Native and Adapted Plants for Central Texas

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Class Topics

Part I: The Basics
A. Why Native and Adapted?
   - Native plants (why important)
   - Adapted plants (benefits, considerations)
   - Other terms (cultivars, invasives)
B. Eco-regions, Adaptations, and Wildlife Value of Native Texas Plants

Part II: Getting to Know the Guide

Part III: Plant Selections for Specific Garden Needs
Why Native and Adapted?

For the benefit of our Austin and Texas wildlife and landscape, it is helpful to select plants that:

- Are water-wise
- Are drought-tolerant
- Have wildlife value (esp. natives)
- Are naturally resistant to pests and diseases (esp. natives)
- Need less maintenance and fertilizing
  → *Also, higher survivability saves money!*

What is native?

- A *native species* is one that exists naturally in an eco-region without human introduction, direct or indirect.
- Native flora and fauna in an ecological community, having evolved together, are often *interdependent.*
Why Are Native Plants Important?

- They protect Texas’ biodiversity
- They gain back natural ecosystems for our native flora and fauna → wildlife interdependence
- They are specially adapted to handle Texas soil and weather
- They use less water and require less maintenance, fertilizing, and pest control
- They protect our watersheds
- They keep Texas beautiful!

Adapted Plants

- **Adapted plants** are non-invasive, non-native plants that are able to thrive in the local climate and soil conditions.
- Adapted plants might come from other regions of Texas, the U.S., or the world.
Benefits of Adapted Plants

- Increased choices
- Many are readily available
- Might fit a design need
- Some have wildlife value

If you have to amend a soil’s pH, or have to fertilize or water excessively to keep a plant alive, that plant is not well adapted for the area.

Shrimp Plant
Justicia brandegeana

Cultivars

- **Cultivars** are varieties selected and/or bred by humans for a particular trait, then propagated to maintain them.

Note: Depending on the variety, a cultivar might no longer function in the ecosystem in terms of wildlife value (seeds, nectar, pollen, chemistry). If you are planting for wildlife, it is helpful to research first!
Texas Noxious and Invasive Plants

Not all adapted plants are good choices. It is important to know their habits and how they spread. **Invasive plants** are plants that spread easily, grow rapidly, and have serious potential for causing economical or ecological harm, especially to agriculture, horticulture, native plants, ecology, and/or waterways.

**In natural areas, invasive plants can quickly outcompete native plants for space, nutrients, water, and sunlight.**

A Closer Look at Natives
Texas Has 11 Ecoregions

An ecoregion is a major ecosystem area with distinctive geography, characteristic flora and fauna, and like environmental conditions.

Why do regional plants matter?
- A plant native to another area of Texas might not grow well in your area.
- Native wildlife depend heavily on regional vegetation and ecosystem webs.

Central Texas Ecoregions

- **Travis County** = primarily Edwards Plateau + Blackland Prairies (the Balcones Fault is the division line)
- Central Texas also includes Cross Timbers and Prairies as well as Post Oak Savannah
Edwards Plateau

- Home of dense Ashe Juniper-Oak woodlands and grassy savanna
- Honeycombed with caves and aquifers
- Covered by limestone and granite; caliche slopes
- Home to many endemic plants and animals
- Clearing for timber and grazing drastically altered the plateau

Blackland Prairies

- Described by early settlers as “a vast endless sea of grasses and wildflowers” with scattered clumps of trees and riparian woodlands
- Rich, deep clay soil
- Once a vast area of massive plant diversity; today endangered
- Habitat for more than 500 fauna species, including 327 bird species
Adaptations of Texas Plants

Our native plants are adapted to handle Texas soil and weather.

In Central Texas, we have:
- Alkaline soil
- Heavy clay to thin caliche
- Hot summers (Death Star)
- Cold winters
- Drought
- Flash floods

Dealing with Drought

Drought-resistant
- Prickly Pear

Drought-enduring
- TX Mountain Laurel, Fragrant Mimosa

Drought-evading
- Rain Lily, Winecup

Drought-escaping
- TX Bluebonnets, Indian Paintbrush
Other Adaptations

Some native plants:
- go dormant in the winter
- have fire resistance or fire response
- have long seed dormancy
- time blooms after last freeze
- are flexible!

Mealy Blue Sage, Purple Coneflower
Natives Protect Our Watershed

- Native root systems:
  - Help water infiltrate soil: groundwater to aquifer
  - Moderate floods and droughts
  - Help control erosion
  - Help clean polluted water

- Using natives reduces use of chemicals that pollute our water systems

Native plants improve water quality

Natives Are Naturally Fertilized

Native plants thrive best when natural soil processes are allowed to exist. They get their necessary nutrients as soil organisms consume organic matter.
Biodiversity = Protection
Wildlife Value

Native plants are the foundation of biodiversity.

Native Plants as Sources of Food

- Native plants are the best sources of food for wildlife.
- Aim for year-round supplies of food.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seeds</th>
<th>Fruits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Berries</td>
<td>Sap</td>
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<td>Nectar</td>
<td>Pollen</td>
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<td>Foliage</td>
<td>Stems</td>
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<td>Nuts</td>
<td>Other Plant Parts</td>
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⇒ Insects!
**Nectar and Pollen**

*Nectar and pollen* are important sources of nutrients for numerous insects, birds, bats, and other animals.

**Fruits, Seeds, Nuts**

*Berries and other fruits, seeds, and nuts* provide food for birds and other animals and are especially important in fall and winter.
Leaves -- especially for caterpillars!

- Some mammals and other animals will consume leaves
- Insects with chewing parts are often **specialists** – they are adapted for eating specific plants with specific leaf chemistry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Butterfly</th>
<th>Lays Its Eggs on</th>
<th>Caterpillar</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gulf Fritillary</td>
<td>Passionvine</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Passionvine Caterpillar" /></td>
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<td>Crimson Patch</td>
<td>Flame Acanthus</td>
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<td>Sleep Orange</td>
<td>Lindheimer’s Senna</td>
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<td>Monarch</td>
<td>Milkweed</td>
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Black Swallowtail
(nectaring at Texas Lantana)
Host Plants: Parsley and Dill family

Giant Swallowtail
(nectaring at Purple Coneflower)
Host Plants: Wafer Ash and other citrus trees

Butterfly Lays Its Eggs on Caterpillar
Insects and Spiders: Key Foods

Most songbirds (96%) feed high-protein caterpillars and spiders to their young – hundreds per day.

The seasonal presence of insects is a trigger for the migration of many bird species.

They are dependent on native plants for the insects they need.

Birds Need Insects in Great Numbers

Photo: Wikipedia Commons

Carolina Chickadee, Barn Swallow, Bewick's Wren
Sources of Cover

A variety of plant types and heights can provide safe cover for many different wildlife species.

- Trees
- Dense shrubs
- Evergreens
- Tall grasses
- Thorny plants
- Snags
- Meadow
- Water plants
- Groundcover
- Leaf litter
- Brush piles
- Fallen logs

Nature’s Layers: Vertical Niches

Vertical Layers Protect Wildlife

Above Canopy
Canopy
Midstory
Understory
Groundcover
Sources of Places to Raise Young

Many places that provide cover are also good places for raising young (including laying eggs).

- Mature trees
- Dense shrubs
- Snags
- Hollow logs
- Bunch grasses
- Leaf litter
- Host plants
- Groundcover
- Meadows
- Water plants
- Brush piles
- Bark, leaves

Carolina Wren babies

Sleepy Orange Caterpillar on Lindheimer's Senna

Water Sources

Foliage, flowers, and fruit provide sources of water for many fauna species, especially when other water is scarce.

- Prickly Pear (Spineless) Opuntia sp.
- Texas Persimmon Diospyros texana
- Red Mulberry Morus rubra
Adapted Plants and Wildlife Value

Many adapted plants do provide nectar, fruits, and other elements of value to certain wildlife.

- However, research has shown that **pollinators are 4 times more attracted to native plants.**

- **Leaf chemistry** dictates what specialist insects, such as many butterflies and moths, need. The caterpillars and adults then become **key food sources in the ecosystem.**

- Nutrients from **native berries** are more likely to be most appropriate for the animals that evolved with them.
Part II: The Guide

Learn First, Plant Later

Researching ANY plant species you are considering can help prevent countless problems later. Look at:

- Size at full growth
- Plant needs (light, water, soil pH, etc.)
- Seasonal/weather tolerance
- Spreading habits
- Wildlife interest
- Maintenance
- Pests
- Gardener reviews
Development and Database

- Why was it created, and why is it special?
- Who contributed?
- What is the phone number if you need many guides?

**Online Grow Green Database**
([www.growgreen.org](http://www.growgreen.org)):
http://austintexas.gov/department/grow-green/plant-guide

- **Sections:** Trees, Small Trees/Large Shrubs, Shrubs and Roses, Perennials, Yuccas/Agaves, Succulents/Cacti/Sotols, Ornamental and Prairie Grasses, Vines, Groundcovers, Turf Grasses, FAQ, Plants to Avoid, Index

- **What’s changed?** More natives, removed deer-resistance and availability columns, removed rain garden and water plant lists
The Key Is the Key (p. 4)

- What’s native?
- What is UA?
- Other items in the key

In this presentation, plants native to Texas will be shown with this symbol:

Getting to Know the Guide

Game Time!
Question:
What deciduous oak tree is native to the Edwards Plateau and is considerably smaller than other regional oaks, making it a good choice for small yards?

Lacey Oak
*Quercus laceyi*

- **Deciduous to semi-evergreen** oak, native to Edwards Plateau
- Grows 30-50’, resistant to oak wilt
- Peach and red leaves in spring mature into blue-green foliage; yellow fall foliage
- **Water:** Very low
- **Light:** Sun/Part Shade
- **Wildlife Value:** Like other oaks, an important host plant for numerous butterflies and moths; acorns feed birds and mammals, provides great cover and nesting spots for much of the year
Question:
In what season(s) does the groundcover Pigeonberry bloom and produce fruit?

Pigeonberry
*Rivina humilis*

- Native groundcover (B/E) or border plant, 1-1.5’
- Offers blooms and berries at the same time (spring to fall)
- May go dormant in drought
- **Water:** Low-med
- **Light:** Part shade
- **Wildlife Value:** Berries prized by birds; flowers attract small pollinators
Frogfruit

*Phyla nodiflora*

- Native low-growing groundcover (B/E)
- 6-8”
- Spreads rapidly under right conditions
- **Water:** L-M (tolerates wet)
- **Light:** Sun/Part Shade
- **Wildlife Value:** Host plant for Phaon Crescentspot, Buckeye, and White Peacock butterflies; attracts small pollinators; provides cover for toads and other small critters

**Question:**

What kind of plants are *Carex* spp., and on what page would you find information on them?
Sedges
Carex sp.

- Groundcover; great alternative to turf; low-growing species require no mowing; many species shade-loving
- Many species native to Texas; adapted also available
- Height varies
- Water: Most are low water
- Light: Sun/Part Shade/Shade
- Wildlife Value: Cover, possibly nesting

Texas Sedge
Photo: Joseph A. Marcus, WFC

Berkeley Sedge (non-native)
Photo: Shirley A. Fox

Cedar Sedge (Carex planostachys)
(example only: this species not currently readily available; had growing naturally)
Question:
What plant has the scientific name *Aloysia virgata*?

**Sweet Almond Verbena**
*Aloysia virgata*

- Non-native semi-evergreen shrub (from Argentina)
- Very fragrant white flower spikes
- Needs room! 4-8’+
- **Water:** Low-Med
- **Light:** Sun/Part shade
- Blooms in warmer months; dies back in harsh winters
- **Wildlife Value:** Pollinator magnet

Lower Photo: Dorothy Borders
Texas Kidneywood
*Eysenhardtia texana*

- **Deciduous shrub** with small leaves (can prune for shape)
- **Fragrant white flower spikes**
- **Fast-growing; airy nature provides light shade to plants below**
- **Blooms often from spring to fall**
- **Water:** Very low
- **Light:** Likes full sun and bright shade
- **Wildlife Value:** Pollinator magnet; host plant for Dogface butterfly

**Question:**
What eco-region(s) is Mexican Plum naturally found in?
Mexican Plum
*Prunus mexicana*

- Small native **deciduous tree** (B/E), 15-20’
- Great understory tree
- Lovely plant, though summer foliage may look ragged
- **Water:** Low
- **Light:** Sun/Part shade
- **Wildlife Value:** Host plant for Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and Cecropia Moth; summer fleshy fruit for birds and mammals; dense foliage for nesting and cover; early blooms for pollinators
Mexican Redbud
*Cercis canadensis* var. ‘mexicana’

- Small **deciduous tree**, 10-15’
- Native to west Texas
- **Light**: Sun/Part Shade
- **Wildlife Value**: Early spring blooms for pollinators; Henry Elfin Butterfly host plant; cover; nesting site

Redbud, with Henry’s Elfin caterpillar/butterfly
Question:
I’m looking for a vine to go on a trellis in front of my A/C unit. I want it to be deciduous so that it shades the unit in summer but lets light in during winter. A yellow or orange color would be nice in that spot, but I don’t want it to be too aggressive. What could I get?

Mexican Flame Vine  
*Pseudogynoxys chenopodioides*

- Non-native deciduous woody vine (from Mexico)
- Bright orange-red daisy-like flowers throughout warmer seasons
- Dies back in cold winters
- Easy to propagate; reaches 10’+
- **Water:** Low
- **Light:** Full sun to light shade
- **Wildlife Value:** Attracts bees, butterflies, birds
Carolina Jessamine
*Gelsemium sempervirens*

- **Evergreen vine** (native to East Texas)
- All parts are poisonous! Don’t eat it.
- High-climbing, 6-20’
- Fragrant yellow trumpet-shaped flowers
- **Water:** medium
- **Light:** Sun/Part Shade
- **Soil:** pH adaptable, prefers acidic-neutral
- **Wildlife Value:** Attracts hummingbirds and other pollinators

**Question:**
How tall does a Skyflower (Duranta) shrub grow?
Duranta Skyflower
Duranta erecta

- Sometimes evergreen shrub (native to Mexico to S. America)
- 5-10’ tall
- Leaves and berries are toxic
- Dies back in cold winters
- **Water:** Low-medium
- **Light:** Sun/Part shade
- **Wildlife Value:** Attracts butterflies

**Question:**
What is particularly interesting about the common name for *Nolina texana*, Basket Grass?
Basket Grass
*Nolina Texana*

- Clumping *evergreen perennial* native to Edwards Plateau
- Not a true grass (member of the Lily Family)
- 2’, with leaves 4’ long – don’t plant close to walkway
- **Water:** Very low
- **Light:** Sun/Part Shade
- **Wildlife Value:** Provides cover; attracts pollinators; host plant for Atea and Sandia hairstreak butterflies

**Question:**
What is one positive and one negative characteristic of the shrub Flame Acanthus?
Flame Acanthus
*Anisacanthus quadrifidus*

- **Deciduous shrub** (native to Edwards Plateau)
- Very drought tolerant; blooms in hot summer
- **Spreads easily**
- **Water:** Very low
- **Light:** Sun/Part Shade
- **Wildlife Value:** Attracts hummingbirds; host plant for Crimson Patch Butterfly

**Question:**
What are two common names for *Ehretia anacua*?
Anacua
*Ehretia anacua*

- Semi-evergreen tree
- 20-25’
- White flowers, edible fruit
- May die back with freeze
- **Water:** low
- **Light:** Sun/Part shade
- **Wildlife Value:** Bee nectar source; attracts birds

**Question:**
What is a non-invasive alternative for Scarlet Firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea*)?
Evergreen Sumac
*Rhus virens*

- Evergreen shrub
- 8-10’
- Fall blooms and berries, high in Vitamin C
- **Water:** Low
- **Light:** Sun/Part shade
- **Wildlife Value:** Provides food and cover; host plant

*Plants for Select Garden Needs*
Selections Based on Garden Needs

Choose plants based on:
- Interests, favorites
- Garden type and/or environment (light, shade, design style, etc.)

Pay attention to the needs and habits of plants:
- Water requirements
- Soil pH
- Light/shade needs
- Size at full growth
- Habits (How does it spread? Will it have a dormant period?)
- Wildlife considerations

The Best Advice: Diversity

- Group plants with similar needs
- Diversity in flora = diversity in fauna = better protection for garden
- Consider bloom and fruiting times
- Evergreen and deciduous
- Layers
- Variety in colors and flower types
Trees, Large-Medium

Trees, when chosen appropriately, provide beauty and well-needed shade for Texas landscapes.

- **Anacua**
  - Fraxinus texensis
  - 40-50’ deciduous tree
  - Fast-grower
  - **Light:** Sun
  - **Water:** Very low
  - **Wildlife:** Nesting, cover, food for birds, host for Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

- **Lacey Oak**
  - Quercus polymorpha
  - 45-60’ Semi-evergreen tree
  - Resistant to oak wilt
  - **Light:** Sun
  - **Water:** Very low
  - **Wildlife:** Host plant for many species, good cover/nesting, nuts for birds and mammals

- **Mexican White Oak**
  - Quercus polymorpha
  - 45-60’ Semi-evergreen tree
  - Resistant to oak wilt
  - **Light:** Sun
  - **Water:** Very low
  - **Wildlife:** Host plant for many species, good cover/nesting, nuts for birds and mammals

- **Texas Ash**
  - Fraxinus texensis
  - 40-50’ deciduous tree
  - Fast-grower
  - **Light:** Sun
  - **Water:** Very low
  - **Wildlife:** Nesting, cover, food for birds, host for Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

- **Arizona Cypress**
  - Hesperocyparis/Cupressus arizonica
  - 25-50’ evergreen tree
  - Blue-silver foliage
  - Seeds require fire
  - **Light:** Sun
  - **Water:** Very low
  - **Wildlife:** Cover, nesting

- **Texas Persimmon**
  - Diospyros texana
  - 12-20’ deciduous to semi-evergreen tree
  - White flowers, edible fruit
  - **Light:** Sun/Part shade
  - **Water:** Very low
  - **Wildlife:** Blooms for pollinators, fruit for birds and mammals, host plant for Gray Hairstreak

Photos: Doris Happel

Trees, cont’d

Photos: Backbone Valley Nursery

Photos: Countryside Nursery

Photos: Tree Land
Understory Trees/Shrubs

Planting shrubs and small trees under shade trees gives much needed habitat to songbirds and other animals.

**Anacacho Orchid**
*Bauhinia lunarioides*
- 6-12’ tree, airy habit
- Semi-evergreen or deciduous
- White blooms in spring
- **Light:** Sun/Part shade
- **Water:** Low
- **Wildlife:** Blooms for pollinators

**Mexican Redbud**
*Cercis occidentalis*
- 5-8’ tree, semi-evergreen
- **Light:** Sun/Part shade
- **Water:** Low
- **Wildlife:** Blooms for pollinators

**Mexican Plum**
*Bauhinia* sp.
- 6-12’ tree, semi-evergreen
- **Light:** Sun/Part shade
- **Water:** Low
- **Wildlife:** Blooms for pollinators

**American Beautyberry**
*Callicarpa americana*
- 4-6’ deciduous shrub
- **Light:** Shade
- **Water:** Low
- **Wildlife:** Fall berries for birds

**Arroyo Sweetwood**
*Myropernum sousanum*
- Deciduous tree up to 20’
- **Light:** Sun/Part Shade
- **Water:** Low
- **Wildlife:** Attracts pollinators and birds

**Barbados Cherry**
*Malpighia glabra*
- 4-6’ semi-evergreen shrub
- Small pink flowers, berries high in Vitamin C
- **Light:** Sun/Part Shade
- **Water:** Low
- **Wildlife:** Attracts pollinators and birds

**Turk’s Cap**
*Malvaviscus arboreus*
- 2-6’ deciduous shrub
- **Light:** Sun/Part Shade
- **Water:** Low
- **Wildlife:** Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies, host plant
Shade-tolerant Perennials and Groundcovers

Many people believe nothing grows under trees in Texas, but there are actually many plants that prefer shade.

**Heartleaf Skullcap**

*Scutelaria ovata subsp. Bracteata*

- 2’ perennial, dormant in summer
- Blue flowers
- May spread when watered

**Light:** Shade  
**Water:** Low-med  
**Wildlife:** Attracts butterflies

**Pigeonberry**

- **Photo:** W.D. and Dolphia Bransford, WFC

**Texas Sedge**

- **Photo:** Joseph A. Marcus, WFC

**Inland Sea Oats**

*Chasmanthium latifolium*

- 2-4’ ornamental grass
- Deciduous
- Hides oak sprouts

**Light:** Shade  
**Water:** Low  
**Wildlife:** Host plant, seeds for birds, good cover

**Cast Iron Plant**

*Aspidistra elatior*

- 3’ evergreen perennial
- Leaves will scorch in too much sun

**Light:** Shade  
**Water:** Low

**Red Columbine**

*Aquilegia canadensis*

- 1-2’ semi-evergreen
- Dormant in summer

**Light:** Sun/Part Shade  
**Water:** Medium  
**Wildlife:** Attracts hummingbirds and early pollinating insects

**Chile Pequin**

*Capsicum annuum*

- 2-4’ deciduous perennial
- White flowers, hot peppers

**Light:** Sun/Part Shade  
**Water:** Low  
**Wildlife:** Attracts birds and small pollinators

Shady Perennials/Groundcover, cont’d
Sun Plants That Provide Light Shade

**Texas Kidneywood**
*Chilopsis linearis*
15-20’ airy tree
**Light:** Sun/Part shade
**Water:** Very low
**Wildlife:** Hummingbirds, bees, butterflies, host plant

**Desert Willow**
*Leucaena retusa*
12-20’ tree
**Light:** Sun/Part shade
**Yellow spherical blossoms**
**Water:** Very low
**Wildlife:** Attracts pollinators, offers cover and nesting

**Fragrant Mimosa**
*Mimosa borealis*
6-8’ shrub with prickles
Pink flowers
**Light:** Sun
**Water:** Very low
**Wildlife:** Pollinators

**Goldenball Leadtree**
*Echinacea purpurea*
1-3’ deciduous perennial
**Light:** Sun/Part shade
**Water:** Low
**Wildlife:** Pollinator magnet; seeds feed birds; host plant

Pollinator Garden – Aim for Variety!

**Texas Lantana**
*Lantana urticoides*
3-5’ shrub-like perennial
**Light:** Sun/Part shade
**Water:** Low
**Wildlife:** Pollinator magnet; birds eat the berries; host plant

**White Mistflower/Shrubby Boneset**
*Aster oblongifolium*
2-3’ fall bloomer
**Light:** Sun/Part shade
**Water:** Low
**Wildlife:** Nectar/pollen source

**Fall Aster**
*Echinacea purpurea*
1-3’ deciduous perennial
**Light:** Sun/Part shade
**Water:** Low
**Wildlife:** Pollinator magnet; seeds feed birds; host plant
Attracting Hummingbirds

Hummingbirds visit flowers of many colors but especially favor red tubular flowers.

- **Flame Acanthus**
  - Photo: Noelle Johnson

**Coral Honeysuckle**
- *Lonicer sempervirens*
  - 6-12’ semi-evergreen vine
  - **Light:** Sun/Part shade
  - **Water:** Low-medium
  - **Wildlife:** Hummingbirds, butterflies, host plant

**Cherry Sage**
- *Salvia gregii*
  - 2-3’ evergreen perennial
  - **Light:** Sun/Part shade
  - **Water:** Low
  - **Wildlife:** Hummingbirds, butterflies, host plant

**Firebush**
- *Hamelia patens*
  - 3-5’ deciduous shrub
  - Prune to 6” after first hard freeze
  - **Light:** Sun
  - **Wildlife:** Hummingbirds

Attracting Butterflies

- **Lindheimer’s Senna**
  - *Cassia lindheimeriana*
  - 3-4’ soft-leaved perennial
  - **Light:** Sun/Part shade
  - **Water:** Low
  - **Wildlife:** Pollen and nectar source; host plant for Sulphur butterflies

- **Gregg’s Mistflower**
  - *Conoclinium greggii*
  - 1-2’ perennial
  - Cut back after freeze
  - **Light:** Sun/Part shade
  - **Water:** Low-medium
  - **Wildlife:** Pollinator magnet

- **Winecup**
  - *Callirhoe involucrata*
  - 6”-1” sprawling plant
  - Dormant when hot
  - **Light:** Sun/Part shade
  - **Water:** Low
  - **Wildlife:** Pollen and nectar source; host
Antelope Horn Milkweed
*Asclepias asperula*

- 1-2’ deciduous perennial
- **Light:** Sun
- **Water:** Low-med
- **Wildlife:** Pollinators; host plant for Monarch and Queen butterflies

Attracting Bees

- Plant a variety of flower types to attract species with shorter or longer tongues
- Bees love blue, purple, white, violet, and yellow flowers
- “Bee targets”
- Fragrance, too!

**Mealy Blue Sage**
*Salvia farinacea*
2-3’ perennial
- **Light:** Sun
- **Water:** Low
- **Wildlife:** Pollen and nectar source

**Zexmenia**
*Wedelia texana*
1.5-2.5’ perennial
- **Light:** Sun/Part shade
- **Water:** Low
- **Wildlife:** Pollen and nectar source; host plant
Evergreens

Evergreens provide important cover for wildlife during winter months, as well as continuous color or screening to the landscape.

✓ **Evergreen Sumac**
Leucophyllum frutescens
5-8’ evergreen shrub
“Barometer Bush”
Light: Sun
Water: Very low
Wildlife: Provides food and cover; host plant

**Texas Sage/Cenizo**
Hymenoxys	
Tetraneuris scaposa
1’ evergreen perennial
Light: Sun/Part shade
Water: Very low
Wildlife: Year-round nectar/pollen source

**Four-nerve Daisy (Hymenoxys)**
Tetraneuris scaposa
1’ evergreen perennial
Light: Sun/Part shade
Water: Very low
Wildlife: Year-round nectar/pollen source

**Texas Sage/Cenizo**
Leucophyllum frutescens
5-8’ evergreen shrub
“Barometer Bush”
Light: Sun
Water: Very low
Wildlife: Provides food and cover; host plant

• **Four-nerve Daisy (Hymenoxys)**
Tetraneuris scaposa
1’ evergreen perennial
Light: Sun/Part shade
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Leucophyllum frutescens
5-8’ evergreen shrub
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Light: Sun
Water: Very low
Wildlife: Provides food and cover; host plant

**Bush Germander**
Teucrium fruticans
4-6’ evergreen shrub
Keep natural shape
Light: Sun/Part shade
Water: Low
Wildlife: Pollinators, good cover/nesting

**Carolina Jessamine**
† Carolina Jessamine
Sophora secundiflora
12-20’ evergreen tree
Fragrant early blooms
Light: Sun/Part shade
Water: Very low
Wildlife: Pollinators, good cover/nesting

**Texas Mountain Laurel**
Sophora secundiflora
12-20’ evergreen tree
Fragrant early blooms
Light: Sun/Part shade
Water: Very low
Wildlife: Pollinators, good cover/nesting

**Crossvine**
Bignonia capreolata
6-30’+ evergreen vine
Light: Sun/Part shade
Water: Low
Wildlife: Bees and hummingbirds, cover/nesting

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4-6’ evergreen shrub
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Hot and Dry/Xeric

Drought-hardy plants are a must in Texas. Fortunately, there’s a variety, and their use brings texture to your garden.

**Artichoke Agave**
* Agave parryi v. truncata
* 2-3’ succulent
* **Light:** Sun/Part shade
* **Water:** Low
* **Wildlife:** Cover for small arthropods; pollen/nectar if blooming

**Prickly Pear**
* *Opuntia* spp.
* 3-5’ cactus
* **Light:** Sun
* **Water:** Low
* **Wildlife:** Bees; some animals consume pads or fruit

**Big Muhly**
* *Muhlenbergia linaneimleri*
* 3-4’ bunch grass
* **Light:** Sun/Part shade
* **Water:** Low-med
* **Wildlife:** Cover; nesting material; host plant

**Gayfeather**
* *Liatris* spp.
* 1-3’ perennial
* Purple fall blooms
* **Light:** Sun
* **Water:** Very low
* **Wildlife:** Great nectar source for insects

**Blackfoot Daisy**
* *Melampodium leucanthum*
* 6-12’ perennial
* Does not like wet feet
* **Light:** Sun
* **Water:** Very low
* **Wildlife:** Nectar/pollen for small insects

**Agarita**
* *Mahonia trifoliata*
* 3-7’ shrub with sharp leaves
* **Light:** Sun/Part shade
* **Water:** Very low
* **Wildlife:** Early blooms, spring berries

**Red Yucca**
* *Hesperaloe parviflora*
* 2-4’ agave with coral spike
* **Light:** Sun/Part shade
* **Water:** Very low
* **Wildlife:** Attracts hummingbirds
Hot and Dry/Xeric, cont’d

**Esperanza**  
*Tecoma stans*  
4-6’ deciduous shrub  
*Light:* Sun  
*Water:* Low  
*Wildlife:* Great nectar source for bees and hummingbirds

**Damianita**  
*Chrysactinia mexicana*  
1’ evergreen perennial  
Fragrant foliage  
*Light:* Sun  
*Water:* Very low  
*Wildlife:* Great nectar source for bees and small butterflies

**Buffalograss**  
*Bouteloua dactyloides*  
3-12’ turf grass  
Often grown with Blue Grama and Curly Mesquite  
*Light:* Sun  
*Water:* Low  
*Wildlife:* Seeds for birds, host plant for Skipper butterflies

**Screening Plants**

**Wax Myrtle**  
*Morella cerifera*  
12-15’ evergreen shrub  
Plant away from structures  
*Light:* Sun/Part shade  
*Water:* Medium  
*Wildlife:* Berries, cover, host plant for two Hairstreak butterflies

**Pineapple Guava**  
*Feijoa sellowiana*  
6-10’ evergreen shrub  
Pink blooms, edible fruit  
*Light:* Sun  
*Water:* Low-med  
*Wildlife:* Attracts pollinators

**Cherry Laurel**  
*Prunus caroliniana*  
15-20’ evergreen shrub  
White flowers, dark fruit, poisonous leaves  
*Light:* Sun/Part shade  
*Water:* Medium  
*Wildlife:* Attracts birds and pollinators

**Sandankwa**  
*Viburnum suspensum*  
6-8’ evergreen shrub  
Fragrant, white waxy flowers, red berries  
Freeze might damage  
*Light:* Sun/Part shade  
*Water:* Medium
Ponds

- There are many native water-loving plants – check local stores and ask friends for divides.
- If choosing exotic plants for your pond, always pay attention to whether they are detrimental to nearby creeks and waterways. Pond plants can and do escape!

Deer-Resistant Plants

Plants with strong scents, tastes, or textures are least palatable to deer.

Examples include: Sages/Salvias, Basket Grass, Big Muhly, Chocolate Daisy, Chile Pequin, Texas Betony, Damianita, Milkweed, Shrubby Skullcap, Texas Lantana, Flame Acanthus, and more
Where to Find Information

- **Austin’s Native and Adapted Landscape Plants** (also, [www.growgreen.org](http://www.growgreen.org))
- **General Native Texas Plant info (Wildflower Center):** [http://www.wildflower.org/explore/](http://www.wildflower.org/explore/)
- **Central Texas Horticulture:** [http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/)
- **TC Master Gardener Help Desk and Daphne Richards**
- **Caterpillar Host Plants:** [http://texasento.net/CenTexPlnts.pdf](http://texasento.net/CenTexPlnts.pdf) (Austin Butterfly Forum)

Where to Buy Natives and Adapted

**Local nurseries:** Several offer many native and good adapted choices, including:
- Barton Springs Nursery (South-Central Austin)
- Natural Gardener (South Austin)
- Vivero Growers (en route to Dripping Springs)
- It’s About Thyme (South Austin)
- The Great Outdoors (South Austin)
- Shoal Creek Nursery (Central Austin)
- Red Barn (North Austin)
- Green ’n Growing (Pflugerville)
- Round Rock Gardens (Round Rock)
- McIntire’s Garden Center (Georgetown)

**Native Plant Sales:** At the [Wildflower Center](http://www.wildflower.org)'s spring (April) and fall (October) plant sales, you can get hard-to-find natives for your garden. Also, our local **Native Plant Societies** periodically host sales.

**Native Seeds:** Native American Seed at [www.seedsource.com](http://www.seedsource.com)
Wrapping Up

Reflection on Native and Adapted Plants
* Sustainability
* Suitability
* Wildlife Considerations

Questions?

Chocolate Daisy
Berlandiera lyrata

Mmmm, chocolate....