and natural beauty of native plants, the Wildflower Center welcomes thousands of visitors each year, many of whom come to see the riot of spring blooms.

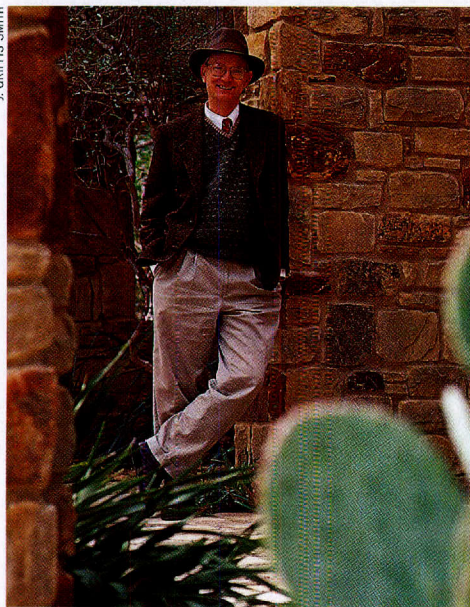
“Many people think of the Wildflower Center as a nice place to visit when they have a free day, and it is, of course,” says Robert. “But the research and conservation work we’re doing here is of fundamental importance. Without healthy landscapes, you don’t have good water, you don’t have clean air, and you don’t have healthy wildlife populations. So we want people to use native plants to save water, to avoid pesticides and fertilizer, to create habitat. But we hope people will go beyond that, to reconnect to the land, to see themselves as one species among

One of the Wildflower Center's many landmarks, the 43-foot observation tower affords spectacular views of the surrounding countryside, and also serves as a 10,000-gallon cistern. The Center's extensive rain-harvesting system can collect more than 10,000 gallons of water per inch of rainfall.





"My hope," WRITES LADY BIRD JOHNSON, "IS NOT A REVOLUTION AGAINST THE USE OF NON-NATIVES, BUT A RESOLUTION TO EDUCATE OURSELVES ABOUT WHAT HAS WORKED FOR MOTHER NATURE THROUGH THE EBB AND FLOW OF TIME."



Executive director Dr. Robert Breunig encourages people to see themselves as one species among many others that live in this world.

many others. That's ecological citizenship."

But the first step in any new awakening is inspiration, and the springtime flowers here captivate like child's play. The blooms, in fact, begin on the roadside, before you've even entered the Wildflower Center. Bluebonnets peek from behind hunks of limestone. Butterflies alight on pink evening primrose. A small, daisy-like flower called fleabane forms mounds of yellow and white. Inside the Center proper, visitors find a hurly-burly celebration of blooms that borders on jubilant. More than 500 species of native plants thrive at the Wildflower Center, and springtime finds them in bloom, in bud, or eye-poppingly green.

Shutterbugs have a field day here, espe-

Demonstration gardens throughout the Wildflower Center showcase the beauty of native plants. This shot, taken in early fall, shows off purple-pink gayfeathers and blooming grasses.

cially in spring. Seas of bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush draw visitors to the Center's natural areas, where trails wind through mixed woodlands and a spectacular, flower-studded savanna. The central courtyard, dappled by vine-clad arbors, displays shade-loving plants like inland sea oats, red and yellow columbine (with their crazy, spaceship-shaped blooms), and understory trees like possumhaw holly and pink-emblazoned Eve's necklace.

Display gardens throughout the Center showcase native flowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees. A naturalistic stream nurtures water-hyssop and purple-spiked pickerelweed, while still another habitat buzzes with pollinators like butterflies, dragonflies, and hummingbirds, attracted to the bright blooms of Texas wisteria and red Drummond phlox.

To the south, in the Center's new, 136-

acre "living laboratory," still more trails traverse a landscape dotted with bluebonnets, yellow Texas star, pink skullcap, and prickly pear. Here, some of the Center's most important plant research takes place. Wooden benches and water stations along the way provide spots to take in the constant calls of insects and songbirds, and interpretive signs help visitors understand the science involved.

For hundreds of thousands of years, the land on which the Wildflower Center sits—a savanna once characterized by grasses, small trees, and seasonal wildflowers—experienced cycles of fire every decade or so, as well as frequent grazing by animals. The plants that adapted best to those conditions thrived—until development took its toll. "Now," says Dr. Steve Windhager, the Center's director of landscape restoration, "we want to get those plants back."

How to PLANT WILDFLOWERS

First, if you want to plant seeds or install a meadow, mark your calendar for late summer, and follow the steps below. *Spring wildflowers should be planted any time from after they naturally go to seed until fall.* (The Wildflower Center plants in August and September.)

Fortunately, many nurseries carry wildflower seedlings (gayfeathers and other late bloomers are good to plant in April), so you can have flowers now to inspire you for next year. (Remember, you can grow wildflowers in containers.)

- Decide on a suitable area—most annual Texas wildflowers need full sun—and measure it (you want to use the recommended amount of seed).
- Mow the existing vegetation, and rake to expose the soil. Don't till; it can encourage dormant grass seeds to sprout.
- Scatter the seed. For better results with bluebonnets, dampen the seeds with water, and add rhizobium (a nitrogen-fixing bacteria), then broadcast. To prevent small seeds (like easy-to-grow horsemint) from blowing away, mix them with damp sand.
- Seed-to-soil contact is imperative, so rake the area again.
- Most spring wildflowers will germinate with the fall rains and spend the winter as rosettes—small plants that hug the ground. Be sure you know what the rosettes look like!

Native American Seed, which sells native wildflower and grass seeds from its headquarters in Junction, has a great Web site dedicated to native plants, with an emphasis on plants native to Texas. Request a free catalog by calling 800/728-4043, or log on to www.seedsource.com.

Wild Ideas

At the Wildflower Center's retail store, longtime product marketing director Joe Hammer sees firsthand the joyful effects of wildflowers. Most visitors here, he reckons, poke their heads into *Wild Ideas: The Store* to browse the eclectic array of wildflower-themed items he has selected to fill the shelves and display cases. "We have people from Maine, Hawaii, Florida—almost everywhere you could name, and they're all excited about the flowers," he says. "The Center, you know, is a national place that just happens to be in Austin. It's like the Sierra Club, or the World Wildlife Fund, but our mission is to promote a better understanding of native plants."

To meet that mission, Joe selects merchandise ranging from wind chimes and pottery to seed packets and garden tools—singular and often hand-crafted items that tie in with ecology, wildflowers, and related things.

Amid a dizzying selection of clothing, jewelry, pottery, toys, cards, housewares, posters, and native-plant-themed books, you'll find such gems as enameled ladybug pins, hand-carved walking sticks, iron armadillo garden ornaments, magnifying insect viewers, blown-glass watering tools, embroidered kids' overalls, and dragonfly-shaped drink coasters—all making for easy gift-buying.

"It's a great place to work and a happy place to shop," says Joe. "Where else can you pull up in the parking lot and have flowers at your bumper?"

Wild Ideas: The Store opens Tue-Sat 9-5:30 and Sun 1-4. Call 512/292-4300. To order items online, log onto www.wildflower.org.

Shortly after the Center acquired the additional 136 acres in 1999, Steve and his crew divided some of the acreage into 54 research units and began a series of landscape-restoration treatments. For comparison's sake, some units are burned in fall, others in spring, still others in the summer. Others get mowed regularly, to simulate bison grazing. Some are left untouched. Although the crew planted several research units with a variety of wildflower seeds,

STAN WILLIAMS



At the Fall Gardening Festival, landscape restorationist David Mahler shows visitors how to collect seeds. "You have to take a leap of faith," he says, "that these little seeds will grow into big, beautiful plants."

The scarlet blossoms of cardinal flowers appear from May to October.

most of the land was left unseeded. When flowers appear in these areas (and indeed, you'll see plenty), they're the result of seeds that have been dispersed by wind or by animals, or that have been waiting for conditions to be right.

Discovering those "right conditions" forms the basis of this experiment. Why, for example, do bluebonnets and paintbrush bloom so prolifically in certain areas?

"We're finding that burning in the fall increases spring wildflowers," says Steve, "which makes sense. The fire removes the plant matter, and all of the nitrogen goes up in smoke. What's left behind is potash, a kind of fertilizer. Many native spring wildflowers—bluebonnets, for example—make their own nitrogen, so they can thrive in nitrogen-poor environments. So, by running any kind of fire, you've set the system correctly for wildflowers."

Interesting stuff, especially for ranch owners who want to restore their land (the landscape-restoration staff offers work-



shops on prescribed burns and emphasizes that this isn't something to try without proper training)—but what does it mean for the average homeowner? Well, *definitely* don't fertilize your wildflowers, and learn to truly observe your land, whether you live on a 400-acre ranch or on a small city lot. Where does the water pool after a rain? How much shade do you get in summertime? Ask yourself, "What plants would be here in nature?"

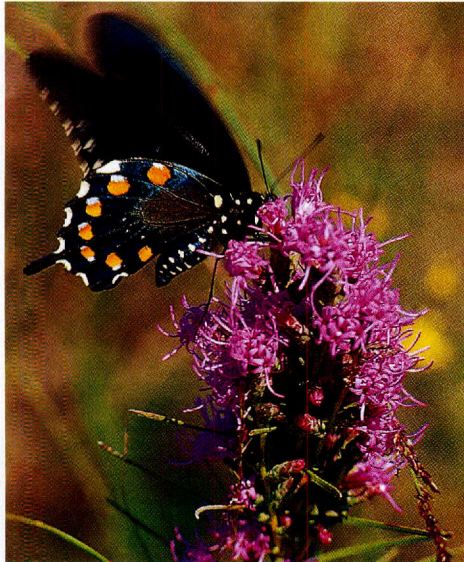
If you don't know the answer to that question (and many others), the Wildflower Center can help. Thanks to a \$5 million

[FACING PAGE] Crushed-granite pathways throughout the Wildflower Center afford visitors easy access to the display gardens. To the left in this photo, yet another cistern helps preserve precious water.

Wild things WERE TAKEN FOR GRANTED UNTIL PROGRESS BEGAN TO
DO AWAY WITH THEM. NOW WE FACE THE QUESTION OF WHETHER A STILL HIGHER
'STANDARD OF LIVING' IS WORTH ITS COST IN THINGS NATURAL, WILD, AND FREE.

—ALDO LEOPOLD, *A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC* (1949)





A butterfly alights on a gayfeather. Expect more butterflies here beginning in June, when a new butterfly garden and education building open. The focus will be on pollinators and pollination.

The Center's spring and fall plant festivals offer opportunities galore to learn from experienced naturalists. Here, native-plant specialist Sage Kawecky leads a group through the gardens.



encowment from Houston's Brown Foundation, the Wildflower Center recently established the Brown Center for Environmental Education, and its director, Dr. Damon Waitt, has big plans.

"Hundreds of years ago, there was a connection between people and the land that industrial society has torn apart," says Damon. "I'd like to bridge that gap, to make people as familiar with the plants in their world as, say, they are with the cars that drive down the street."

To accomplish that goal, the Brown Center offers regular teacher workshops; hikes and other activities for kids; weekend classes on everything from water gardening to landscaping with grasses; and even college-level botany courses (in summer) to help people learn about the joys of native plants.

"We've also put all of our native-plant information online," says Damon. Say, for example, you have a shady backyard in Central Texas, and you want to know what might do well there. The Native Plant Information Network on the Center's still-expanding Web site (www.wildflower.org) can help. Within the site, "Texas Plants Online" features a searchable database with images and information about 200

plant species native to Central Texas, tips on growing Texas' most popular wildflowers, articles on such topics as native lawns and seed collecting, and answers to visi-

Wildflower Tour

Together with the Johnson City Visitor & Tourism Bureau, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center offers a springtime **Wildflower Country Tour** for groups of 15 or more. A flexible itinerary (you can begin in either Austin or Johnson City) includes a docent-led tour of the Wildflower Center, snacks at the Wildflower Cafe and shopping at the store, lunch at a restaurant in Johnson City, a guided nature walk at LBJ National Historical Park, and a tour of the new Johnson City Wildflower Loop.

Tour fees begin at \$12.50 per person (not including lunch). If your group has rented a van or bus, consider hiring a step-on guide (\$50) for the Johnson City leg of the tour; guides can talk about the history of the area and recommend other nearby scenic drives (the Willow City Loop and the Fredericksburg Loop, for starters). Call 512/292-4200.

tors' most-frequently-asked plant questions. "Native Plants Online" broadens the scope to include seed suppliers, nurseries, and landscapers across the nation. You'll also find a list of recommended books and native-plant success stories from as far away as Alaska and Wisconsin.

The Center's Spring Gardening Festival and Native Plant and Seed Sale (April 6-7 this year) provides another good opportunity to glean knowledge. Plant aficionados mark their calendars for this twice-annual event (the fall festival takes place in October), so if you have a mind to stock up on native plants and seeds, arrive early. The Center offers more than 150 native varieties for sale, and if you have questions about which plants might do well in your landscape, dozens of volunteers wend their way among the tables to help out. (If you want to do some research beforehand, check out "Texas Plants Online" on the Web site, or nab a copy of *Hill Country Horticulture: A Growing Guide for Central Texas Native Plants*, \$5 at the store and at the plant sale.)

Activities throughout the day highlight topics like seed collecting (a lesson in patience, says group leader David Mahler),

growing wildflowers from seed, attracting hummingbirds (think red, tubular flowers), and garden design—all free with the price of admission.

“We’re trying to save the world one landscape at a time,” says horticulture director Denise Delaney with a smile. Denise oversees the plant sales and demonstration gardens, and considers it part of her job to inspire people. (At last fall’s plant

sale, folks fell head-over-heels for the delicate, golden grasses in bloom in the theme beds; some varieties sold out before 10 a.m.)

For more ideas, says Denise, “Come to the Wildflower Center at different times of the year. Visit other native-plant gardens in your area. Go out into your natural areas, into the state parks.” In other words, if you don’t know what to do, imitate nature. “It’s important,” she adds, “for people to see that a garden doesn’t have to always be bright and showy, or completely manicured and orderly. A garden can be naturalistic without being messy. Think about texture and forms and the way the light shines.”

With that thought in mind, mark your calendar for a fall visit, and another in wintertime. Fall at the Wildflower Center brings flowers in vibrant hues of orange, yellow, and purple; the leaves of trees like red oak and sumac blush crimson and copper. In the mornings, dewdrops sparkle like diamonds on the feathery panicles of blooming grasses.

Winter reveals the Center’s subtler charms. The golden meadows undulate in the wind. Trees become sculptures, their bare limbs twisting skyward, their trunks striated with shades of silvery gray. You’ll find color here in winter, but you have to look a little harder. The bright-red berries of the possumhaw hollies look like tiny gems against a gray sky, and the ebony seed clusters of Eve’s necklace (remember its pink blossoms from springtime?) make it clear how the tree gets its name. And, for those who say,



Bluebells bloom from June to September. Their broad flowers may be blue, pink, or white.

“but everything’s brown!” remember that brown comes in many shades.

To gain greater appreciation for a wildflower’s life cycle, make a point to study the ground here in February, where clumps of green—called rosettes—form gentle mounds. Having germinated from seed with the fall rains, many wildflowers establish their roots during the winter so they can expend their springtime energy on blossoms.

Seed heads, too, have their own special beauty. Geometric shapes, fuzzy textures,

and rich colors abound—some look like layered wedding cakes and others resemble raggedy-gray schnauzer beards. “The study of seeds is the focus of our kids’ programming in the winter,” says Damon. “I tell the kids that the next generation of plants is still sort of hanging around on mom, in the form of seeds.”

Whether in spring, summer, autumn, or winter, nature’s beauty reveals itself to those willing to notice the details. “Mrs. Johnson traveled around the country as First Lady, and each and every place she visited was beautiful,” says Robert Breunig. “She called it ‘regional flavor.’ For us, the message is that every place, in its natural state, is inherently beautiful. We want people to appreciate that, and to see that our lives are tied to ecological diversity. Beginning that journey starts with enjoying the wildflowers, but that’s not the end. It’s just the beginning. That’s what turns on the switch.” ★

LORI MOFFATT thanks Priscilla Pipho, Robert Breunig, Damon Waitt, Denise Delaney, Steve Windhager, and Joe Hammer for teaching her more about native plants; and photographer Stan Williams for his hard work.

ESSENTIALS Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

THE GROUNDS, gardens, and hiking trails of the Lady Bird

Johnson Wildflower Center, at 4801 La Crosse Ave. in southwest Austin, open Tue-Sun 9-5:30. The **Visitors Gallery**, which features displays on native plants and the environment over the centuries, opens Tue-Sat 9-4 and Sun 1-4. The adjacent **Wildflower Cafe** serves sandwiches, soups, cookies, beverages, and other light refreshments Tue-Sat 10-4 and Sun 11-4. Across the courtyard, **Wild Ideas: The Store** opens Tue-Sat 9-5:30 and Sun 1-4 (see sidebar, page 24). On weekends, the **Children’s Little House** features wildflower-themed activities for kids (planting seedlings and painting with native-plant dyes, for example). The **Library**, which contains a vast array of reference books and periodicals, opens Tue-Wed 2-4 and by appt.

Year round, adult and school groups can take **docent-led tours** of the Wildflower Center; *reservations required* (fees \$5-\$7.50 per person). The new **Afternoon Trailblazer Program**, aimed at kids, features naturalist-led hikes through the Center, by appt. (\$6 per person).

Upcoming spring events include workshops on using **Grasses in the Landscape** (Apr. 21), **Container Gardening** (Apr. 27), **Creating a Water Garden** (Mar. 24, Apr. 27), planting **Basically Native** (Apr. 13), and the **Spring Gardening Festival and Native Plant and Seed Sale** (Apr. 6-7, free with admission), which features walks and talks by local experts and more than 150 species of hard-to-find natives for sale. The Fall Gardening Festival occurs in Oct.

Admission: \$7, \$5.50 students and age 65 and older, free members and age 4 and younger. **Memberships** begin at \$25 and include free admission; discounts on educational programs, plant sales, and items at the store; and a subscription to the center’s quarterly magazine, *Native Plants*. For more information, call 512/292-4200; www.wildflower.org.





© JOE LOWERY

BY JACK LOWRY AND ROSEMARY WILLIAMS

Zoomin' ON WHAT'S BLOOMIN'
Texas' size and location give it a rare advantage in terms of wildflower diversity. Because it lies in the southern Great Plains, Texas nurtures a larger wildflower population and more wildflower acreage than any other state. Texas' great grasslands provide the optimal conditions—vast horizons and sparse woodlands—for wildflower displays that burst forth with color.

Yet, because the state boasts environments in addition to the Great Plains, it shelters some 5,000 species of flowering plants. In East Texas we see the oftentimes subdued gems of moist thickets, forests, and fields. And to the west, where rainfalls may be less than an inch per month and elevations can top 8,000 feet, blooming cacti and shrubs show off delicate blossoms that contrast with their dramatic desert backdrops.

With the approach of spring, the understated shades of winter yield to an array of vivid greens on newly-leaving trees and awakening grasses. Then, through the wonders of organic alchemy, a profuse palette splashes across Texas fields and roadsides. The springtime symphony of Indian paintbrushes, bluebonnets, evening primroses, and desert marigolds has begun.

[CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP RIGHT] Indian blankets thrive across the state except in portions of East Texas, whereas prairie verbenas can be found in every region. The carnivorous pitcher plant of the Big Thicket attracts crickets, grasshoppers, and snails with an aromatic nectar that traps them in its leaves. Bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush bloom in a field in Wilson County, southeast of San Antonio.



© DON ALLEN



© MIKE BRINER



© RUSTY YATES

Wildflower

FIELDS FOREVER



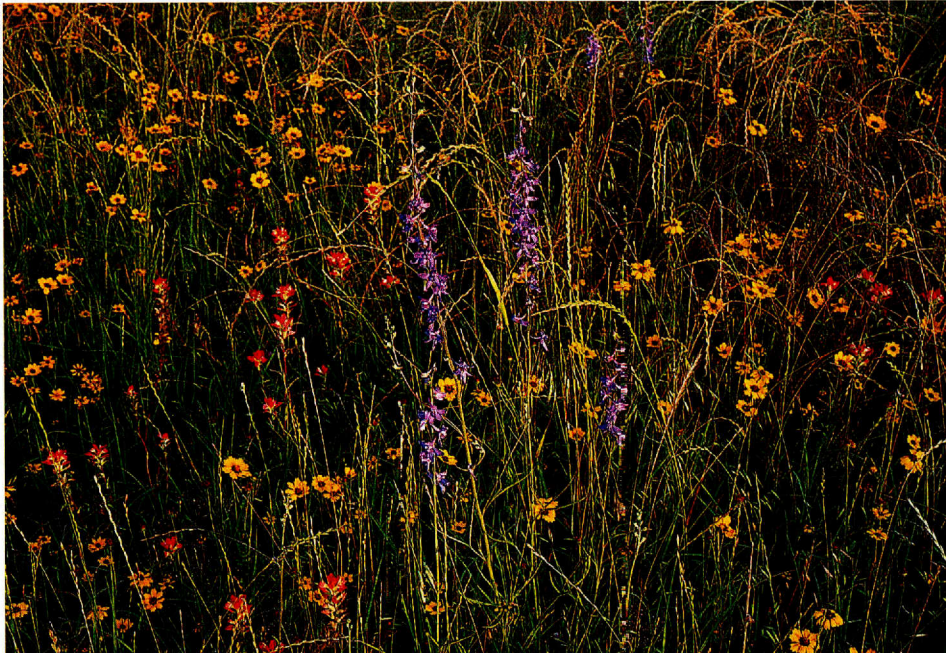
[ABOVE] The semiparasitic paintbrush frequently cozies up to native grasses and bluebonnets to siphon off nutrients from the host plants' root systems.

[FACING PAGE, TOP] Ocotillos and prickly pears are two of the Big Bend's blooming natives.

[FACING PAGE, BOTTOM] Indian paintbrushes and prickly pears frequently grow together, especially in Central and South Texas

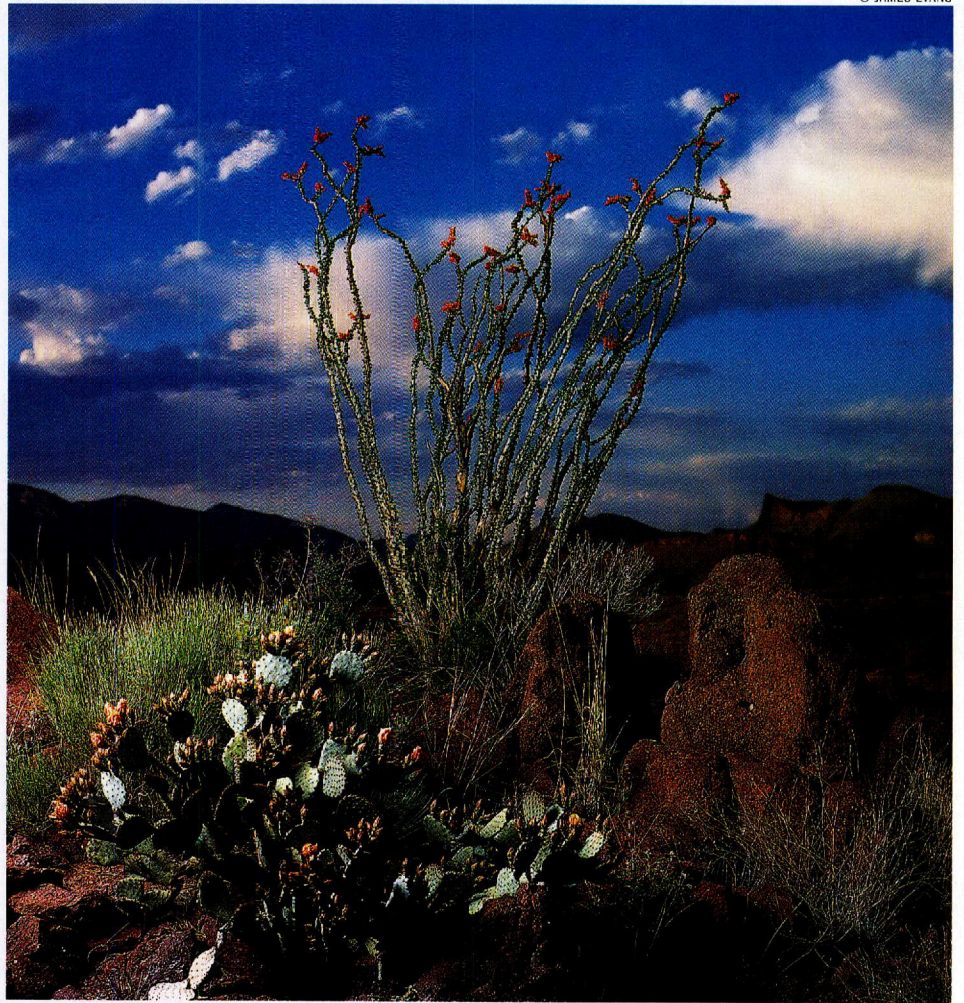
[RIGHT] Larkspurs and Indian paintbrush thrive among grasses and yellow members of the sunflower family. Larkspurs contain highly toxic alkaloids that are harmful to livestock.

© C.L. EDMISTON III





© TIM FITZHARRIS



© JAMES EVANS

Native OR WILD?

Native plants are not necessarily wildflowers, and wildflowers may not be natives. Brown-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), bluebonnets (*Lupinus* spp.), Drummond phlox (*Phlox drummondii*), and showy primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*), for example, are wildflowers that happen to be natives. On the other hand, crimson clover (*Trifolium incarnatum*), milfoil (*Achillea millefolium*), bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*), and tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*) are all introduced. Tocalote, which has become naturalized, can spread rapidly, and takes over less aggressive native plants. Bindweed has deep roots that spread out and make the plant tough to control; hence its alternative common name, possession weed. Queen Anne's lace, because of its tendency to take over abandoned fields, is commonly considered a weed.

Advocates of using indigenous natives in planned landscapes do not necessarily believe that eradicating naturalized species is a realistic goal, but they do urge controlling invasive plants, and most frown on the introduction of foreign species to the mix of native flora. It's true that some introduced plants may naturalize successfully, but others become aggressive and harmful, and still others may not adapt and fail to thrive.

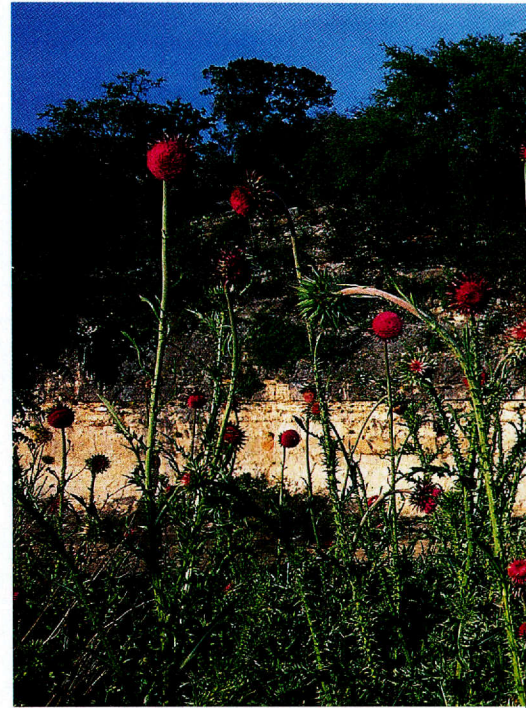
Native plants take advantage not only of weather and seasonal conditions, but also of the other plant material they must compete with. The Indian paintbrush, for example, can't absorb sufficient water and minerals to support itself. Rather than shrivel up and die, it taps into the roots of other plants, frequently grasses and bluebonnets, and siphons off a portion of its sustenance. The "transfusion" doesn't harm the host plant, but it helps the semiparasitic paintbrush flourish. That's one reason Indian paintbrushes and bluebonnets often splash their bright reds and blues in tandem across Texas fields and roadsides.



© TIM FITZHARRIS



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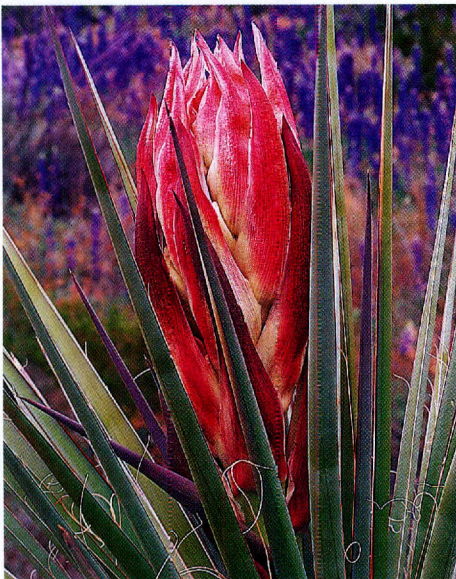


© JEFFREY HARTMAN

WILDFLOWERS *York*

Wildflowers do more than just blow in the breeze and look fetching. Many of them exhibit practical characteristics. Some, such as the goat-foot morning glory (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*), help stabilize sand dunes

along the coast. Plantings of native vegetation along roadways and stream banks help inhibit soil erosion. Other wildflowers provide the basic ingredient in an abundance of dyes, used by Native Americans and early Tejanos and Texans. Tall goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) yields shades of yellow to yellow-green, wild blue indigo (*Baptisia australis*) provides a blue dye, and plains coreopsis (*Coreopsis tinctoria*) produces a rusty red. Herbal remedies, teas, and poultices were prepared from wildflowers such as rayless green-thread (*Thelesperma megapotamicum*) and wild bergemot (*Monarda fistulosa*). Woolly mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) was used to cure earaches, hemorrhoids, and mental ills, and the plant yields a bright yellow dye. Early Texans also dipped the dried stalks of woolly mullein in wax and used them as candles.



© TIM FITZHARRIS



© JIM BONES

[ABOVE] Nodding thistle, introduced from Europe, has become a problem species in some parts of Texas because it can spread so rapidly and take over native species.

[FACING PAGE, TOP] The goat-foot morning glory, or railroad vine (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*), is a perennial evergreen that flourishes on the Texas coast. The deeply rooting stems help stabilize coastal dunes. The vines can grow 100 feet or longer and may grow as much as a foot a day.

[FACING PAGE, BOTTOM] A yucca blooms in the Big Bend region. Native Americans have long valued the plant for its fiber and edible fruit and flowers.

[FACING PAGE, RIGHT] Prairie coneflower thrives in disturbed soils except in westernmost Texas.

[LEFT] Desert marigolds proliferate in the Rio Grande floodplain in Presidio County.

[OVERLEAF] Groupings of plants like Big Bend bluebonnets (*Lupinus havardii*), parralena or dogweed (*Dyssodia pentachaeta*), bicolor mustard (*Nerisyrenia camporum*), Havard's fiddleleaf (*Nama havardii*), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), and lechuguilla (*Agave lechuguilla*) make the Chihuahuan Desert a botanically rich arid region.









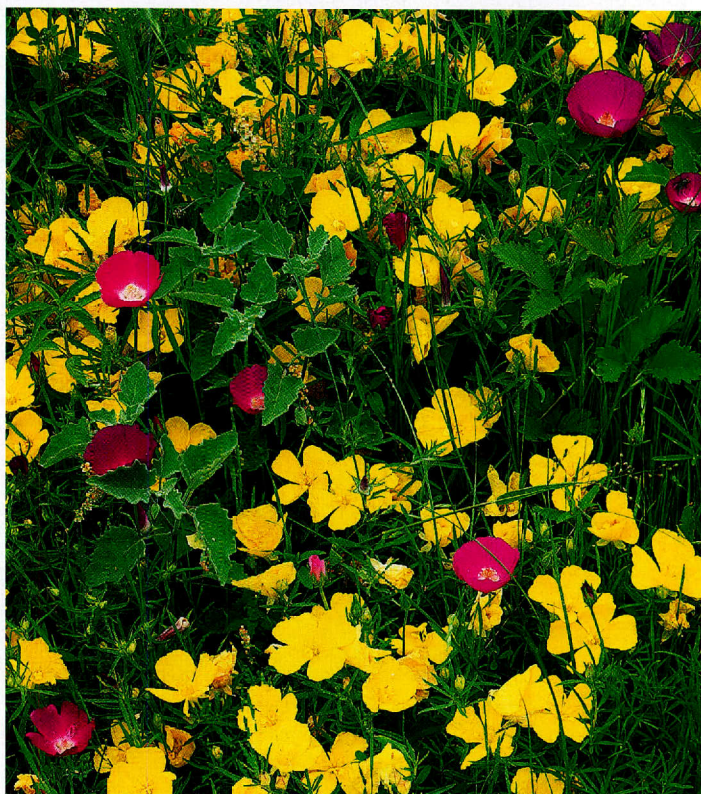
Resplendent ROADWAYS

We can all thank Mother Nature and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for the wildflower displays that beautify the byways and highways of Texas. After the Texas Highway Department was formed in 1917, maintenance workers and engineers noticed that wildflowers were frequently the first plants to grow on the road rights-of-way. The Highway Department saw the wildflowers as a natural means of erosion control, and by 1930 had launched a program to preserve the state's native vegetation. According to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's *Wildflower Handbook* (1st ed.), "It is generally agreed that Texas' highway department was the first to recognize wildflowers as a roadside asset."

Today, the department sustains a landscaping crew that tends more than one million acres of Texas.

[ABOVE AND RIGHT] The roadways of Gonzales County glow with bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, and Drummond phlox, and in other spots, with yellow primroses and burgundy winecups.

[FACING PAGE] Drummond phlox, primrose, Indian paintbrush, and bluebonnets are common sights on the byways of Atascosa County, south of San Antonio.



Blossoms FOR BRITAIN

The colorful phlox (*Phlox drummondii*) that makes British gardens blush with pink and red is actually a transplanted Texan. Scottish botanist Thomas Drummond discovered the flower along the banks of the Brazos River in 1833-1834. He sent specimens of phlox to England, where the plant thrived and gained a place in the hearts of English gardeners. Drummond collected more than 700 species of plants in Texas, but the phlox remains his most celebrated find.

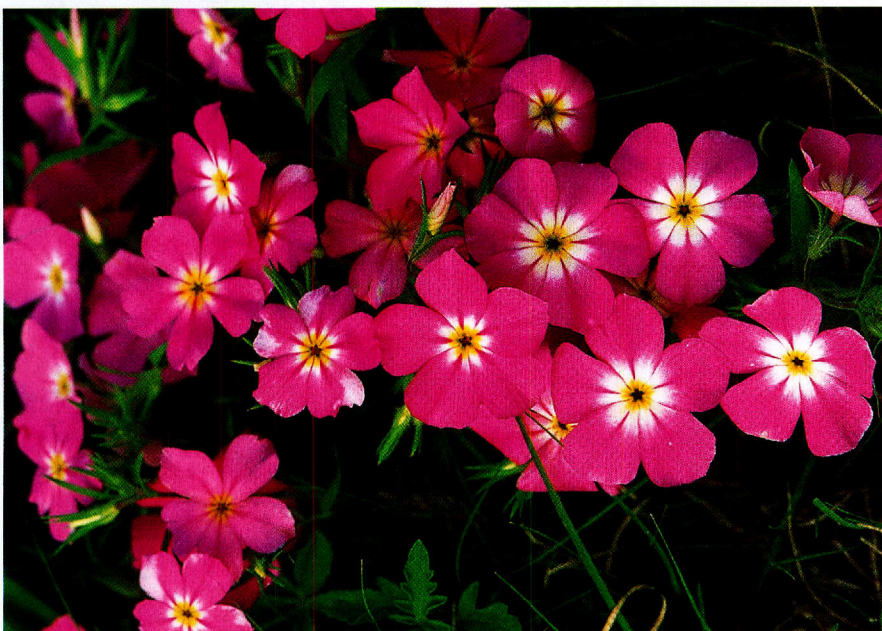
Although Drummond's life was cut short in Havana in 1835 by illness, he lives on in the nomenclature of numerous Texas plants, including pink mint (*Stachys drummondii*), Drummond rainlily (*Cooperia drummondii*), Drummond skullcap (*Scutellaria drummondii*), turk's cap (*Malvastrum arboreum* var. *drummondii*), square-bud day-primrose (*Calylophus drummondianus*), beach evening primrose (*Oenothera drummondii*), and, of course, Drummond phlox (*Phlox drummondii*). Today, Drummond phlox blossoms from China to the Carolinas.

[FACING PAGE] Thomas Drummond discovered the phlox named for him during his travels to Texas in 1833-34. Drummond phlox (shown here with bur-clover) ranges in color from white to pink to red to purple, and can be bicolored or variegated. There are six varieties of Drummond phlox in Texas, and more than 200 cultivated varieties worldwide.

[RIGHT] The sweet-scented flowers of prairie phlox (*Phlox pilosa*) attract butterflies and bees. The genus name "phlox" means "flame," and the species name "pilosa" means "covered with soft hairs."



© JOE LOWERY



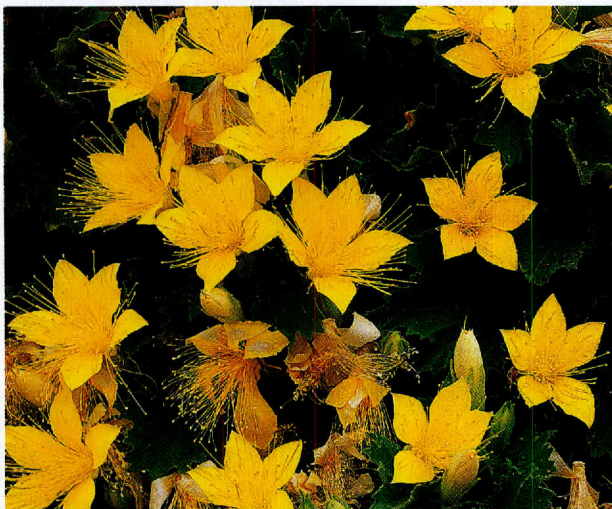
© N. CAMPBELL COX



© RUSTY YATES

[ABOVE AND RIGHT] Golden-eye phlox (*Phlox roemeriana*) is named for German geologist Frederic von Roemer, who collected plants and minerals in Texas in 1845-47. The flowers are similar to Drummond phlox, except for their yellow centers. In the wild or in the garden, lovers of Drummond phlox favor red.





[ABOVE] Bluebonnets growing plentifully give off an almost fruity fragrance.

[LEFT] Rock-nectle (*Eucnide bartonioides*) does well on dry limestone soils and is frequently found clinging to hillsides and cliff faces.

[RIGHT] The flowers of Texas mountain laurel, also known as mescal bean or frijolillo (*Sophora secundiflora*), exude an aroma reminiscent of grape bubble gum. Some find the fragrance delightful, while others deem it dreadful.

[FACING PAGE] Lemon mints, basketflowers, and gaillardias bloom in Briscoe County. Lemon mint (*Monarda citriodora*) gives off a strong lemony scent. Oils from the plant contain citronellol, which is used for perfumes and insect repellent.



© LAURENCE PARENT

© LAURENCE PARENT



© LAURENCE PARENT



© RICHARD RENOUS

FOLLOW THAT *Fragrance*

Wildflowers don't just look good, many of them smell good, too. Of course, some smell downright disagreeable—in fact, their common names can be dead giveaways. Consider stinking gourd (*Cucurbita foetidissima*). Walk through a thicket of this vine, and the powerful odor will stick with you for some time. Get too close to devil's claw (*Proboscidea louisianica*), and you catch a distinctive whiff of B.O.

Fortunately, many Texas wildflowers exude more-pleasing aromas. Fragrant heliotrope (*Heliotropium convolvulaceum*) boasts sweet-scented flowers that open late in the day and remain open until the heat of the next day makes them wither. Perhaps you have come across bluebonnets growing in abundance, their numbers filling the air with an almost fruity bouquet. Lemon mint (*Monarda citriodora*), also known as horsemint, gives off a strong lemony scent. Huisache daisies (*Amblyolepis serotina*) exude a bright, aromatic fragrance. Rayless gaillardia (*Gaillardia suavis*) makes up for its lack of ray flowers with a scent that some liken to gardenias. No wonder one of its common names is "perfumeballs."



© FRED HIRSCHMANN

Bluebonnets ABLOOM

Bluebonnets (*Lupinus* spp.) belong to the legume family. The genus name comes from the Latin word *lupus*, meaning "wolf." At one time, folks believed that these plants robbed the soil of its nutrients, and the name had to do with the predatory nature of the wolf. We now know that legumes fertilize the soil through the symbiotic bacteria in the root nodules, which "fix" atmospheric nitrogen into organic compounds that can then be used by other plants.

Six species of bluebonnets grow in Texas: *Lupinus corcinus*, *L. havardii*, *L. perennis*, *L. plattensis*, *L. subcarnosus*, and *L. texensis*. When the Texas Legislature designated *Lupinus subcarnosus* the official state flower in 1901, members did not know that other bluebonnet species existed in the state. Neither did they realize that another species, *L. texensis*, bloomed profusely in more areas than *L. subcarnosus*. The *texensis* species was also showier, so, in 1971, the Legislature extended the description of the state flower to include *all* bluebonnet species that bloom in Texas.



© STEVE GUYNES



[ABOVE] Bluebonnets proliferate in disturbed soil in Central Texas, such as that along these railroad tracks in Llano County.



[LEFT] Bluebonnets thrive with Indian paintbrush and pepperweed in a Llano County field. The state flower not only looks lovely, it helps other plants by returning nitrogen to the soil.

© DON ALLEN

[ABOVE AND LEFT] Big Bend bluebonnets are one of six species of the state flower that grow in Texas. Taller than its cousins in other parts of the state, *Lupinus havardii* also blooms earlier, frequently appearing in February.



Native plants, CHOSEN WISELY, PROVIDE BOTH FOOD AND SHEL-
TER FOR WILDLIFE AND FORM THE NUCLEUS OF A HOME WILDSCAPE. SMALL
PONDS OR BIRDBATHS PROVIDE THE THIRD ESSENTIAL ELEMENT—WATER.

TEXAS' roadsides, fields, and forests are now ablaze with wildflowers, creating a stunning spring spectacle. Not only does this floral pageant appeal to human senses, it provides a special banquet for countless forms of wildlife, including some of our most colorful winged creatures—birds and butterflies. Migrating warblers, buntings, tanagers, orioles, and other birds nibble at the flowers and seeds or glean insects from the foliage. Hummingbirds hovering on rapidly beating wings sip nectar from blossoms. Iridescent butterflies patrol the fields in lilting flight.

Although such scenes still abound within the state's borders, Texas faces a continuing loss of wildlife habitat as urban sprawl and changes in land-use alter the environment, especially around larger cities and towns. More than three-fifths of all Texans live in and around six major cities—Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, and El Paso. As these metropolitan areas expand, open space shrinks. And although many businesses and residents take pride in landscaping their properties, all too often they limit their efforts to manicured St. Augustine lawns, boxwood hedges, and pristine beds of pansies or begonias. These alien plants offer little to wildlife compared with prairies filled with bluestem grasses or fields of asters, gaillardias, milkweeds, thistles, and other wildflowers. To many



people, such attractive native plants are “weeds,” but to the hungry bird or discerning butterfly, they represent life itself.

Urban sprawl and related environmental problems have no easy solutions. However, if you have a yard—even a small one—you can provide wildlife habitat by creating a “wildscape.” (Many folks establish theirs in the backyard because it's usually

At left, guayacán, a shrub or small tree native to South Texas, sports lovely purple flowers in early spring and summer that attract butterflies like this Dusky-blue Groundstreak. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird (above) perches in a mulberry tree. Although it can't eat the berries, it supplements its nectar diet with tiny insects that are attracted to the fruit and flowers.

Wildscaping

FOR BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES



Checkered Whites visit a variety of flowers for their nectar. This one takes advantage of an Indian blanket in Llano County.

more secluded, but a front yard has possibilities, too.) A 1994 Texas Parks & Wildlife Department initiative, called the Texas Wildscape program, offers enormous environmental, esthetic, educational, and economic benefits to humans while providing niches for wildlife. Happily, the concept (modeled after the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program) isn't complicated and calls for only a few simple elements.

BASICS OF WILDSCAPING

Most creatures have three basic requirements: water, food, and shelter from weather and predators. Native plants, chosen wisely, provide both food and shelter and form the nucleus of a home wildscape. Adapted for local soils and climates, natives require less care than most exotic species, especially in times of drought and temperature extremes.

Because of Texas' enormous size and the huge variation in ecological regions, the plants appropriate for wildscapes vary widely according to location. Species suited to the Piney Woods or Gulf Coast prairies

will not flourish in the arid Trans-Pecos region, nor will some that thrive in the Rio Grande Valley survive the winter months in the Panhandle or on the High Plains. When deciding on plants for your wildscape, consult the resources at the end of the article (several provide information for all portions of the state), as well as Howard Garrett's list of flowering natives on pages 16-17. Local nature centers, nurseries, and native-plant societies can also offer expert guidance.

An important principle of wildscaping involves creating layers in your wildlife environment, starting first with trees and shrubs. Deciduous species normally produce



Although the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail dines diversely, its caterpillars prefer the leaves of ash and cherry trees.

BEYOND *Plants*

Small ponds or birdbaths provide the third element essential for wildlife—water. A recirculating pump that produces a trickle of water over a rock ledge, or even a constant drip from a hose or tube, will greatly increase your garden's attractiveness to birds and other wildlife. While birds gather to drink and bathe at a shallow pool, butterflies will sip at the muddy edges, imbibing essential minerals and nutrients to supplement their nectar diet.

Bird feeders, including those for hummingbirds, complement an array of fruit-bearing trees and flowers, drawing even more avian visitors to your yard.

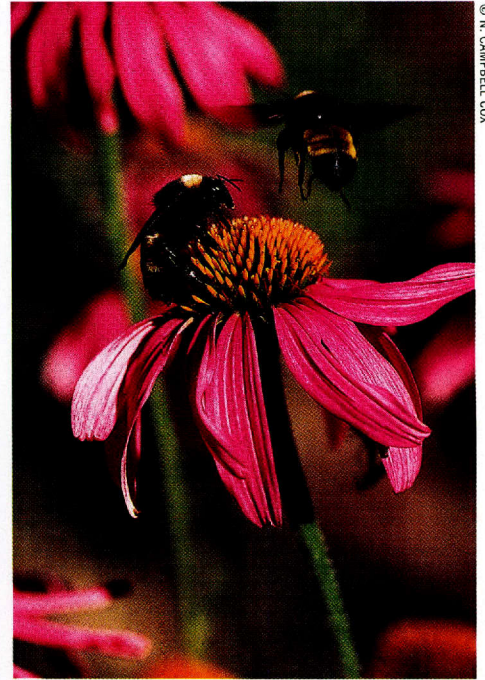
And finally, a note on what *not* to add. Wildlife gardeners should reduce—or eliminate entirely—their use of insecticides or other pesticides. After all, butterflies are insects, and once these products enter the food chain, they harm birds and other wildlife, too.

—John and Gloria Tveten

To many people, ATTRACTIVE NATIVE PLANTS LIKE ASTERS, CONEFLOWERS, GAILLARDIAS, MILKWEEDS, AND THISTLES ARE "WEEDS," BUT TO THE HUNGRY BIRD OR DISCERNING BUTTERFLY, THEY REPRESENT LIFE ITSELF.



A Tropical Checkered-Skipper feeds at a mistflower in the authors' yard in Baytown. Various species of this plant's genus, *Eupatorium*, grow in Texas, and most are excellent plants for a butterfly garden.



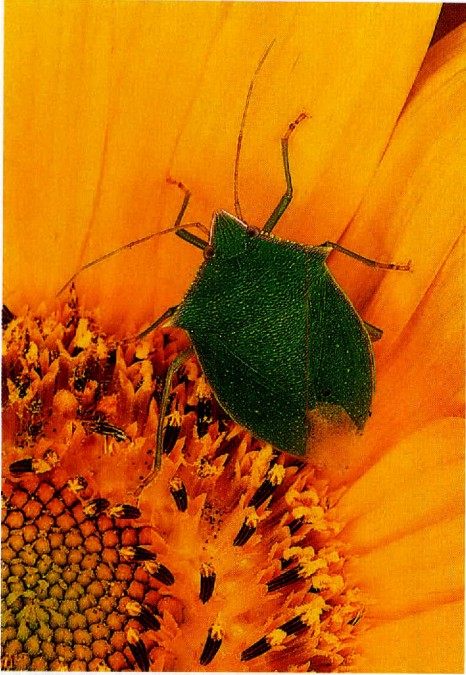
© N. CAMPBELL COX

Purple coneflowers attract butterflies as well as bees, and make an attractive addition to a home wildscape.

the most bird food in the form of fruits, nuts, and seeds; evergreens afford year-round shelter from the elements. Red mulberry, Mexican plum, yaupon, deciduous holly, elderberry, and the various dogwoods, sumacs, and junipers comprise just a few of the middle-story plants that you can include beneath larger oaks, elms, or pines. Flowering vines and smaller shrubs add their own distinctive elements to the mix. An understory of wildflowers will lure both birds and butterflies, with each wildflower attracting and providing for particular species.

PLANTING FOR BUTTERFLIES

*N*ative plants should form the basis of any butterfly garden, because the insects have adapted to these species. To attract the maximum number of butterflies, you should provide both food plants for the larvae and nectar plants for the winged adults. Most caterpillars feed on only a few hosts, normally those within a single plant genus or family. Adult butterflies, on the other hand, visit a wide range of blossoms, although they may have distinct preferences for certain flower shapes, colors, or nectar content. The key to attracting butterflies is to have some plants



Native plants draw fascinating creatures, like this green stink bug, to your garden.

in bloom throughout the growing season, to provide a continuous supply of nectar.

A Black Swallowtail, for example, may dine at coneflowers, mistflowers, lantana, button-bush, phlox, verbena, or other favorites in season. The female lays her eggs, however, only on plants in the parsley family. Planting a few parsley, dill, or fennel plants will assure an abundance of new caterpillars, which will result eventually in more Black Swallowtail butterflies.

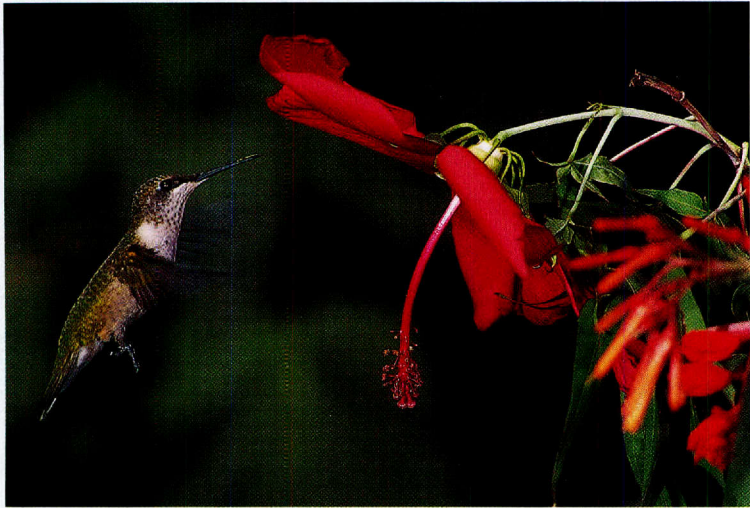
Similarly, Pipevine Swallowtail larvae consume only pipevines, also called Dutchman's-pipes, while the larvae of Palamedes Swallowtails prefer red bay. Gardeners in East Texas can raise black-and-white Zebra Swallowtails on pawpaw; gardeners in West Texas, huge Two-tailed Swallowtails on ash. Lemon-yellow Cloudless Sulphurs prefer to lay their eggs on species of senna; the Gulf Fritillary and the lovely, long-winged Zebra and Julia Heliconians select only passion-flowers. In the authors' Baytown yard, rusty-seed paspalum grass that springs up on its own hosts larvae of Clouded Skippers, butterflies that swirl around the flower beds throughout the year. Volunteer sidas (members of the mallow family) feed caterpillars of Common and Tropical Checkered-Skippers.

Wildlife gardeners SHOULD REDUCE—OR ELIMINATE ENTIRELY—THEIR USE OF INSECTICIDES OR OTHER PESTICIDES. AFTER ALL, BUTTERFLIES ARE INSECTS, AND ONCE THESE PRODUCTS ENTER THE FOOD CHAIN, THEY HARM BIRDS AND OTHER WILDLIFE, TOO.



A Golden-fronted Woodpecker feasts on possumhaw berries, which appear in the fall and last through the winter. The wise wildlife gardener keeps all four seasons in mind.

© BILL DRAKER/KAC PRODUCTIONS



A vibrant, nectar-filled hibiscus bloom draws the attention of a juvenile Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Given adequate space, even tall golden-rods, sunflowers, and thistles deserve a place in your butterfly garden, perhaps as a backdrop along a fence or against a building. They, too, will attract a multitude of butterflies during their blooming seasons. Grasses that grow in clumps, like the various bluestems, can also be used to good advantage, serving as accent pieces in the garden while providing food for the larvae of various skipper and satyr butterflies.

Certain alien plants can also contribute to the mix (avoid those that tend to become pesky weeds or escape cultivation). The tropical Mexican milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) now widely planted by butterfly gardeners proves one of the best hosts for the ever-popular Monarch and Queen butterflies. Horticultural varieties of the common butterfly bush (*Buddleia* spp.) also serve as valuable nectar plants, as do such standard garden flowers as zinnias and marigolds.

PLANTING FOR BIRDS

Many of these same flowers attract birds as well. Orioles, warblers, and buntings probe or tear apart blossoms to sip the sweet nectar inside, while tiny hummingbirds rely on them to fuel their high-speed lifestyles. The latter prefer tubular flowers in shades of red but will visit a wide variety of other forms. Hummingbird gardeners in East Texas rely on such standards as trumpet-creeper, turk's-cap, red salvia, coral bean, red buckeye,

lantana, coral honeysuckle, and beebalm, while those in West Texas will be equally successful with desert plants like ocotillo, red-flowered yucca, desert willow, yellow trumpets, and autumn or mountain sage. No matter where you live in Texas, you can provide a

haven for several hummingbird species.

Once the blooming season ends, those same flowers provide seeds for other birds, including doves, finches, and the charming native sparrows, many of which spend only the winter months in Texas. Asters,

coneflowers, sunflowers, goldenrod, mullein, thistles, and grasses all produce seeds attractive to birds. Thus, your bird and butterfly garden can offer delights throughout the year.

Although birds and butterflies will probably prove the most welcome guests to your backyard sanctuary, dragonflies and other fascinating insects, along with spiders, toads and frogs, lizards, and small mammals, may also learn to call it home. Together they form a balanced ecosystem—your own private wildscape—that will provide countless hours of enjoyment and education for you, your family, and friends. ★

Houston photojournalists JOHN and GLORIA TVETEN have written several books on Texas natural history, including *The Birds of Texas*, *Butterflies of Houston and Southeast Texas*, and *Wildflowers of Houston and Southeast Texas*.

ESSENTIALS Planting for Wildlife

A PRIMER for wildlife gardeners is *Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife* by Noreen Damude and Kelly Bender (Texas Parks & Wildlife Press, 1999). The user-friendly, 387-page handbook includes plant and animal lists for each portion of the state and ideas for creating backyard habitats, as well as numerous color illustrations.

Look also for the following books in your local library or bookstore: *Attracting Birds to Southern Gardens* by Thomas Pope, Neil Odenwald, and Charles Fryling Jr. (Taylor Publishing, 1993); *Butterfly Gardening for the South* by Geyata Ajilvsgi (Taylor Publishing, 1990); *Perennial Gardens for Texas* by Julie Ryan (Univ. of Texas Press, 1998); and *How to Grow Native Plants of Texas and the Southwest* by Jill Nokes (Univ. of Texas Press, 2001); as well as three volumes by Sally and Andy Wasowski: *Native Texas Plants: Landscaping Region by Region* and *Native Texas Gardens* (Texas Monthly Press, 1989 and 1997, respectively), and *Gardening with Native Plants of the South* (Taylor Publishing, 1994). *Wildflowers of Texas* by Geyata Ajilvsgi (Shearer Publishing, 1989) offers an excellent resource for identifying wildflowers across the state.

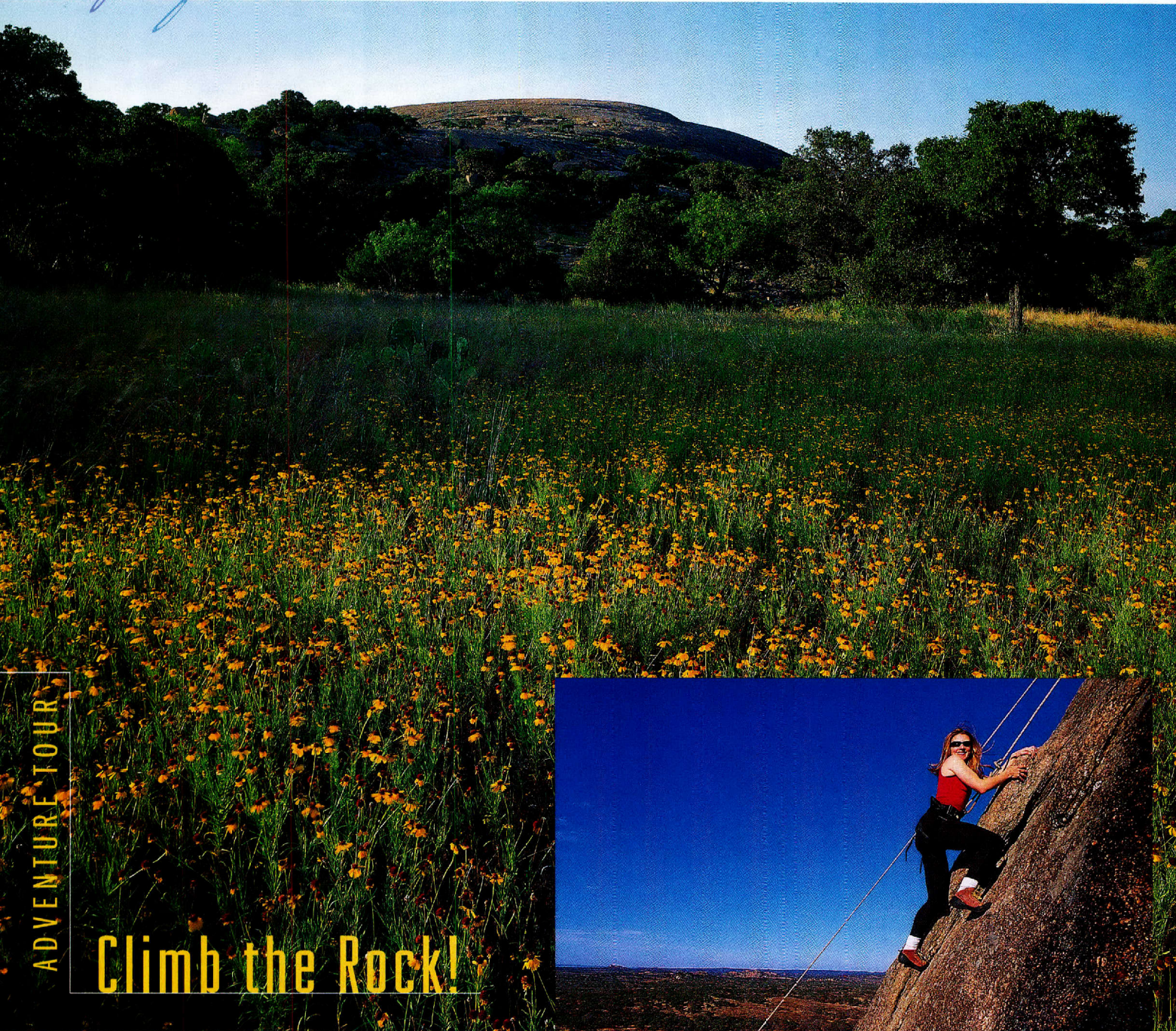
To learn more about the **Texas Wildscapes program** and how to obtain **official certification**

for your wildscape, write to Texas Wildscapes, Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept., 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin 78744; 512/389-4644; www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/wildscapes.

The **National Wildlife Federation** also offers information on creating a backyard wildlife habitat (certification available; requirements less restrictive in regard to native Texas plants, as compared to TPWD's program). National newsletter available quarterly upon certification. To find out about workshops in Texas, write to the Gulf States Natural Resource Center, National Wildlife Federation, 44 East Ave., Ste. 200, Austin 78701; 512/476-9805; www.nwf.org.

The **Native Plant Society of Texas** has chapters throughout the state, each of which conducts regular meetings and field trips and can provide information on local flora. For information on a group near you, write to the Native Plant Society of Texas, Box 891, Georgetown 78627; www.npsot.org.

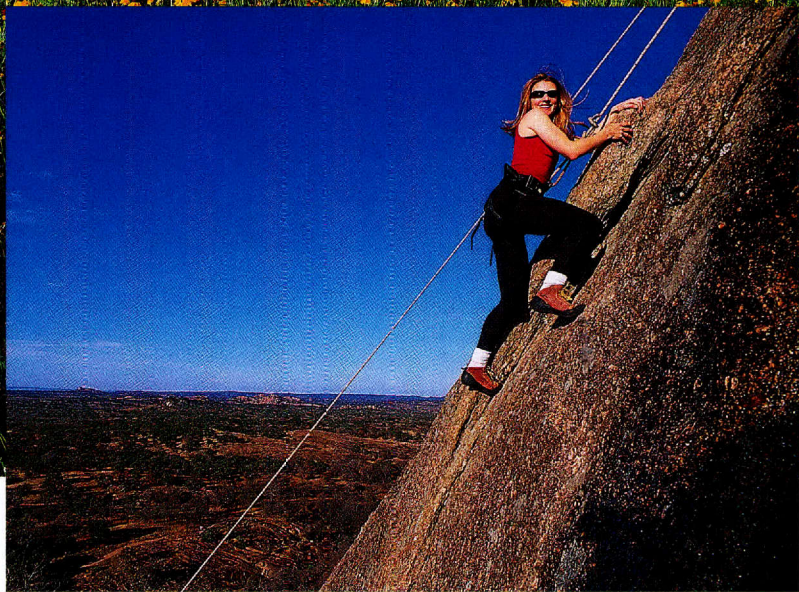
Displays, demonstration gardens, and reference materials on native plants abound at the **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** (see page 20). Write to 4801 LaCrosse Ave., Austin 78739-1702; 512/292-4200; www.wildflower.org.



ADVENTURE TOUR

Climb the Rock!

BY PATRICIA CAPERTON PARENT
PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURENCE PARENT



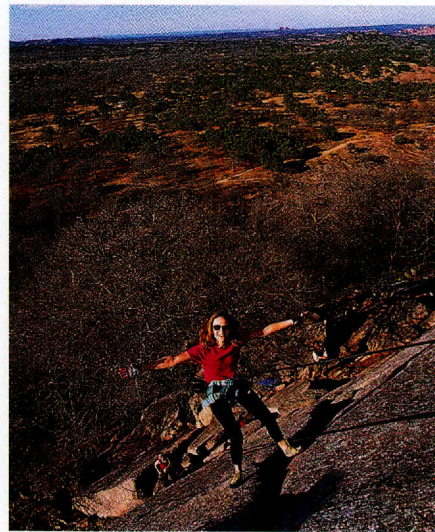
High above me, my friend Keri North is etched against the deep blue sky as she slowly inches her way up the northwest face of Enchanted Rock. She is rock-climbing for the very first time. It is also my first time to belay a climber, which means I must provide a safety line to catch her if she falls. I work hard to keep Keri's belay rope taut, keeping both of my hands on the rope and never letting my eyes leave her as she climbs. Finally, after negotiating an especially steep section of cliff, she reaches the top, yelling out the command our Mountain Madness instructor, Chris Keistler, has taught us: "At the top!" Keri takes a moment to survey the Hill Country vistas, spreading to the horizon in a 360-degree sweep. "Wow, it's awesome up here," she calls.

Surrounded by flowery fields in the springtime, Enchanted Rock is Texas' largest rock mountain. Above, Keri North scales a stretch of this Hill Country wonder.

Soon Keri is ready to come down. She leans out backwards, perpendicular to the rock, “walking” down the rockface as I control her descent on belay. As she lands smoothly next to me, she smiles broadly. “That scary part, I had to actually stop and take deep breaths just to quit shaking,” she says, “but I can’t wait to go up again.”

Now it’s my turn to climb for the first time, and my nerves jangle like taut wires within me. Can I do it? Will the harness really hold me if I fall? Summoning all my courage, I start up the rock. Despite the sheer cliff face, the granite contains small crystals that protrude from the rock, providing hand- and footholds for determined climbers. I place my fingertips over these tiny protrusions and try to do the same with my feet. “Smear, baby, smear!” calls Chris. My tight, elfin-like climbing shoes have special rubber soles designed to grip the rock. Chris was exhorting me to use my legs to climb, because they are much stronger than my arms. (To “smear” is to put as much of your foot on the rock as possible for more support and a better grip.)

I move upward, jamming my fingers into a crack and pushing upward with my feet. My instincts tell me to hug the rock, but I follow Chris’ instructions and work to hold myself out from it, which allows my feet to grip better. To my surprise, I move right up the cliff, even as I search intently for hand- and footholds. At that moment, nothing else matters, all my worldly problems have evaporated. When I get to a two-inch ledge, it feels like a four-lane highway. I stop to take in the incredible Hill Country view, and then I let out a war whoop, elated that I’ve scaled what seemed an impossible cliff.



Author Patricia Parent (above) basks in the satisfaction of her summit victory. According to Mountain Madness instructor Chris Keistler, Enchanted Rock offers more than 400 climbs.

**When I get to a two-inch ledge, it feels like a four-lane highway.
I stop to take in the incredible Hill Country view, and then I let out
a war whoop, elated that I’ve scaled what seemed an impossible cliff.**

Then I make the mistake of looking straight down. Keri stands almost directly below me, a tiny stick figure. Panic strikes as I realize how high I am. My breath comes in short bursts, and I begin to shake. Fighting to regain control, I decide to come down rather than finish the few feet left in the climb. “Dirt me, baby!” I yell to Keri, and she replies, “Lowering.”

Descending is easier than climbing, but it requires complete trust in your partner. I lean backward until my body is almost perpendicular to the rock, letting the rope hold me. I begin to “walk” downward toward terra firma as Keri lowers me. This climb has been nicknamed “No Sweat,” but for me, it is anything but.

Once I’m on solid ground, I temporarily forget my fears, and we move to a different section of rock, to a climb called “Baba Wawa.” Climbers rate climbs primarily according to difficulty and risk and then give them silly names. Baba Wawa turns out to be more difficult than No Sweat, but Keri and I manage to conquer a little more fear the second time out.

Our third climb, “Prok,” proves even harder. Because sunset is approaching, only Keri has time to attempt it. On this route, hand- and footholds are all but invisible, especially at the beginning. Chris and I encourage Keri as she creeps upward. When she reaches the top, Chris shouts, “You go, girl!” and flashes her a thumbs-up.

Later, we pack our gear and hike to the parking lot as dusk falls. I ask Chris what he finds special about teaching climbing at Enchanted Rock. “I’ve climbed all over the place, but I just love Enchanted Rock,” he says of this prodigious granite dome, which sits on the Gillespie and Llano county lines. “There are more than 400 climbs here. I really enjoy sharing climbing with others. It’s great to see people overcome their fear. When they do it, their faces just light up,” he says.

Keri and I certainly have overcome our fear today—several times, in fact. At the end of this spectacular day, both of us are ready to climb again, primed for adrenaline rushes, magnificent views, and a fantastic feeling of accomplishment. ★

ESSENTIALS

Climbing Enchanted Rock

**ENCHANTED ROCK
STATE NATURAL
AREA** lies 100
miles west of Austin.

*Climbing is safe with proper
instruction and equipment; don't
attempt it otherwise. If you've never
climbed before, take a class from an ex-
perienced guide service such as Mountain
Madness Climbing School; call 512/329-
0309; www.MtMadness.com.*

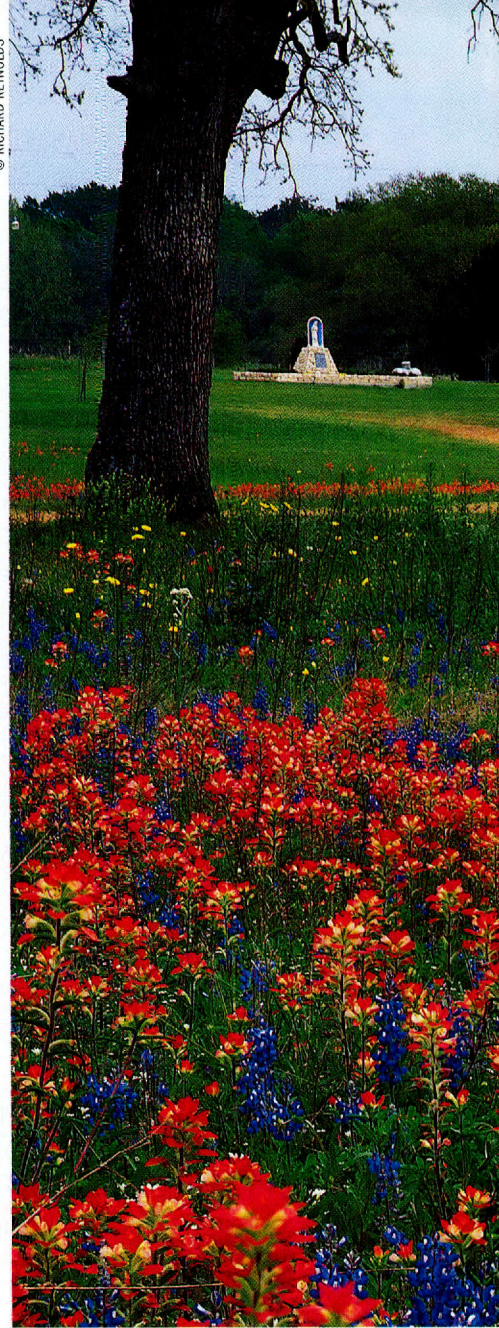


Keep an eye out for PATRICIA and LAURENCE PARENT’s upcoming Adventure Tours on mountain-biking and sea-kayaking.



COURTESY BURNET CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

© RICHARD REYNOLDS



BY ROSEMARY WILLIAMS

IN TEXAS, April brings showers—showers of wildflowers, that is. Bluebonnets cascade down hillsides. Indian paintbrushes rain red on sea-green fields. And roadsides brim with blossoms of yellow-hued daisies, sprinkled with the white of prickly poppies. Throughout the spring, rainbow bouquets splash across roadsides, especially in Central Texas.

East to west, we Texans celebrate events that honor our treasured wildflowers, especially the distinctively lovely state flower, the bluebonnet. On these pages, we sample two of those floral fetes, the Official Bluebonnet Festival of Texas in Washington County's Chappell Hill, and the 19th Annual Bluebonnet Festival in Burnet.

OFFICIAL BLUEBONNET FESTIVAL OF TEXAS, Chappell Hill

Washington County harbors many a roadside awash in spring wildflowers, as well as a host of wonderful sites for visitors. Here, you can enjoy the pleasures and pastimes of Brenham, the historic ambiance of Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park, and the aromatic scents

and sights of The Antique Rose Emporium at Independence (see last month's story). Here, too, lies the engaging community of Chappell Hill, host of an annual bluebonnet festival (April 13-14, 2002) that draws almost 40,000 visitors each year. The event was designated the state's Official Bluebonnet Festival by the Texas Legislature in 1997.

[TOP LEFT] April Ellis (left), Junior Miss Bluebonnet, and Abbey Riley (right), Miss Burnet Bluebonnet, reign over the parade at last year's Bluebonnet Festival in Burnet.

[ABOVE] Bluebonnets and Indian paintbrushes make a patriotic splash in Washington County, home of Chappell Hill's Official Bluebonnet Festival of Texas.

Bloom IN' FUN
BLUEBONNET FESTIVALS



Downtown Chappell Hill rests serene and snug along FM 1155, just north of US 290. Each spring, during the popular bluebonnet event, area roads teem with traffic, and the town's main streets blossom with white and blue awnings sheltering more than 200 artists, artisans, and craftspeople displaying and selling their handiwork.

Numerous food vendors, musicians, and other entertainers join the exciting mix, enticing thousands of festival-goers to browse, buy, munch, meander, sing along, and tap their toes. And certainly the youngsters aren't forgotten, with a petting zoo and pony rides. But the focus of the Chappell Hill festival remains arts and crafts—and excellent ones at that. Art-



Shown here at the Burnet airshow, staged by the Highland Lakes Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force, *Devil Dog* is a Navy/Marine version of the famous B-25 Mitchell bomber, which operated in every theater of World War II.



Inks Lake ablaze. At sunset, a fiery sky mirrors the flowery fields that await visitors to Burnet's Bluebonnet Festival.

© JOE LOWERY

We Texans LOVE TO CELEBRATE EVENTS
THAT HONOR OUR TREASURED WILDFLOWERS,
ESPECIALLY THE DISTINCTIVELY LOVELY STATE FLOWER,
THE BLUEBONNET.

works (many with wildflower, Western, and Texas themes), handmade pottery, handcrafted furnishings, homemade foods, and dozens of unusual items provide many a shopping opportunity.

At their booth near the fire station, Houstonians Karen Baldwin and Gary Scoggins of B&S Conglomerations sell handsomely matted and framed "postal art," including first-day issues of stamps, such as the 1986 Texas Sesquicentennial commemorative stamp that features the Alamo and a Longhorn steer. Artist Joe Friddle's area showcases his vivid watercolors, with paintings of wildflowers and rural Texana among his most popular works. Joe, who hails from Killeen, has been coming here for eight years.

Down the way, Linda Crain specializes in women's clothing and accessories abloom with hand-painted wildflowers. "My lightweight, dark-denim shirts are

really popular," says Linda, whose artistry embellishes the front of each shirt with vibrant bluebonnets, Indian paintbrushes, and primroses. "I always add a small flower or two on the back of the garment as well. That's sort of my 'signature,'" she says.

If colorful tortilla warmers catch your eye, they're probably the handiwork of artist Marla Cook of Colorworks by Marla. She produces the distinctive tortilla-keepers from gourds, fashioning the lids of some in the shape of Texas and painting the bowls with large stars in a motif that resembles the state flag; other warmers have a chili pepper motif. Marla also makes such other intriguing items as sculptures embellished with leather and bone beads, hand-painted cloth napkins, and amusing birdhouses fashioned from gourds and decorated in bright lime green, orange, and purple.

Besides the many talented vendors at the festival, several shops in Chappell Hill provide their own browsing fun. The Bluebonnet House, which sits on Main Street, sells antiques, crafts, and collectibles. Here, you can find items such as bluebonnet-embroidered tea towels, tinkling wind-chimes, and handmade, bluebonnet-bedecked pottery.

Festival fare also includes homemade foods such as jams, jellies, salsas, and sauces. Among them, you can taste-test Pecan Pear Jam from Jammin' Jelly, Etc. Mmm, good. And, if you have a truly adventurous palate, try their Habanero Jelly. "The peppers add a nice little kick and make that jelly and our Jalapeño Jelly favorites with our customers," says company owner Jill Evans, who creates the luscious preserves. Jill enjoys another interesting distinction: She not only uses spoons to stir jams, but she also uses spoons to jam, playing them as musical percussion instruments. She sometimes accompanies bands that perform at the festival.

Check out, too, Antipasto Plus, a "Texas Made Italian Appetizer" sauce produced by retired Newgulf schoolteacher Annie Stafford and her husband, James, who retired from coaching athletics in the Boling and Sweeny school districts. According to the Staffords, their tomato-based sauce spices up rice as well as pasta and serves as a spread for crackers, a dip for chips, and a garnish for meats. "One of our customers claims he spoons it over his breakfast pork chops!" says Annie.

Speaking of edibles, you will not go hungry while you stroll the Bluebonnet Festival. From snacks such as old-time kettle corn (freshly popped, lightly sweetened popcorn), fried onion rings, and snow cones, to more robust fare like hamburgers, chicken-on-a-stick, barbecued beef, and sausage (such as that sold at "The Best of the Wurst—and Kraut"), you can eat daintily or chow down. Funnel cakes and other goodies satisfy the sweet tooth.

Take time to explore Chappell Hill's interesting historic buildings, including the Chappell Hill Historical Museum and the

1869 Rock Store, where two six-by-30-foot folk-art wall hangings take center stage. For a quiet respite, step into the historic Providence Baptist Church (erected on this site in 1873), and admire its reed-pipe organ. If fortune smiles on you, the dulcet tones of the Star of Texas Dulcimers ensemble or music provided by the Dallas Baptist University Chamber Singers will serenade you as you linger in this impressively restored church.

Music rings out elsewhere as well, such as on the porch of Texas

Homeplace Mortgage. Here, musicians, including the bluegrass band Pine Island Station, entertain you and enliven the festival with joyous strains plucked from banjo, guitar, and mandolin.

Lively music. Talented artists and artisans. Lots of shopping. Fun foods. What better way to spend a lovely spring day than at Chappell Hill's Official Bluebonnet Festival of Texas? Mark your calendar!

19TH ANNUAL BLUEBONNET FESTIVAL, Burnet

The sprawling, hospitable town of Burnet—named the “Bluebonnet Capital of Texas” by the 67th Texas Legislature—lies in the heart of the scenic Hill Country, a veritable canvas for Nature’s wildflower artistry.

On your way to Burnet’s Bluebonnet Festival, allow yourself plenty of time for a drive along the highways radiating through the area and around the Highland Lakes. Many of the roads, such as FMs 1431 and 2241, Park Road 4 (at Inks Lake State Park), and Texas 261, border roadsides and fields that blaze with springtime blooms.

If seasonal rains and temperatures have been favorable, wildflower displays can be spectacular. Last year, the scenery along Texas 29 between Llano and Burnet proved particularly beautiful, bursting with

© MARK MATSON



Chappell Hill's Bluebonnet House sells antiques, collectibles, and crafts such as bluebonnet-embellished tea towels and pottery. Everything's better with bluebonnets on it....

stands of bluebonnets and Indian paintbrushes that spread their velvety blue and red across fields and among granite outcroppings. The folks in Burnet treasure the bluebonnet so much that for years they've dedicated an April weekend (April 13-14, 2002) to celebrating the state flower with special festivities. Activities at Burnet's Bluebonnet Festival center around the Burnet County courthouse square and spill over into Hamilton Creek Park, the train depot, and even Burnet Municipal Airport. The numerous events, before and during the festival, include a golf tournament, pet parade, 5-K run, bicycle tour, car show, an airshow, carnival rides, live music, and an outdoor adventure area for kids, not to mention a dance, some rip-roarin' gunfighters' shootouts, and an entertaining parade.

During festival weekend, arts and crafts booths rim the historic square, offering temptations such as original artworks by notable artists. Here, too, you will find hand-painted clothing, interesting crafts (how about a bluebonnet-embellished mailbox?), homemade foods, and souvenir T-shirts. Sausage dogs, barbecue, hamburgers, and funnel cakes number among the festive foods that will quell your hunger pangs.

On Saturday morning, visit the town's Hamilton Creek Park, where you will see 90 to 100 automo-

tive beauties at the Bluebonnet Festival Car Show. Street-rods, antique cars, and classics such as T-Birds, Mustangs, vintage Chevys, and even a 1917 Ford Model T light military truck like those used in World War I gleam in the sunlight. Sometimes vintage motorcycles, likewise restored to shiny splendor, roar into the park, but the emphasis remains on cars. Just look at that meticulously detailed, dark blue 1939 Mercury coupe and that lustrous silver 1939 Chevy two-door! Gorgeous machines, aren't they?

Car-show organizer Pete Bundrant and his wife, Paula, of Burnet own the beautiful, bright yellow 1955 Chevrolet Nomad station wagon you see here. Pete says that this year, car owners hope to participate in a Sunday “cruise” of area roads, so they can enjoy a look at the gorgeous wildflowers. Watch for the cruisers and their distinctive vehicles along the highways.

Before you leave Hamilton Creek Park, walk across the creek from the auto exhibit and meander through the art show that

MORE *Wildflower* FESTS

Several other spring celebrations and events commemorate Texas wildflowers. Among them are:

SAN MARCOS, Apr. 6-7. The **Bluebonnet Kite Festival**, sponsored by the Bluebonnet Lion's Club, features kite contests, a 5-K run, arts, crafts, foods, entertainment, and children's activities. Call 888/200-5620; www.sanmarcostexas.com/tourism.

KENEDY, Apr. 19-21. **Bluebonnet Days** offers the Miss Bluebonnet Pageant, a parade, carnival, cookoff, arts, crafts, foods, carriage and pony rides, a mechanical bull, and a baseball tournament. Call 830/583-3223.

ENNIS, Apr. 19-21. The popular **Bluebonnet Trails Festival** offers bluebonnet-trails maps (some 40 miles of trails), heritage home tours, arts, crafts, foods, an art show, and children's activities. Call 972/878-4748; www.visitennis.org.

FREDERICKSBURG/HILL COUNTRY, Apr. 20-21. Follow the **Wine & Wildflower Trail** through the Hill Country to some 15 wineries. Events include wine seminars, wine pairings, wine tastings, music, art exhibits, and even a hayride. Call 830/868-2321; www.texaswinetrail.com.

SALADO, Apr. 20-21. A **Wildflower Art Show** in picturesque Salado invites you to view a juried show of handmade items, accompanied by live music. Call 254/947-5040; www.salado.com.

—Rosemary Williams

displays the works of area youngsters. Watercolors, drawings, and crafts signify their artistic talent.

Be sure to arrive downtown (a couple of blocks east of the park) in time to watch the official Bluebonnet Festival Parade, which starts about 12:30 on Saturday. The parade begins shortly after the arrival of the *Hill Country Flyer*, the excursion train from Cedar Park, near Austin.

Very much a patriotic community production, the parade introduces you to many local officials and luminaries. Participants march, ride, or drive by on festive floats and in convertibles, pickup beds, an antique fire-truck, classic cars, a mini-train, and even humongous 18-wheeler cabs, whose booming airhorns reverberate across the square. Kids pedal bikes, trikes, and miniature tractors; last year, one child pulled a small trailer carrying a bemused-looking pet rabbit. Peppy marching music stirs the blood. Played by the 120-member Burnet High School Band and the 140 musicians of the Burnet Middle School Band, selections include the theme from the movie *Giant*.

The parade also features military band members from Fort Hood, whose cadence leads the way for their colleagues of the First Team, 1st Cavalry Division Horse Detachment. Dressed in 19th-Century period uniforms and mounted on horses, the cavalry brigade and its mule-drawn wagon clip-clop smartly around the square.

After the parade, grab a snack or two, roam the arts and crafts booths, and then head over to the "Old West Town" façade set up on Vanderveer Street. Twice on Saturday afternoon and once on Sunday, you can watch local cowboys portray 19th-Century gunfighters as they end a spirited "feud" with a shoot-'em-up, take-no-prisoners gunfight.

For thrilling and entertaining air fare, you can't beat the show staged at the Burnet Municipal Airport by the Highland Lakes Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force (formerly the Confederate Air Force). The entry fee covers both the static displays and numerous in-air demonstrations. (If you plan to stay for more than an hour, take along lawn chairs for comfort.)

Some 40 to 50 World War II-era planes,

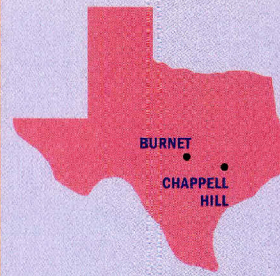
ESSENTIALS Flowery Fun

CHAPPELL HILL is on FM 1155 at US 290, between Austin and Houston. This year's **Official Bluebonnet Festival of Texas** occurs on Apr. 13, 10-6, and Apr. 14, noon-6; free. For more information, call the Chappell Hill Historical Society, 979/836-6033. Parking available (\$5 per car) on lots just north of US 290.

For a copy of the *Washington County Visitor's Guide*, which contains information about Chappell Hill, Brenham, Burton, Independence, and Washington, as well as a map outlining the county's "Bluebonnet Trails," call the Washington Co. Chamber of Commerce, 888/BRENHAM or 979/836-3695; www.brenhamtexas.com.

FOR ART and handicrafts information mentioned in the story, call the vendors directly:

- **Antipasto Plus**, Annie Stafford, Boling; 888/657-2397 or 979/657-2397.
- **B&S Conglomerations** "Postal Art," Karen Baldwin and Gary Scoggins, Houston; 281/448-8946.



- **Colorworks by Marla**, Marla Cook, Arlington; 817/457-8903.
- **Jammin' Jelly, Etc.**, Jill Evans, Brenham; 979/836-3990.
- **Joe Friddle, Art st**, Killeen; 254/554-8815; www.joefriddleart.com.
- **Linda Crain Handpainted Clothing and Accessories**, San Antonio; 210/661-6527.
- **The Bluebonnet House**, 5095 Main St. (FM 1155), Chappell Hill; 979/836-2554 or 713/932-8806.

BURNET is about 55 miles northwest of Austin. The **19th Annual Bluebonnet Festival** takes place Apr. 13-14, with some activities, such as a pageant and carnival, beginning Apr. 9; free. For details and times of festival activities and to learn about Burnet

sites, accommodations, and restaurants, call the Burnet Chamber of Commerce, 512/756-4297; www.burnetchamber.org.

The **Bluebonnet Festival Car Show** takes place on Apr. 13 at Hamilton Creek Park, between West St. and Buchanan Dr. (TX 29), and on Apr. 14 at the train depot on E. Jackson St., or cruising area roads; free. Call Pete and Paula Bundrant, 512/756-2760.

The **CAF Air Show** takes place Apr. 13 at the Burnet Municipal Airport, on US 281 about 1 mile south of town. A static display of planes and military vehicles opens at 9 a.m. on Sat.; the airshow begins at noon. Food and drink booths. Admission: \$8, \$4 ages 12-18, free age 11 and younger. Call 512/756-2226; <http://members.thegateway.net/caf>.

For information about the **Hill Country Flyer** excursion train between Cedar Park (just northwest of Austin) and Burnet, call 512/477-8468; www.austinsteamtrain.org.

including a B-25 Mitchell, F4F Wildcat, P-40 Warhawk, and B-17 Flying Fortress, line the airfield and provide a nostalgic glimpse into the nation's intriguing air-force past. Vintage planes take off and land at regular intervals, and stunt pilots fly their crafts in awesome maneuvers of loops, rolls, stalls, and spins guaranteed to make you gasp.

The show includes a short reenactment of the *Tora! Tora! Tora!* Japanese bombing run on Pearl Harbor, complete with fiery booms and pyrotechnics. The stunning display always elicits "wows" from spectators. An aerial dogfight follows, punctuated by blazing guns and smoking aircraft. (Of course, the planes don't really go down in flames; special oil sprayed in the engines' exhausts provides the illusion.)

"This year, the airshow will emphasize

WWII fighter planes," says Howard Martin, the CAF Highland Lakes Squadron operations officer. "We hope to host a P-39 Aircobra, a Hawker Sea Fury, and two or more P-51 Mustangs, in addition to the usual complement of vintage war birds."

If you like historic aircraft, continuous action, and heartstopping aerial stunts, don't miss this show.

You can wrap up your festival day by dancing to country-western tunes on the courthouse square and by joining the crowd at an automotive "destruction derby." Then, tiptoe through the bluebonnets, and wend your way back home.

Texas wildflower celebrations can be bloomin' fun! ★

Austin writer ROSEMARY WILLIAMS wrote the story on the Presidential Corridor in the March issue.

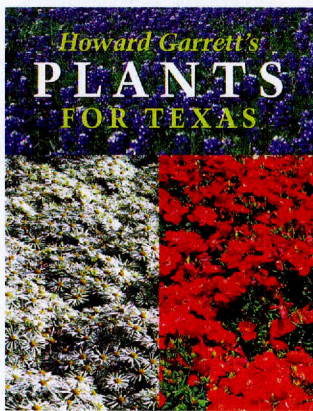
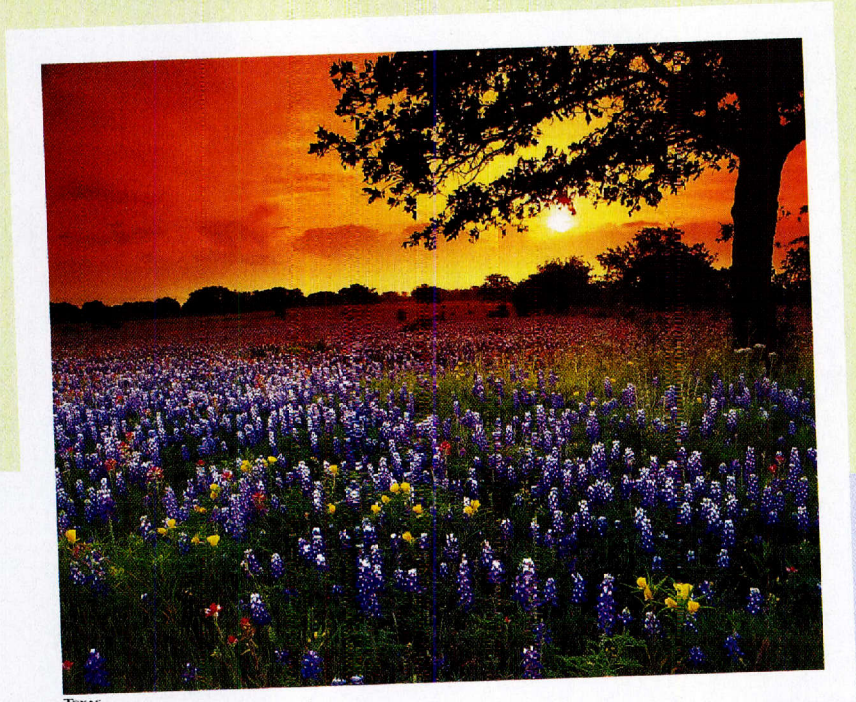
Wild for Texas Flowers?

Then you'll love Texas Highways' Spring Collection.

Wildflowers at Sunset

One of our best-selling posters ever. A live oak silhouetted against a glowing Texas sky is cooled by a tide of bluebonnets. Who can resist the image? This print adds twilight magic to any wall.

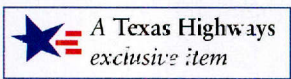
24" width x 20" height
#32148 \$11.95



Plants for Texas By Howard Garrett

If you enjoyed "Going Native with Howard Garrett" (see page 12) and are ready to learn more, you'll find this book is a great place to start. Here you'll find a virtual encyclopedia of more than 500 plants suitable for Texas' extreme growing conditions. Beautifully illustrated with full-color photographs and details about each plant's needs for optimum results, this book may even turn some black thumbs green!

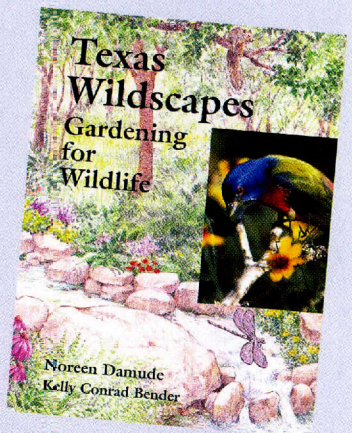
8 1/2" x 11", 182 pages, 505 full-color photos, paperback
#36103 \$19.95



Texas Blooming Wildflower Note Cards

Plant them. They grow! The flower seeds are in the paper.
Send a card to a friend, who can enjoy beautiful Texas wildflowers later in the garden. Wildflower seed varieties embedded in the cards include Texas bluebonnet, Indian blanket, Engelmann daisy, prairie coneflower, and more.

5 1/4" x 4"
6 cards, 6 envelopes
Blank inside
#35127 \$11.95



NEW!

Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife

By Noreen Damude and Kelly Conrad Bender

If this month's story on "Wildscaping for Birds and Butterflies" (see page 44) piqued your interest, here's a fantastic book that covers all the basics of gardening for wildlife. You'll find extensive information on native plants and animals. Plus, step-by-step instructions tell you how to build a pond, construct nest boxes for birds, and address special needs for deer-prone sites, shady landscapes, and wet zones. Order one, and let your backyard adventure begin.

387 pages, 160 color illustrations (photos & drawings), 25 b&w line drawings, 1 map, paperback
#36120 \$24.95

Call 1 800 839 4997 to order

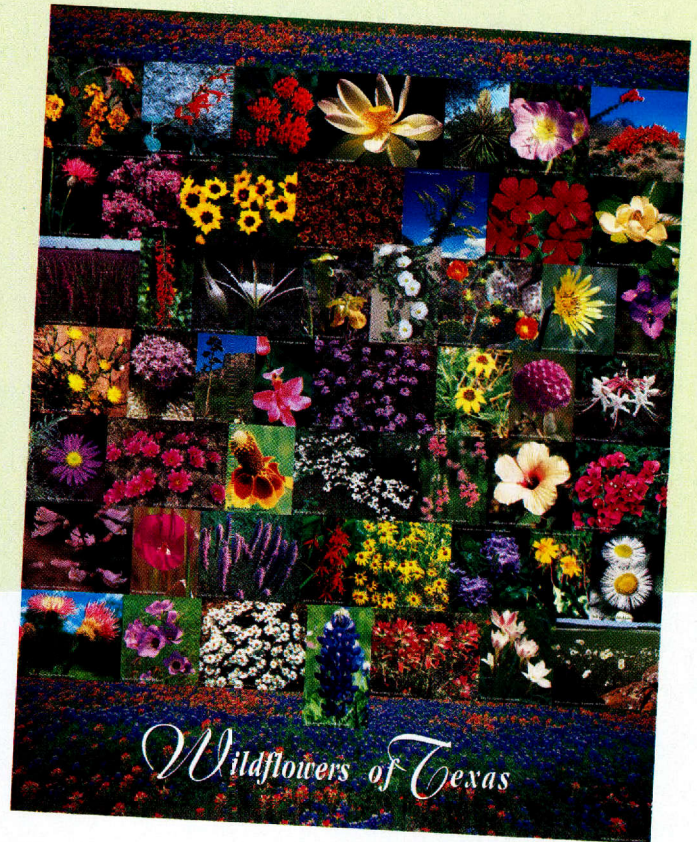
Shop Online @ www.texashighways.com

Texas Highways Spring Collection

Wildflowers of Texas Note Cards **NEW!**

These gorgeous note cards capture the natural beauty of Texas wildflowers. Four different images by Richard Reynolds showcase closeup and landscape portraits. The cards come in a pretty keepsake box with a handy magnetic, flip-top lid.

20 cards, 21 envelopes
5 each of 4 images
3½" x 5"
#35128
\$11.95



Wildflowers Over Texas T-shirt

This screen-printed T-shirt highlights a rainbow of favorite Texas wildflowers. Wear it and show you're wild for Texas blooms. Now available in XXL!

100% heavyweight cotton
Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL
#38102 \$17.95

Country Bluebonnet Apron

Cook 'em a chicken-fried steak, barbecued brisket, or pinto beans in an apron Texas-enough to do these Lone Star staples proud.

24" x 33"
50% cotton/50% polyester
Adjustable length
#38101 \$17.95



Wildflowers of Texas Puzzle **NEW!**

Available April 1, 2002

A collage of beautiful Texas wildflowers awaits discovery as you work to complete this 1,000-piece puzzle. Each flower is labeled with both its common and botanical name. The completed puzzle is not only suitable for framing, it's also a great reference tool.

1,000 pieces, 24" x 30" finished size
#37105 \$16.95


Texas Wildflower Tote Bag

Whether shopping or traveling, you'll find this wildflower tote bag is just the right size for your belongings. Made of 100% cotton, the screen-printed bag is durable as well as stylish.

Approximately
14½" x 14½"
#37104
\$16.95



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exclusive item

Send your order today!

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\$50.01 to \$80.00	\$10.50	\$200.01 and over	\$20.00
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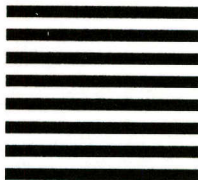
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Texas Highways Spring Collection



NEW!

Texas Bluebonnets and a Live Oak

For all of you who wrote to suggest that our 2001 Calendar cover would make a great print, we wholeheartedly agreed! Now, we offer that unforgettable image of a majestic live oak towering over a Hill Country field filled with Texas bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush. Enjoy!

24" width x 20" height
#32175 \$11.95



★ "Texas...Where Pickups Rule" T-shirt

Show 'em which vehicle reigns in Texans' hearts with this *Texas Highways* exclusive. In a state where more than 25% of registered vehicles are pickups, this T-shirt says it all.

Screen-printed
100% heavyweight cotton
Sizes: M, L, XL, XXL
#38103 \$17.95



Llano County Wildflowers ★

This may well be the quintessential bluebonnet print. A mixture of Indian paintbrush, bluebonnets, and yucca against a fiery Texas sky, photographed by Joe Lowery, makes a beautiful statement for your home or office.

24" width x 20" height
#32173 \$11.95

★ Under the Texas Sky— Songs from *Texas Highways* Magazine Music CD

Order the ONLY music CD developed especially for *Texas Highways*' readers.
#37101 \$12.98

Featuring:

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| <i>In the Real West</i> | Tish Hinojosa |
| <i>West Texas Sun</i> | Nanci Griffith |
| <i>El Llano Estacado</i> | Tom Russell |
| <i>Texas Blues</i> | Joe Carr and Alan Munde |
| <i>The Cowgirl's Song</i> | Laurie Lewis |
| <i>Blue Bonnet Lady</i> | Riders in the Sky |
| <i>Sage and Sand</i> | Wylie and The Wild West |
| <i>Texas Home</i> | Kimberly M'Carver |
| <i>Jingle, jangle, Jingle</i> | Wylie and The Wild West |
| <i>When the Bloom Is on the Sage</i> | Riders in the Sky |



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Texas Highways Products

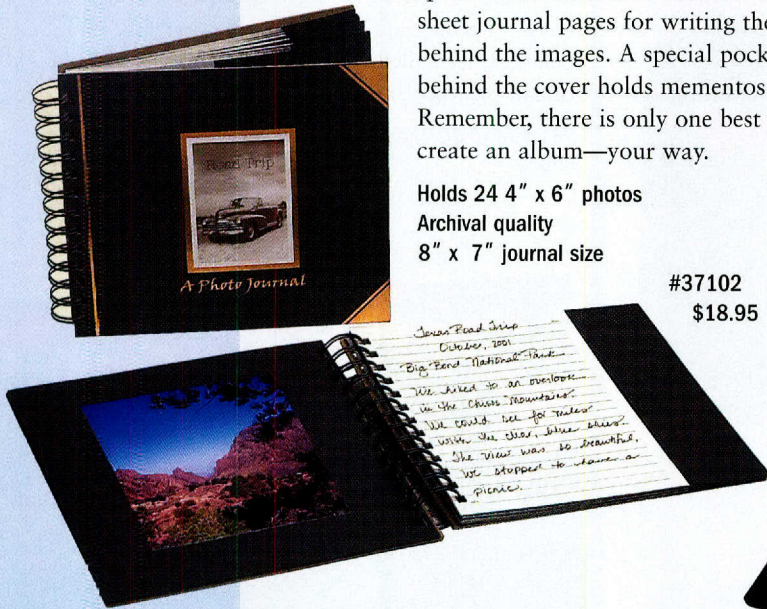
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Road Trip Photo Journal

Create a personal memory book you'll treasure for years to come. 12 archival-quality sheets of heavy black card stock for photos are interleaved with 22 lined half-sheet journal pages for writing the stories behind the images. A special pocket hidden behind the cover holds mementos. Remember, there is only one best way to create an album—your way.

Holds 24 4" x 6" photos
Archival quality
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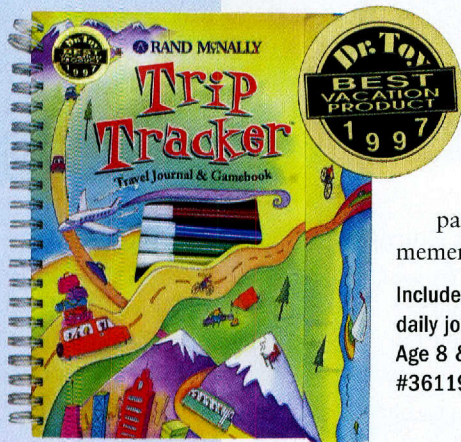
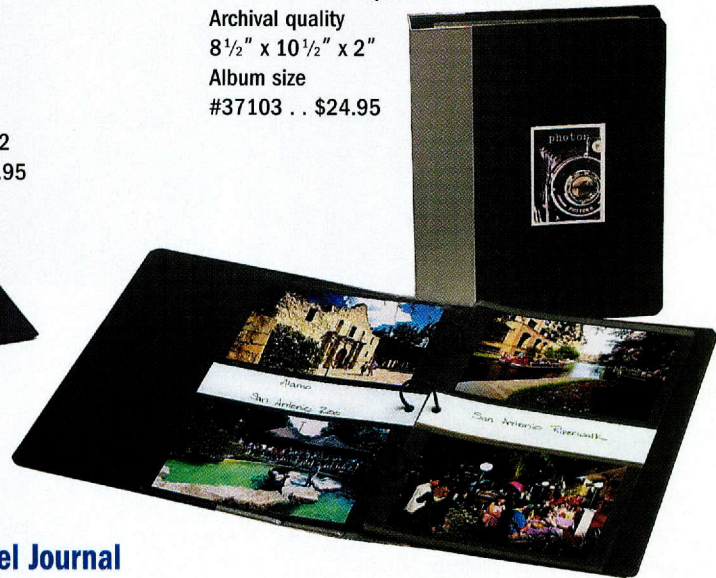
#37102
\$18.95



Keepsake Photo Album

Keep your treasured photos in this handsome album. Each archival-quality page includes a legend strip to record short captions to complement your images. Get out that shoebox of old photos, and transform them into your own unique visual journal.

Holds 72 4" x 6" photos
Archival quality
8½" x 10½" x 2"
Album size
#37103 . . \$24.95

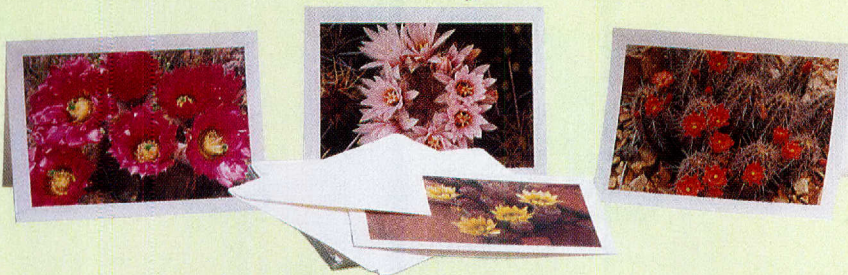


Trip Tracker Travel Journal & Gamebook

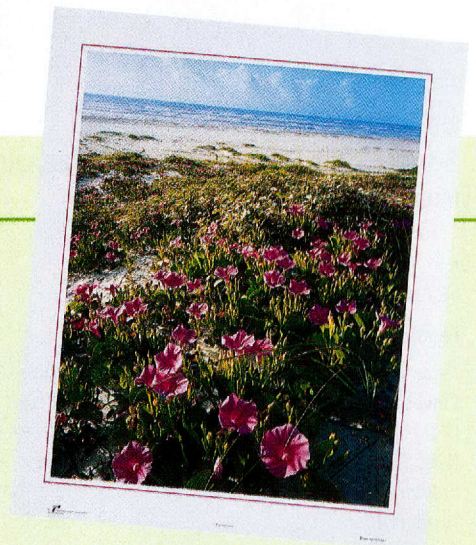
A must-have for a special child's next trip! The Rand McNally Trip Tracker includes activities to keep kids entertained for hours ... journal pages, a trip calendar, and a variety of games. It's sure to become a treasured memento of a wonderful adventure through the eyes of a child.

Includes: colored markers, make-your-own postcards, daily journal pages, games, stickers, and more.
Age 8 & older, 8½" x 11", 80 pages
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Sale—save up to 35%



Cactus in Bloom Note Cards 
12 cards, 12 envelopes
3 each of 4 images
#35114. ~~\$9.25~~ Now \$6.00



Beach with Pink Flowers
20" width x 24" height
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MAY 2002						
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

BIG BEND COUNTRY

1

EL PASO
Spanish Spelling Bee
915/780-1919

Spring Festival of Dance
505/874-2844

1-5

EL PASO
(began Apr 27)
Heritage Week Festival/
Cinco de Mayo
915/533-2656

3-5

MIDLAND
Cinco de Mayo
International
Soccer Tournament
915/682-2960

ODESSA
Fiesta West Texas & Expo
915/567-9999

4

PRESIDIO
Dutch Oven Cooking
at Big Bend Ranch
915/358-4444

5

EL PASO
Magoffin Home
Victorian Tea
915/533-5147

Middle Eastern Feast
915/562-8242
or 532-7845

MIDLAND
Lone Star Brass Concert
915/563-0921

6

ODESSA
Hurricane Party Mudbug IV
915/333-6451

11

EL PASO
El Paso Symphony Orchestra
Mother's Day Concert
915/532-3776
or 544-8444

Walk for the Arts
915/541-4481

11-12

ODESSA
Arts & Crafts Show
915/366-3541

12

DEL RIO
Air Amistad
830/298-5988

17-19

MIDLAND
Celebration of the Arts
915/687-1149

18

EL PASO
Ballet Folklórico
915/857-8928

18-19

EL PASO
Art in the Park
915/533-3311

ODESSA
Depression Era Glass Show
915/580-5800
or 337-1297

24-25, 31

ODESSA
*You're a Good Man,
Charlie Brown*
915/550-5456

25-27

ANTHONY
International Balloonfest
915/544-8864

30-AUG 24

EL PASO
Viva! El Paso
915/755-2000
or 544-8444

GULF COAST

1-4

BEAUMONT
(began Apr 27)
Neches River Festival
409/835-2443

CLEAR LAKE AREA
West Marine Trawler Fest
888/968-3378

1, 4, 7, 10, 12

HOUSTON
(began Apr 26)
Samson and Delilah
713/227-ARTS or
800/828-ARTS

3

ALVIN
Cinco de Mayo Celebration
281/388-4698

HOUSTON
(began Apr 19)
The Makropulos Case
713/227-ARTS or
800/828-ARTS

3-4

ORANGE
25th
International
Gumbo Cookoff
409/883-3536

SWEENEY
Pride Day
979/548-3249

3-5

HARLINGEN
Cactus Flower
956/412-7529

3-5, 10-12

SPRING
Texas
Crawfish & Music Festival
713/863-9994

3-4, 9-12, 16-18

VICTORIA
The Love Doctor
361/576-6277

4

HOUSTON
Cinco de Mayo Celebration
713/284-8352

VICTORIA

Stardust
361/572-2787

4-5

CLEAR LAKE AREA
Wooden Keels
& Classic Wheels
281/474-2511

GALVESTON
Annie Get Your Gun
409/765-1894 or
800/821-1894

HOUSTON
St. Jude
Trail Ride & Barbecue Cookoff
281/890-5500

5

HOUSTON
Asian Pacific Heritage Festival
713/784-1112

10-12

CLEAR LAKE AREA
Greek Festival
281/992-0897

CRYSTAL BEACH
Texas Crab Festival
409/684-3345 or
800/386-7863

11

CORPUS CHRISTI
Botanical Gardens
Orchid Workshop
361/852-2100

PASADENA

Strawberry Festival Parade
281/991-9500

12

HOUSTON
Festival de la Familia
281/890-5500

17-19

PASADENA
Strawberry Festival
281/991-9500

17-19, 25-26

GALVESTON
Oleander Festival
409/770-9077

19

HOUSTON
GTO Car Show
281/890-5500

LA PORTE
Monumental VW Bug Bash
281/479-2431

23-27

CORPUS CHRISTI
US Open Windsurfing Regatta &
Kite Boarding Championships
361/985-1555

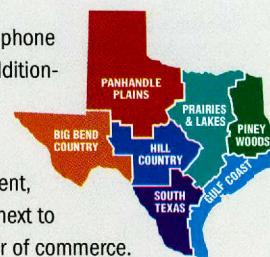
24-26

CORPUS CHRISTI
Fun Run Car Show
361/993-3839
or 387-0587

PALACIOS
Becoming an Outdoors Woman
800/792-1112

IN FUN FORECAST, we provide events and telephone numbers for next month, so that you'll have additional time to plan your outings.

SOMETIMES DATES CHANGE after the magazine is printed. Before you drive miles to an event, confirm the date by calling the number listed next to the festivity or by contacting the local chamber of commerce.



FOR FREE ROUTING ASSISTANCE or details on any destination in Texas, call 800/452-9292 toll-free from anywhere in the United States and Canada, any day between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Central Time. A travel counselor at one of the state's Travel Information Centers will be on the line to provide travel information, send brochures, and advise you of any emergency road conditions.

IF YOU WISH TO SUBMIT AN EVENT for Fun Forecast, please send the information to Fun Forecast, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009; fax 512/486-5879. Submit information at least three full months before the first of the month in which the event will take place (for example, by May 1 for August festivities). Space is limited, so we may not be able to print every event. For a quarterly, more detailed schedule of events, write for a free *Texas Events Calendar*, Box 149249, Austin 78714-9249.

www.texashighways.com, *Texas Highways'* Web site, includes an expanded Fun Forecast that gives descriptions of the events.

24-27

PORT ARTHUR
S.A.L.T. Fishing Rodeo
409/735-4488

25

ROCKPORT
Festival of Wines
361/729-1271

25-26

GALVESTON
Cinderella
409/762-8620

HILL COUNTRY

1-31

ROCKSPRINGS
Devil's Sinkhole
Bat Flight Tours
830/683-2287

2

WIMBERLEY
Ptarmigan Celtic Band
512/842-2648

2-4

SAN MARCOS
Viva! Cinco de Mayo
888/200-5620

2-5, 9-11

ROUND ROCK
*The Importance of
Being Earnest*
512/244-0440

3-4

BOERNE
Relay For Life
830/249-1828

3-4

SONORA
Relay for Life
915/387-2507

3-5

GEORGETOWN
Air Show
512/869-1759

LAGO VISTA
Texas Songbird Festival
512/267-7952

4

BIG LAKE
Cinco de Mayo Celebration
915/884-2980

BOERNE
Hauptstrasse Quiltfest
830/249-5530

MARBLE FALLS
Howdy Roo Chili Cookoff
830/693-5502

NEW BRAUNFELS
Fountain Darter Festival
830/629-5700

SAN SABA
Cow Camp Cookoff
915/372-5221

WIMBERLEY
Market Day
512/847-2201

4-5

AUSTIN
Old Pecan St
Spring Arts Festival
512/583-7235

COMFORT
Comfort Village Antiques Show
830/995-2884

4-5

SAN MARCOS
Tours of Distinction
888/200-5620

5

AUSTIN
Cinco de Mayo
512/499-6700

MASON
1870s Mason County War
Symposium
915/347-1020
or 347-6291

9-12

MARBLE FALLS
Springfest
830/693-2815

10-11

FREDERICKSBURG
Founders Day
Inter-Tribal
Powwow
830/997-2835

10-12

AUSTIN
Peter Pan
512/476-2163

JUNCTION
PRCA Rodeo & Dance
915/446-3190

11

AUSTIN
Kars for Kids
512/462-0393

CASTROVILLE
Market Trail Day
830/741-3841

11
FREDERICKSBURG
Founders Day Festival
830/997-2835

GEORGETOWN
Market Day
512/868-8675

11-12
BOERNE
Market Days
830/249-5530

18
SAN MARCOS
Texas Natural & Western Swing Festival
888/200-5620

19-20
JOHNSON CITY
Market Days
830/868-7800

22
AUSTIN
Texas Amphibian Watch Workshop
512/912-7062 or 327-7622

23-JUN 9
KERRVILLE
Kerrville Folk Festival
830/257-3600 or 800/435-8429

24-25
FREDERICKSBURG
Crawfish Festival
830/997-2350

24-27
KERRVILLE
Official Texas State Arts & Crafts Fair
830/896-5711

25
GOLDTHWAITE
Central Texas Country "Fare"
915/648-3531

LEAKEY
Friends of the Library
Cowboy Breakfast
830/232-5199

25-26
BANDERA
Arts & Crafts Show
830/589-2219

PANHANDLE PLAINS

1
SAN ANGELO
Wynton Marsalis
915/653-6793

3
SAN ANGELO
Cactus Jazz Series
915/653-6793

3-5
BRECKENRIDGE
Stephens County Frontier Days
254/559-2301

OLNEY
Rodeo
940/564-5445

WICHITA FALLS
Wrangler Barrel Classic
940/855-8999

3-5, 10-11
POST
I Remember Mama
806/495-4005

4
BLUEGROVE
Fiddlers Contest
940/895-3791

BUFFALO GAP
Red Steagall
915/793-3862

LUBBOCK
Iris Show
806/797-0593

MATADOR
Mott Creek Ranch
Cowboy Camp Meeting
806/787-0592

Street Dance
806/787-0592

OLNEY
May Fest
Family Fun Festival
940/564-5445

4-5
ABILENE
St. Vincent's
Cinco de Mayo
Celebration
915/672-0010

PERRYTON
Cinco de Mayo Fiesta
806/435-6575

6-12
GRAHAM
Lions Club Carnival
940/549-2211

8-11
MINERAL WELLS
Palo Pinto County
Livestock Assn Pro Rodeo
800/252-6989

9-11
ABILENE
Western Heritage Classic
915/677-4376

9-25
AMARILLO
The Will Rogers Follies
806/355-9991

10-11
ELECTRA
Goat Barbecue
940/495-3577

10-12
FLOMOT
Washington Cattle Company
Bluegrass Festival
806/469-5278

11
GRAHAM
Air Fair and Fly-In
940/549-4846

11-12
SWEETWATER
Soap Box Derby
915/235-5488

12
MINERAL WELLS
Mother's Day
at Clark Gardens
940/682-4856

17-19
SWEETWATER
Cutting Horse Show
915/235-3484

18
GRAHAM
Art Splash on the Square
800/256-4844

JACKSBORO
Car Show
940/374-3223

PLAINVIEW
Pioneer Roundup
806/293-7334

SAN ANGELO
Armed Forces Day
at Fort Concho
915/481-2646

Cowboy Concert
915/481-2646

SANTA ANNA
Frontier Days
915/348-3535

SLATON
South Plains Air Show
806/828-4664

23-25
WICHITA FALLS
Legends of Western Swing
Festival
800/799-6732

25
QUITAQUE
Railway Adventure
806/455-1492

RANGER
Fly-In
254/647-3302

25-27
AMARILLO
FunFest
806/374-0802

26
HASKELL
John Wallace Memorial
Roping
940/864-2477

30-JUN 1
BUFFALO GAP
Smoked Hamlet
915/793-3862

31-JUN 2
ABILENE
Quilt Show
915/676-6211

EDEN
Junior Rodeo
915/869-5180

HASKELL
Wild Horse Prairie Ranch Rodeo
940/864-2477

31-JUN 2, 7-8, 14-15
POST
Night of January 6th
806/495-4005

PINEY WOODS

2-4
CROCKETT
PRCA Rodeo
936/546-2265

2-5
MARSHALL
Josey's Ranch
Junior World Championship
Barrel Race
903/935-7868

3-5
HENDERSON
Greater Tuna
903/657-2968

JEFFERSON
Battle of Port Jefferson
903/665-2672
Jefferson Historical Pilgrimage
903/665-8305

4
CONROE
Austin Symphony
936/588-6645

HUNTSVILLE
Cinco de Mayo
Celebration
936/295-0223

TEXARKANA
Wine Tasting
903/793-4831

4-5
LIVINGSTON
St. Joseph's Catholic Church
Bazaar
936/967-8385

5
LONGVIEW
Cinco de Mayo
Celebration
903/237-1230

8-11
JASPER
PRCA Rodeo
409/384-4322
or 384-2234

10-11
CONROE
Wildlife Expo
936/760-4686

11
LUFKIN
Rhythm and Brass
936/633-5234

11-12
JEFFERSON
Rod Run & Car Show
903/665-2672

17-18
SAN AUGUSTINE
Rodeo
936/275-3610

18
HENDERSON
Meet Me on the Square
Festival
903/657-5528

MINEOLA
May Days Bean Fest
903/569-2087

SAN AUGUSTINE
Pinefest Arts & Crafts Fair
936/275-3610

18-19
MARSHALL
Stagecoach Days Festival
903/935-7868

30-JUN 2
HUNTINGTON
Huntington Festival
936/422-4195

31
CONROE
The Boyfriend
936/756-1274

31, JUN 7-9, 14-15
CONROE
*The Best Little Whorehouse
in Texas*
936/441-SHOW

PRAIRIES AND LAKES

1-JUN 2
WAXAHACHIE
(began Apr 13)
Scarborough Faire
Renaissance Festival
972/938-3247

2
DALLAS
Architecture Forum:
William Gass
214/740-0644

2-5
FORT WORTH
Mayfest
817/332-1055

3-4
SEGUIN
Cinco de Mayo
Celebration
830/303-7147
or 401-0232

3-5
GLEN ROSE
Glen Rose
Classic Horse Show
254/897-4509

WAXAHACHIE
L'I Abner
972/217-1791

3-5, 10-12, 17-18
WACO
Jesus Christ Superstar
254/776-1591

4
ATHENS
Cinco de Mayo Festival
888/294-2847

East Texas Arboretum May Fair
903/675-5630

BRENHAM
Ice Cream Festival
888/273-6426

CALDWELL
Fiestas de Mayo
979/567-4494

CLEBURNE
Cinco de Mayo Celebration
817/558-4260

ELGIN
Blackland Prairie Festival
512/281-4741

GRAND PRAIRIE
Cinco de Mayo Celebration
972/642-2621

McKINNEY
Cinco de Mayo
972/562-1847

4
MIDLOTHIAN
Outdoor Craft Fair/
Spring Fling
972/723-8600

MOUNT VERNON
Maypole Celebration
903/537-4760

ROCKDALE
Dewberry Festival
512/446-2030

SOUTHLAKE
North Texas Book Festival
940/240-1123

4-5
BELTON
Sami Arts & Crafts Show
512/441-7133

CALDWELL
VFW Barbecue & Cookoff
979/567-9663

FORT WORTH
Gem & Mineral Show
817/246-1403

SULPHUR SPRINGS
Northeast Texas
Choral Society
Concert
903/885-6944

4-5, 11-12
CARROLLTON
Photography Show
972/418-1199

4, 11, 18, 25
STEPHENVILLE
Cross Timbers
Country Opry
254/965-4132

5
DALLAS
SMU Meadows Museum
Cinco de Mayo
214/768-2516

DENTON
Homes Tour
940/565-2807

5-12
IRVING
Verizon Byron Nelson Classic
PGA Golf Tour
972/717-1200

6
WACO
Annie Get Your Gun
254/752-9797 or
800/701-ARTS

7-12
FORT WORTH
Les Misérables
817/332-2272

9-11
BRENHAM
Maifest
979/836-3695 or
888/273-6426

10-11
CANTON
Lone Star Ladies
Motorcycle Rally
214/535-7797

WEATHERFORD
Spring Creek Festival
940/325-3731

10-11
WEST
Old West Trade Days
254/826-3188 or
866/826-3189

11
DALLAS
Asian Festival
214/979-6435

SMU Meadows Museum
El Día de las Madres
214/768-2516

FLOWER MOUND
Wild About Flower Mound
Festival
972/539-0500

GRAND PRAIRIE
Mayfest
972/642-2787

LANCASTER
2nd Saturday on the Square
972/227-2579

STEPHENVILLE
Cowboy Capital of the World
PRCA Rodeo
254/965-5313

11-12
FORT WORTH
Fairmount
Historic Homes Tour
817/923-4807

GLEN ROSE
Texas Pony Competition
254/897-4509

GRAND PRAIRIE
*The Compleat Works of
William Shakspr (abridged)*
972/642-2787

13-19
FORT WORTH
MasterCard
Colonial Golf Tournament
817/927-4280

16-18
GIDDINGS
Lee County Fair & Rodeo
979/542-3455

16-19
DALLAS
Dallas Video Festival
214/428-8700

17-18
MADISONVILLE
Barbecue Cookoff
936/348-3591

17-19
CANTON
Antique Classic Auto Swap
972/276-1790

COLUMBUS
Live Oak Festival
979/732-6090

ENNIS
Texas Motorplex
Super Chevy Show
972/878-2641

FORT WORTH
Quilt Show
940/798-3310

18
ADDISON
Madison Tibbs 5-K Run
972/450-6237 or
800/233-4866

18
COLUMBUS
*A Funny Thing Happened
on the Way to the Forum*
877/444-7339

ENNIS
Chili Cookoff
972/878-4748

FORT WORTH
Bird Mart
817/478-8320

GIDDINGS
Official State of Texas
Noodle Cookoff
979/542-1200

LA GRANGE
Main Street Market Day
979/968-8701

NOCONA
Fun Day
940/825-3150
or 825-3526

WACO
Rockin' Heart Ranch Dance
254/776-1660

18-19
ADDISON
Taste of Addison
800/233-4766

DALLAS
Safari Days
214/670-5656

GRAND PRAIRIE
Cajun Fest
972/647-2331

GUN BARREL CITY
Cedar Creek Lakefest
903/887-3152

McKINNEY
McKinney Art & Jazz Festival
972/562-6880

19
ROUND TOP
VFD Feast
979/249-3151

SHERMAN
Tea on the Porch
903/893-4067

20
SHERMAN
Symphony Orchestra
903/813-2251

21
FORT WORTH
Cliburn Concerts Presents
Feghall & Friends
817/335-9000

22-26
WAXAHACHIE
Rotorcraft Convention & Fly-In
940/627-9887

23
SEGUIN
Agri Feast
800/580-7322

24-26
ENNIS
National Polka Festival
972/878-4748

GUSTINE
Homecoming & Rodeo
915/667-7326

24-26
WEST TAWAKONI
Catfish Festival & Tournament
903/447-3349

25
PALESTINE
Texas State Railroad
Starlight Excursion
800/442-8951

SALADO
Music Under the Stars
254/947-9205

SEGUIN
Main Street Trade Day
830/401-2448 or
800/580-7322

25-26
ELLINGER
May Festival
979/378-9007

26
SHINER
Spring Picnic
361/594-3836

27
DENISON
Memorial Day Parade
903/465-1551

Taste of Texoma
903/465-9008

30
WACO
Indian Spring Park Concert
254/772-1428

30-JUN 2
FORT WORTH
Art Garfunkel with
Fort Worth Symphony Pops
817/665-6000

30-JUN 30
GRANBURY
The Music Man
817/573-9191 or
866/572-0881

31
ATHENS
Texas Fiddlers Contest
and Reunion
903/675-1859

31-JUN 1
GATESVILLE
Riding Club Rodeo
254/248-1173

Shivaree
254/865-2617

31-JUN 2
CANTON
First Monday
Trade Days
903/567-2991

FORT WORTH
Quarter Horse Classic
817/871-8150

GLEN ROSE
Peruvian Horse Classic
254/897-4509

WEATHERFORD
First Monday
Trade Days
817/598-4124

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS

1
SAN ANTONIO
"The Best-Laid Plans:
How San Antonio Grew
and Why"
210/999-8404

3
SAN ANTONIO
Gemini Ink
First Friday Reading Series
210/734-9673

3-4
SAN ANTONIO
Cloggers Showcase
210/492-8700

3-5
GOLIAD
Cinco De Mayo Fiesta
361/645-4079

SAN ANTONIO
Cinco de Mayo
210/207-8600

3-4, 17-18, 31-JUN 1
SAN ANTONIO
San Antonio Symphony
210/554-1010

4
BEEVILLE
Indian Trails Powwow
361/358-3267

Market Day
361/358-3267

4-5
BIG WELLS
Cinco de Mayo
830/457-2218

4-JUN 22
SAN ANTONIO
Crazy for You
210/734-4646

5
SAN ANTONIO
Cinco de Mayo
Concert
210/554-1010

Youth Orchestras
of San Antonio
210/826-3447

7
THREE RIVERS
Brush Country Music
Jamboree
361/786-3334

7-19
SAN ANTONIO
Forever Plaid
210/226-3333

8-12
SAN ANTONIO
Tejano Conjunto Festival
210/271-3151

11
SAN ANTONIO
Secret Gardens
of King William
210/271-3247

14-15
SAN ANTONIO
Floating Festival
210/226-2891

17
SAN ANTONIO
Maifest Garten Konzert
210/222-1521
or 408-0004

17-19
WESLACO
Dragonfly Days
956/968-2475

18
SAN ANTONIO
Soul Food Festival
210/207-8618

19, 26
SAN ANTONIO
La Feria de las Flores
210/822-3247

24
SAN ANTONIO
Dance Theatre of New Zealand
210/207-7211

24-26
SAN ANTONIO
Arts & Crafts Fair
210/227-4262

25-27
SAN ANTONIO
Return of the Chili Queens
210/207-8600

THIS MONTH **On the Web**



TRAVEL NEWS Discover events, getaways, and Texas tidbits featured only on the Web site.

EVENTS Search our database by region and month, and use the events links for even more information.

GIFT SHOP Find great Texas-themed products at our online gift shop. All of the products from our Spring Collection, including the wildflower T-shirt shown at left, are just a click away.

RECIPES Find your next hit in the kitchen by searching our recipe archives. Try this month's featured recipe, "Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson's Peach Ice Cream," for a tasty spring treat.

E-POSTCARDS Send a little bit of Texas to a friend for FREE. Choose a region, select the card you like, write your message, and send it off. It's easy!

WWW.TEXASHIGHWAYS.COM

WILD THINGS

You'll find several stories in this issue that recommend using native plants in your landscape. But how the heck do you find native plants? First of all, ask for them at local nurseries. Second, do a search for "Native Plants" on the Web; you'll find native-plant societies and networks throughout the United States and beyond. Third, visit your local botanical gardens and ask about plant sales and festivals; many focus on native plants. (See page 26 for information on the plant sales at Austin's Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.)

On April 20-21, The Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary in McKinney holds the largest native-plant sale in Texas, with more than 300 varieties of trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, perennials, and wildflowers available. Experts will be on hand to offer advice, and you can stroll the center's native-plant gardens and forested hiking trails for



© JOE LOWERY

An Indian paintbrush blooms in DeWitt County, where an annual wildflower celebration lasts the whole month of April.

inspiration; call 972/562-5566; www.heardmuseum.org. (The Heard offers wildflower walks in the sanctuary April 6, 13, 27, and May 4.)

Near Fort Davis, the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute holds its annual native-plant sale April 26-27.

In its 20-acre arboretum, in its greenhouse, and along its trailways, the CDRI showcases many of the desert's trees, shrubs, and cacti. ...Call 915/364-2499; www.cdri.org.

The San Antonio Botanical Garden throws its spring celebration,

Viva Botanica!, April 6-7.

Amid some 33 acres of gardens and conservatories, visitors can enjoy live music, a plant sale, a children's play area, and the debut of the center's new water-saver garden, which focuses on native and adapted plants. On April 20, a free event here called **Walk Across Texas** offers living-history demonstrations and tours in the native-plant areas. Call 210/829-5100 or 207-3255; www.sabot.org.

ANTIQUÉ WEEK

Lower-fanatics out for a leisurely drive in the bluebonnet-studded landscapes of Fayette, Austin, and Washington counties may find the roads a bit more trav-

eled during the first week of April. That's when thousands of antique dealers and potential customers converge upon the tiny towns of Round Top, Warrenton, and Shelby for Texas Antique Week, April 1-7.

One possible plan: From Brenham at US 290, follow FM 359 south to Shelby, where parking is a cinch at the Harmonie Hall Antique Show. From Shelby, follow the signs (it's that simple!) to antique shows in Round Top and Warrenton, where vendors set up in open fields, dance halls, and circus-size tents along the roadsides. Note: Park only in designated lots. "This time of year, you can't go wrong," says dealer Merle Booker, who sells her wares in Shelby. "Even if you don't care for antiques, you'll have a lovely drive."

Many dealers start selling as early as April 1, and by Wednesday, April 3, most booths are open. For more details, call the Round Top Chamber of Commerce, 979/249-4042; www.roundtop.org.

PETAL PEDALING

What could be nicer than taking in a bounty of wildflowers by bicycle? During the DeWitt County Lanes & Byways wildflower celebration (Apr. 1-30), spring cycling tops the list for some folks.

On April 27, cyclists can choose among five distances, from 10 to 60 miles, meaning that nearly everyone can see the flowers at a leisurely, pedal-powered pace. Of course, the celebration offers surprises for those who prefer to steer clear of two-wheeled conveyances: On April 6 at 9 a.m., groups embark on three-hour bus trips to see the hundreds of species blooming along the county's serpentine backroads. (Other group tours can be arranged, as well.)

Throughout the month, you can drop by the DeWitt County Museum to pick up free maps for driving

Spring Mela

North America's largest Hindu temple—Barsana Dham—lies on 250 wooded acres southwest of Austin. Since its completion in 1995, the stunning temple has attracted so many curious visitors that temple leaders created a spring festival—a *mela*, in Hindi—to help their Texas neighbors experience Indian culture. This year's mela takes place April 27, noon to 5 p.m.

Visitors can enjoy Indian foods and performances of traditional dance and music; take a camel ride through the landscaped gardens or consult an Indian astrologer; and explore the dozens of booths selling Indian jewelry, crafts, games, and clothing. Take the opportunity, too, to stroll the temple's rose gardens, the marigold fields (they'll begin blooming in July), and the orchard (return in June for pick-your-own peaches).

Barsana Dham is on FM 1826, between Oak Hill and Driftwood. Admission is free, but parking costs \$5. The temple welcomes visitors year round, 8-10 a.m. and 3-5 p.m. daily, and can accommodate overnight visitors in the ashram. Call 512/288-7180; www.isdl.org.

Austin's Barsana Dham temple holds its annual Indian festival on April 27.



COURTESY ISDL

By the Way...

tours to view the flowers, as well as a brochure that describes historic sites and other places of interest in the county.

For more information about the celebration and wildflower-viewing in DeWitt County, call the DeWitt County Wildflower Association, 361/275-9942; www.dewittwildflowers.org, or call the Cuero Chamber of Commerce, 361/275-2112; www.cuero.org.

FLOWER MOUND

Rising more than 50 feet above the surrounding countryside, **Flower Mound's** namesake mound is one of the few remaining remnants of the Great North American Prairie, an expanse of grasses and wildflowers that once swept from Canada to the Rio Grande and from the Rockies to the Mississippi. Early pioneers used the mound, which sits between today's Dallas and Denton, as a hay meadow and never plowed it, so wildflowers and native prairie grasses flourished here—and still do.

In 1983, the late Otto Consolvo and his wife, Babe, convinced a developer to deed the 12.76-acre property to the citizens of Flower Mound. Today, a nonprofit group called the Mound Foundation welcomes visitors to its prairie preserve year round. Botanists have documented some 175 species of wildflowers here, and springtime finds the hill in full bloom. Visitors to the Mound on Easter Sunday (March 31 this year) find a special treat: At sunrise, the Flower Mound Summit Club presents its annual nondenominational Easter Sunrise Service here.

The Mound is at the northeast corner of the intersection of FM 3040 and FM 2499. For more information, send an email to MoundFoundation@yahoo.com, or call the Flower Mound Chamber of Commerce, 972/539-0500; www.flowermoundchamber.com.

In **Austin**, the **Zilker Garden Festival** (Apr. 13-14) features live music, food, arts and crafts, exhibits and games for kids, and dozens of plant vendors. Whether you're searching for herbs, cacti, clumping bamboo, or native trees and flowers, you'll find them here. Call 512/477-8672; www.zilker-garden.org.

The **Corpus Christi Botanical Gardens**, on 180 acres along Oso Creek, showcase floral gardens blended with native habitat and natural wetlands. On April 6, the Gardens host a one-day workshop called **Spring Wildflowers of South Texas**, led by naturalist Gene Blacklock. On April 20, don't miss the **Spring Garden Festival & Plant Sale**, which features free seminars and guided tours of the gardens, as well as an orchid auction, and hundreds of plants for sale....call 361/852-2100; www.ccbotanicalgardens.org.

Celebrate **Arbor Day**—April 25 this year—by planting a native tree. Devote a little TLC to its care early on, and your tree will reward you with shade, fresh air, and beauty for many years. Check out the National Arbor Foundation's Web site, www.arborday.org, for more details. After all, so the saying goes, the best time to plant a tree was 10 years ago. The second-best time is right now.

For 22 years, Mary Kemp and her family have invited the public to see the wildflowers and enjoy a day in the country at their ranch near **Weatherford**. The **Shaw-Kemp Open House** (Apr. 13 this year) features carriage rides, live music, historical reenactments, demonstrations of frontier skills and crafts, miniature horses and vintage cars, and tours of the many historical structures on the property. If Mother Nature cooperates, you'll see abundant bluebonnets and pink primroses blooming along the roadsides....call 817/594-6837.

The town of **Seguin** boasts tree-lined streets, great antique stores, and, in recent years, a bit of celebrity, thanks to author **Janice Woods Windle**, who has set three of her books here (including the best-selling *True Women* and the just-released *Will's War*). The Seguin Convention and Visitors Bureau has organized three tours for fans interested in seeing the sites depicted in the novels, and April—with wildflowers galore—proves a great time to visit. The self-guided tours explore Seguin and the surrounding countryside. ...call 830/379-6382 or 800/580-7322; www.visitseguin.com.

Established in 1951 to preserve plants, animals, and natural communities, The Nature Conservancy presents **In Response to Place: Photographs from The Nature Conservancy's Last Great Places** at the **Houston Museum of Natural Science** through April 21. With works by such artists as Annie Leibovitz, William Wegman, Sally Mann, and Terry Evans, this collection of 130 images explores and celebrates the natural world. Educational programs associated with these exhibitions include a lecture on Texas' endangered plants and animals, landscaping workshops, and field trips. ...call 713/639-4629; www.hmns.org.

The New York-based **Garden Conservancy** hosts an annual **Open Days** program that allows the public access to hundreds of private gardens coast to coast. In Texas, 13 gardens in **Houston** open their gates April 13-14, followed by eight gardens in **Dallas** on May 18, and then five spaces in **Austin** on September 28. Admission to each garden costs \$5. Call 888/842-2442 to find out where to pick up maps and instructions; or purchase **The Garden Conservancy's Open Days Directory: The Guide to Visiting America's Best Private Gardens** (\$15.95 at bookstores and nurseries, or you can order by calling the number above).

Wildflowers abound—in our landscapes, along our roadsides, blooming abundantly from the pages of our favorite Texas travel magazine.... Want to bring those beautiful blooms indoors with you? Think artwork. We like artist **J. Michael Hargrove's** detailed 11-by-17-inch depictions of the Indian paintbrush, bluebonnet, Texas bluebell (shown above), and evening primrose. J. Michael creates the prints using an old-fashioned quill pen and India ink, then hand-colors each one in pencil and watercolor. Each one sells for \$70, or you can buy the set of four for \$250. Call 214/553-1512; www.jmichaelhargrove.com.



Eustoma grandiflorum

Texas Bluebell
J. Michael Hargrove

Dallas artist J. Michael Hargrove has created four hand-detailed wildflower prints.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT www.texashighways.com



they're packing pistils

maratta / M

© KATIE AND PETE MARATTA

If you're digging for more on wildflowers, the following resources will provide a good start. Also see the Essentials section at the end of each story in this issue.

A BOUQUET OF BOOKS

Folklore:

Hedgemaids and Fairy Candles: The Lives and Lore of North American Wildflowers by Jack Sanders (McGraw-Hill, 1995)

Legends & Lore of Texas Wildflowers by Elizabeth Silverthorne (Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1996)

Wildflower Folklore by Laura C. Martin (East Woods Press, 1984)

For Children:

The Legend of the Bluebonnet by Tomie DePaola (Putnam and Grosset Group, 1996)

The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush by Tomie DePaola (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1988)

Gardening:

Howard Garrett's Plants for Texas (Univ. of Texas Press, 1996)

How to Grow Native Plants of Texas and the Southwest by Jill Nokes (Univ. of Texas Press, 2001)

Native Texas Plants: Landscaping Region by Region by Sally and Andy Wasowski (Gulf Publishing Co., 1997)

Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife by Noreen Damude and Kelly Conrad Bender (Texas Parks & Wildlife Press, 1999)

General Guides:

A Field Guide to Wildflowers, Trees & Shrubs of Texas by Delena Tull and George Oxford Miller (Gulf Publishing Co., 1991)

Plants and Their Names by Roger Hyam and Richard Pankhurst (Oxford, 1995)

Plants of the Rio Grande Delta by Alfred Richardson (Univ. of Texas Press, 1995)



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A Practical Guide to Edible & Useful Plants by Delena Tull (Texas Monthly Press, 1987)

Shinners & Mahler's Illustrated Flora of North Central Texas by George M. Diggs Jr., Barney L. Lipscomb, and Robert J. O'Kennon (Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 1999)

Texas Wildflowers by Campbell and Lynn Loughmiller (Univ. of Texas Press, 1984)

Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of the Southwest by Robert A. Vines (Univ. of Texas Press, 1986)

Wildflowers of Houston by John and Gloria Tveten (Rice Univ. Press, 1993)

Wildflowers of Texas by Geyata Ajilvsgi (Shearer Publishing, 1984)

Wildflowers of Texas brochure, Texas Department of Transportation (order a free copy at 800/452-9292)

Wild Flowers of the Big Thicket, East Texas, and Western Louisiana by Geyata Ajilvsgi (Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1979)

Wildflowers of the Texas Hill Country by Marshall Enquist (Lone Star Botanical, 1987)

Wildflowers of the Western Plains, A Field Guide by Zoe Merriman Kirkpatrick (Univ. of Texas Press, 1992)

Photography:

The Field Guide to Photographing Flowers (Center for Nature Photography Series) by Allen Rokach and Anne Millman (Amphoto, 1995)

How to Photograph Flowers by Heather Angel (Stackpole Books, 1998)

Nature Photography: National Audubon Society Guide by Tim Fitzharris (Firefly Books, 1996)

Photographing Wildflowers: Techniques for the Advanced Amateur and Professional by Craig and Nadine Blacklock (Voyageur Press, 1987)

SOWING THE SEEDS OF SPRING

TH recommends two good mail-order seed sources: **Wildseed Farms** near Fredericksburg (800/848-0078; www.wildseedfarms.com) and **Native American Seed** in Junction (800/728-4043; www.seedsource.com). Both places can provide growing tips, as well. (Of course, many nurseries and grocery stores across the state sell small seed packets.)

WILDFLOWERS ON THE WEB

- **The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's** Web site (www.wildflower.org) includes the Native Plant Information Network with a database of Texas plants.
- Click on www.instar.com/wildflowers for a database of Texas wildflowers, a wildflower sightings page, and screensavers.

- Billed as "the largest gardening site on the Web," www.gardenweb.com also features an extensive plant database, as does www.csdl.tamu.edu/FLORA/gallery.htm.

- Other good wildflower sites include: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wildseed/weblinks.html>; <http://hotx.com/wildflowers/bflowerpage.html>; www.riceinfo.rice.edu/armadillo/Wildflowers/; and www.nps.gov/plants/cw.

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Following is a sampling of gardens and organizations that can provide examples of and tips on landscaping with native plants.

Austin:

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center; 512/292-4100; www.wildflower.org

National Wildlife Federation; 512/476-9805; www.nwf.org

Native Prairies Association of Texas; www.texasprairie.org

Texas Wildscapes Program, Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.; www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/wildscapes

Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve; 512/327-7622; www.wildbasin.org

Zilker Botanical Gardens; 512/477-8672; www.zilker-garden.org

Amarillo:

Wildcat Bluff Nature Center; 806/352-6007; www.wildcatbluff.org

Beaumont:

Beaumont Botanical Gardens; 409/842-3135; www.beaumontbotanicalgardens.com

THE *Bluebonnet* TRUTH

Take your pick: There is **no law** against picking our state flower, but keep in mind that there are laws against damaging roadside rights-of-way. The **Texas Department of Transportation** discourages picking wildflowers along the roadsides, to allow the plants to reseed and come back the next year for everyone to enjoy.

WILDFLOWER Resources

GOING FOR A SUNDAY DRIVE
IN THE HILL COUNTRY



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Beaumont (continued):

John J. French Museum; 409/
898-3267

Boerne:

Cibolo Nature Center; 830/
249-4616; www.cibolo.org

Corpus Christi:

Corpus Christi Botanical Gardens;
361/852-2100; www.ccbotanical
gardens.org

Dallas:

Dallas Arboretum & Botanical
Gardens; 214/327-8263; www.
dallasarboretum.org

Dallas Nature Center; 972/296-
1955; www.dallasnaturecenter.org

Texas Discovery Gardens; 214/
428-7476; http://community.
dallasnews.com/dmn/texas
discoverygardens

El Paso:

University of Texas at El Paso Cen-
tennial Museum; 915/747-5565;
www.utep.edu/museum

Blossom HOTLINE

The Texas Department of
Transportation, the folks who
bring you the eye-popping, right-of-way
wildflower displays, offers **wildflower
reports** on the state's best viewing
areas on a toll-free Travel Information
line. Call 800/452-9292 from
around mid-March through mid-May.

Fort Davis:

Chihuahuan Desert Research Insti-
tute; 915/364-2499; www.cdri.org

Fort Worth:

Fort Worth Botanic Garden; 817/
871-7689 or 871-7673; www.
fortworthgov.org/pacs/botgarden

Fort Worth Nature Center; 817/
237-1111

Georgetown:

Native Plant Society of Texas;
512/868-8799, www.npsot.org

Houston:

Bayou Bend Collection & Gardens;
713/639-7750; www.bayoubend.
uh.edu

Houston Arboretum & Nature Cen-
ter; 713/681-8433; www.houston
naturecenter.org

Humble:

Mercer Arboretum & Botanical
Gardens; 281/443-8731; www.
cp4.hctx.net/mercerc

Kerrville:

Riverside Nature Center; 830/
257-4837; www.ktc.net/riverside

Langtry:

Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center;
915/291-3340; www.dot.state.tx.us

Midland:

Sibley Nature Center; 915/684-
6827; www.sibleynaturecenter.org

McKinney:

Heard Natural Science Museum &
Wildlife Sanctuary; 972/562-5566;
www.heardmuseum.org

Nacogdoches:

SFA Mast Arboretum; 936/
468-4404; www.sfasu.edu/ag/
arboretum

Pasadena:

Armand Bayou Nature Center;
281/474-2551; www.abnc.org

San Antonio:

San Antonio Botanical Gardens;
210/207-3255; www.sabot.org

Terlingua:

Barton Warnock Environmental
Education Center; 915/424-3327;
www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Weslaco:

Valley Nature Center; 956/
969-2475; www.valleynature
center.org

WHERE TO FIND WILDFLOWER-PHERNALIA

■ **Congress Ave. Cards & Gifts**, Austin;
512/478-1663. Features all sorts
of Texas items.

■ **Guitars & Cadillacs**; 14 stores in
Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston,
and San Antonio; 800/273-6389;
www.guitars-cadillacs.com. Selection
includes bluebonnet potholders and
kitchen towels, bluebonnet and wild-
flower T-shirts, bluebonnet suncatch-
ers, wildflower trivets, spoon rests,
mugs, and message clips.

■ You can order fresh-cut, Texas long-
stem bluebonnets and bluebonnet gift
items from the **Old Alazan Company's**
Texas Bluebonnet and Ranch Store;
915/851-1238; www.texas
bluebonnet.com.

■ **Texas Highways' gift shop**, 150
E. Riverside in Austin, features a
variety of wildflower items (see the
product section starting on page
57 in this issue); to order, call
800/839-4997; www.texas
highways.com.

■ **Wild Ideas: The Store**, at the Lady
Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in
Austin, offers a broad selection of
wildflowerly gifts; 512/292-4300;
www.wildflower.org. So, too, does
Wildseed Farms near Fredericksburg;
800/848-0078; www.wildseed
farms.com.

■ **Y'all's Texas Store**; 10 locations in
and around Houston; www.yalls.com.
Bluebonnet items: dominoes, Teddy
bears, coasters, playing cards, blue-
bonnets-and-barn afghan, mugs,
pitchers, creamer/sugar bowl.

SEE FOR YOURSELF

According to the *Texas Highways*
Readers' Choice Results (published
in January 2001), these are the **Best
Places to View Wildflowers**:

- 1 Hill Country
- 2 Brenham and Chappell Hill area
(Washington County)
- 3 Willow City Loop (Gillespie County)
- 4 Fredericksburg area (Gillespie
County)
- 5 Burnet and Marble Falls area
(Burnet County)
- 6 Llano area (Llano County)
- 7 **TIE**: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower
Center, Austin

Lyndon B. Johnson State and
National Historical Parks,
Stonewall

Texas 71 (especially from Austin
east through Bastrop, Smithville,
La Grange, and Columbus, and
west from Austin to Llano)

US 281 (especially north of
San Antonio through Johnson
City, Marble Falls, Burnet, and
Lampasas)

Wildseed Farms, near
Fredericksburg
- 8 **TIE**: Austin

Ennis area (Ellis County)

Johnson City area (Blanco County)
- 9 Cuero area (DeWitt County)
- 10 **TIE**: Kerrville area (Kerr County)

Mason area (Mason County)



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Window on Texas

WARM SPRING DAYS combined with blooming wildflowers inspire Texans to venture out and explore backroads in search of flower-filled meadows. Photographer Paul Gunn found this trail near Fredericksburg, in Gillespie County.

