

WILDFLOWER REGIONS OF TEXAS



Panhandle Plains

Piney Woods

Gulf Coast

South Texas Plains

Hill Country

Big Bend Country

PANHANDLE PLAINS
The Texas Panhandle combines the vegetational areas of the Rolling Plains with that of the High Plains, which are the southernmost extension of the Great Plains of the United States. The Rolling Plains consist of juniper woodlands and midgrass prairies, while the High Plains are primarily short grasses. Much of the Panhandle has been converted to cropland and ranches. Sand sagebrush and honey mesquites, along with buffalo grass, various species of grama grass and little bluestem dominate the natural landscape.

PRAIRIES AND LAKES
The oak woods and prairies portion of this region is a transitional zone for a number of plants, with ranges extending northward into the Great Plains or eastward into the forests. Early settlers named it Cross-Timbers because of the belts of oak

forest crossing strips of prairie grassland they found here. This region also includes the Blackland Prairies, so named for its deep, fertile black soils. The area's once-dominant grass species—big and little bluestem, Indiangrass and switchgrass—are now found only in pockets of land left undisturbed by grazing or cultivation.

PINEY WOODS
The eastern portion of Texas includes the vegetational areas of the Piney Woods and the Post Oak Savannah. With its abundant rainfall (40 to 55 inches a year), the Piney Woods is characterized by mixed pine and hardwood forests, plus swamps that support unique species such as pitcher plants, orchids and sundews. Flowering dogwoods herald the arrival of spring in most woodlands. The Post Oak Savannah—dominated by hickories, post oak and blackjack oak—comprises a transition zone between the eastern forests and prairies to the west.

GULF COAST
This 50- to 100-mile-wide area of land bordering the Gulf of Mexico consists of cordgrass marshes, which support a rich array of marine life and provide wintering grounds for water birds. Remnants of coastal tallgrass and midgrass prairies with tall woodlands are found in the river bottoms. Much of the land has been developed into farms, ranches and urban areas. With an annual rainfall of 25 to 55 inches, the Gulf Coast blooms almost year-round with morning glories, sea-eyes and beach evening primroses.

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS
The South Texas Plains, known as the Rio Grande Plain, is a land of thorny woodlands, shrublands and many subtropical species. Formerly an area of open grasslands, today's South Texas landscapes reflect the changes

wrought by agriculture, industry and urban development. Rainfall is sparse, but when it comes—usually in spring and fall—it brings a profusion of wildflowers, cacti and flowering shrubs such as huisache.

HILL COUNTRY
One of the richest areas for wildflower displays, Central Texas includes the Edwards Plateau, known more popularly as the Hill Country. This region is primarily an area of oak-hickory or oak-juniper woodlands, mesquite-mixed brush savannah and grasslands. The scenic area is rich ecosystem with limestone cliffs, caves, granite outcrops and hidden springs, which create diverse habitats for wildflowers. Favorites such as bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, winecups, Indian blanket and lemongrass paint the fields with bold palettes of color.

BIG BEND COUNTRY
West Texas, primarily the Trans-Pecos zone, is perhaps the most complex of all of the regions. A land of desert and as eight inches. The Trans-Pecos is home to the highest point in the state—Guadalupe Peak at 8,749 feet above sea level. Moist canyons, wooded mountains and desert shrublands offer myriad habitats for unusual wildflowers. Spring rains transform this arid region into a riot of color, as Chisos bluebonnets, desert marigolds and a variety of cacti bloom. An encore comes with a second flowering period in the fall, following late summer rains.



Prairies and Lakes

WILD FLOWERS of Texas



WILDFLOWERS OF TEXAS

WITH ITS SPRAWLING SIZE AND DIVERSITY of landforms, Texas offers a treasure of spectacular wildflowers for residents and visitors alike. More than 5,000 species of flowering plants are native to Texas. The abundance results from an exceptional multitude of plant habitats and weather conditions.

Texas elevations range from sea level to craggy mountain peaks over 8,000 feet high. More than 55 inches of annual rainfall drench the jungle-like regions of East Texas, while the sun-baked Chihuahuan Desert of West Texas averages less than eight inches of moisture per year. Although Panhandle localities average 24 inches of snowfall a year, the city of Brownsville at Texas' subtropical tip rarely records a single snowflake.

NATION'S LARGEST GARDENER Connecting all the sites and offering sightseeing access is the Texas highway system. Along the roads lie more than 800,000 acres of highway right-of-way. The Texas Department of Transportation cares for every acre. Landscape architects and maintenance personnel carefully groom the roadsides and highway medians—fertilizing, mowing,



a prime example being the miles of crape myrtles, spectacular in spring, on U.S. 271 north of Paris.

planting shrubs and trees, and sowing literally tons of wildflower seed yearly. Examples of the department's commitment to beauty are seen in highway medians and roadsides, especially in spring. In addition to wildflowers, attractive cultivated varieties also are planted along highways.



PRIME TIMES & PLACES
March, April and May are prime blooming months in Texas. Dogwood festivals in Woodville and Palestine celebrate the season with special events usually held on the last two weekends in March and the first weekend in April. Bluebonnets, too, are in their glory all year long. One of the oldest bluebonnet trails is in Ennis, featuring more than 40 miles of well-marked routes. Trails in Washington County are charted from Brenham and Chappell Hill, while La Grange offers bluebonnet trails in Fayette County. Farther west, the Highland Lakes Bluebonnet Trail loops through the scenic Hill Country, usually on the first two weekends in April. In Northeast Texas, a signed wildflower route on the last full weekend in April showcases dozens of beautiful wild species between the towns of Avinger, Hughes Springs and Linden. A floral treat in mid-March is the Houston Azalea Trail, when the cultivated, manicured gardens of some of the city's prestigious homes are shared with the public. Visit a Texas Travel Information Center or write to the address on the back cover for a free copy of each spring's *Texas Events Calendar*, which gives wildflower and other floral event dates and locations. Events also can be viewed at www.travelinfo.com or www.texashighways.com.

For reports on scenic wildflower locations, visit www.tdot.gov to late-May, visit www.tdot.gov or call 800-452-9292.

AND OTHER TIMES

While spring hosts lavish wildflower displays, succeeding months offer their own spectacles. Indian blankets may color entire fields with red and orange during May and June. Bunches of brilliant yellow flowers thrive during summer's hottest months. Elegant Queen Anne's lace is a September offering, followed by fall blooms including goldenrod and purple gayfeather. In mid-October, roses are the stars of Tyler's annual Rose Festival. But fall's flowers are rivaled in color by October's autumn trails in Canadian and Willsboro. In West Texas, colorful blossoms of cacti, succulents and other desert species may erupt following any rain.

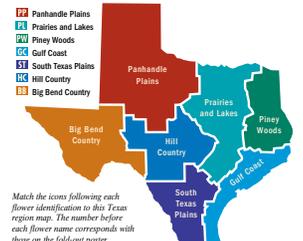
LIKE TO KNOW MORE?

The state's capital city, Austin, is home to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, a research unit of the University of Texas at Austin, devoted to the preservation and use of native plants. The Wildflower Center is a botanical garden that demonstrates the beauty and importance of native plants. Water features, nature trails, display gardens, visitors gallery, café, gift store and award-winning architecture can be found, along with information on how to plant and grow wildflowers. Spring wildflowers bloom March through June; fall wildflowers bloom September through November.



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WILDFLOWER SPECIES



- 1. TAHOKA DASY** (*Machaeranthera tanacetifolia*) also known as tansy aster, grows abundantly in the sandy soils of West Texas or the Panhandle. Its rich-purple flower head with the yellow center adds a vivid spot of color to dusty landscapes. Tahoka daisies bloom from late spring to summer. [12](#) [13](#) [14](#)
- 2. BUTTERFLY WEED** (*Azteculepis tuberosa*) blooms in spring and summer in East and Central Texas. Although the leaves are poisonous to livestock, the nectar is a staple of monarchs and other butterflies. [15](#) [16](#) [17](#)
- 3. MEXICAN HAT** (*Ratibida columnifera*) is so named for its striking resemblance to the traditional high-crowned, broad-brimmed Mexican sombrero. Common throughout most of Texas, Mexican hat blooms from May to July and later with favorable weather. [18](#) [19](#) [20](#) [21](#) [22](#) [23](#) [24](#) [25](#) [26](#) [27](#)
- 4. AMERICAN LOTUS** (*Nelumbo lutea*), or water lily, is a close relative of the sacred lotus of Egypt. It grows in quiet waters of South and East Texas. At maturity, the flat-topped seed pod floats away, releasing seeds in new locations as it decays. [28](#) [29](#) [30](#) [31](#) [32](#) [33](#)
- 5. BLUE-EYED GRASS** (*Sisyrinchium spp.*) On sunny spring days (April to May), this perennial, with its grasslike leaves, blankets roadside pastures with blue to purple blooms. Common in the sandy forests of East Texas and the prairies of the Texas Gulf Coast. [34](#) [35](#) [36](#) [37](#) [38](#) [39](#)

- 6. PINK EVENING PRIMROSE** (*Oenothera speciosa*), sometimes called buttercup, opens at dusk in northern parts of the state, resembling tiny glowing lamps. Though the flowers wither the next day, new blossoms open each evening; in the rest of the state, blooms stay open all day. With favorable weather, these drought-tolerant beauties bloom from April to June. [40](#) [41](#) [42](#) [43](#) [44](#) [45](#) [46](#) [47](#) [48](#) [49](#)
- 7. OOTILL** (*Fraxipetris ootillana*) is also known as silwood, candlewood, coachwhip and flammingsword. A native of West Texas, ootillo (oh-ke-tee-oh) blooms in April and May, and sporadically thereafter following rains. During dry periods, it looks dead and leafless. [50](#) [51](#)
- 8. HUISACHE DASY** (*Amblylopsis setigera*) emits a fresh scent that smells like newly mown hay. It blooms from April to June in Central and South Texas. The yellow huisache (we-sach) daisy often grows in thick blankets beneath huisache and other chaparral shrubs, hence its name. [52](#) [53](#) [54](#) [55](#) [56](#) [57](#) [58](#) [59](#) [60](#)
- 9. RAIN LILY** (*Cooperia pedunculata*) appears like magic a few days after heavy rains, from spring to fall. The blossom opens slowly at dusk, gradually expands during the night and appears in full flower the next morning. [61](#) [62](#) [63](#) [64](#) [65](#) [66](#) [67](#) [68](#) [69](#)
- 10. BLUEBELLS** (*Eustoma grandiflorum*) are one of the loveliest Texas wildflowers. The bluebell blossoms from June to September. Don't pick them! Bluebells have virtually disappeared in many locations due to indiscriminate picking. [70](#) [71](#) [72](#) [73](#) [74](#) [75](#) [76](#) [77](#) [78](#) [79](#)
- 11. AGAVE** (*Agave spp.*) grows in the Chihuahuan Desert of Southwest Texas. It is sometimes called the century plant, as each plant only flowers once in its lifetime, and it may take many years to reach the flowering stage. The tall flower stalk provides a feast for birds, bats, butterflies and other insects. Tequila is made from commercially grown agave. [80](#) [81](#) [82](#) [83](#)
- 12. INDIAN BLANKET** (*Gaillardia puchella*), also called firewheel, blooms across much of the state from April to June. When viewed in mass, its brilliant combinations of red, orange and yellow resemble brightly woven tapestries. [84](#) [85](#) [86](#) [87](#) [88](#) [89](#) [90](#) [91](#) [92](#)
- 13. SPODERBURY** (*Tridesmoda gigantea*), well represented in Texas, has a dainty, three-petal flower with slender, hairy stamens. The flower color can be an indicator of the pH of the soil. Acidic soils produce blue flowers, while more alkaline soils create varying shades of pink and purple. [93](#) [94](#) [95](#) [96](#) [97](#) [98](#) [99](#) [100](#)
- 14. FLEABANE** (*Erigon philadelphicus*) is a common flower on sandy soils throughout most of East Texas, usually along roadsides and stream banks. It flowers early in the spring, persisting until late summer. [101](#) [102](#) [103](#) [104](#) [105](#) [106](#) [107](#) [108](#) [109](#) [110](#)
- 15. RED VERBENA** (*Verbena spp.*) species, found throughout all regions, are among the most abundant wildflowers in the state. Although verbe-

- nas bloom most profusely in the spring, they may flower at other times of the year as well, depending on the amount of rainfall. [111](#) [112](#) [113](#) [114](#) [115](#) [116](#) [117](#) [118](#) [119](#) [120](#)
- 16. LEMONMINT** (*Monarda citrifolia*), also called horsemint, grows abundantly throughout most of Texas, in many different colors. Various species flower from May to September, and each species attracts particular nectar-seekers, including bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Pioneers brewed a cough medicine from lemonmint. [121](#) [122](#) [123](#) [124](#) [125](#) [126](#) [127](#) [128](#) [129](#) [130](#)
- 17. TEXAS DANDELION** (*Pyrrophragma carolinianum*), or false dandelion, grows commonly over the eastern half of the state. Besides growing in fields and along roadsides, it often invades yards. Its lemon-yellow flower heads bloom in the mornings from March through May. [131](#) [132](#) [133](#) [134](#) [135](#) [136](#) [137](#) [138](#) [139](#) [140](#)
- 18. SPIDER LILY** (*Hymenocallis liriosme*) has fragrant flowers with dramatic white petals. Requires a generous source of water, and grows in ditches, beside ponds and on coastal prairies. [141](#) [142](#) [143](#) [144](#) [145](#)
- 19. WHITE PRICKLY POPPY** (*Argemone albiflora*), an abundant, nettle-like plant of Central and South Texas, blooms profusely in April. Closely related is a yellow species, Mexican poppy, and several other species with colors varying from lavender to rose. [146](#) [147](#) [148](#) [149](#) [150](#) [151](#) [152](#) [153](#) [154](#) [155](#)
- 20. CENZOL** (*Leucophyllum frutescens*) thrives in dry areas of the western half of the state. Although it is also called Texas or purple sage, cenozo is not a true sage. After rains, the soft, ash-colored leaves become engulfed by masses of lavender blossoms. [156](#) [157](#) [158](#) [159](#) [160](#)
- 21. BASKET FLOWER** (*Centaurea americana*), also called shaving brush, has feathery pink outer ray flowers surrounding a creamy center of disk flowers. Underneath the flower are straw-colored bracts that resemble a woven basket. Basket flower occurs throughout most of Texas and blooms from June to July. [161](#) [162](#) [163](#) [164](#) [165](#) [166](#) [167](#) [168](#) [169](#) [170](#)
- 22. YUCCA** (*Yucca torreyi*), or Spanish dagger, flourishes over much of Texas, but is most common in western areas where it can attain heights of 18 feet. A huge mass of white blossoms appears in spring and sometimes after fall rains. [171](#) [172](#) [173](#) [174](#) [175](#) [176](#) [177](#) [178](#) [179](#) [180](#)
- 23. WILD AZALEA** (*Rhododendron canescens*), sometimes called spring honeysuckle, thrives in the wet woodlands of East Texas. Large pink and white petals appear before the azalea leafs out in early spring. [181](#) [182](#) [183](#) [184](#) [185](#) [186](#) [187](#) [188](#) [189](#) [190](#)
- 24. CACTI**, (Strawberry cactus, *Echinocereus stramineus*) such as this species, grow on dry soils throughout most of Texas and bloom in early summer. The flowers vary in color from pink to red, lavender and yellow-green. The flower forms into a fleshy green fruit. [191](#) [192](#) [193](#) [194](#) [195](#) [196](#) [197](#) [198](#) [199](#) [200](#)
- 25. CORDEPUS** (*Coepepus tinctoria*), or tickseed, often blankets whole fields and roadsides with the brilliance of gold. It blooms from May to August in the eastern half of the state. Early settlers used the plants in their mattresses to ward off ticks and fleas. [201](#) [202](#) [203](#) [204](#) [205](#) [206](#) [207](#) [208](#) [209](#) [210](#)
- 26. SWAMP MALLOW** (*Hibiscus moscheutos*) is one of the most popular Texas species in the mallow family. Native to tropical areas along the Gulf Coast, swamp mallow also inhabits low areas of East Texas. The mallow family includes such crops as cotton and okra. [211](#) [212](#) [213](#) [214](#) [215](#) [216](#) [217](#) [218](#) [219](#) [220](#)
- 27. INDIAN PAINTBRUSH** (*Castilleja spp.*) varies in color from scarlet to orange, cream, yellow and occasionally purple. The brightly colored tips of the petal-like bracts look like they've been dipped in a brilliant paint. Indian paintbrushes grow throughout the state and bloom in early spring. [221](#) [222](#) [223](#) [224](#) [225](#) [226](#) [227](#) [228](#) [229](#) [230](#)
- 28. PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS** (*Opuntia spp.*) grows throughout Texas. The yellow to deep purple flowers form edible, pear-shaped fruits that turn dark red as they ripen in late summer and fall. [231](#) [232](#) [233](#) [234](#) [235](#) [236](#) [237](#) [238](#) [239](#) [240](#)
- 29. OBEDIENT PLANT** (*Physostegia pulegioides*) is an endemic species, found mostly in the wet bottomlands of East Texas. You can move the flowers around on the stem and they'll stay where you put them, hence the name "obedient." Obedient plant blooms from April to June. [241](#) [242](#) [243](#) [244](#) [245](#) [246](#) [247](#) [248](#) [249](#) [250](#)
- 30. GOLDENROD** (*Solidago spp.*), a much-maligned plant, is mistakenly thought to cause hay fever. The real culprit, ragweed, blooms at the same time. Texas has more than 30 species of goldenrod, and most flower in late summer and fall. [251](#) [252](#) [253](#) [254](#) [255](#) [256](#) [257](#) [258](#) [259](#) [260](#)
- 31. CARDINAL FLOWER** (*Lobelia cardinalis*), although found throughout the state, requires moist areas that occur more commonly in the eastern half of the state. The bright-red flowers often grow along stream banks, where sulfur bacteria and hummingbirds partake of their nectar. Cardinal flowers bloom from May to December, depending on the amount of moisture. [261](#) [262](#) [263](#) [264](#) [265](#) [266](#) [267](#) [268](#) [269](#) [270](#)
- 32. SLEEPY DASY** (*Xanthoxia texanum*) grows in open sandy areas, mainly in South and Central Texas. At night or on cloudy days, the rays close up, and the daisy seems to "sleep." Sleepy daisy blooms from spring to early fall. [271](#) [272](#) [273](#) [274](#) [275](#) [276](#) [277](#) [278](#) [279](#) [280](#)
- 33. GRASS PINK** (*Calopogon tuberosus var. tuberosus*) is one of many fascinating orchids found in the tangled swamps of the Big Thicket area in Southeast Texas. Grass pinks and other unique species are becoming more scarce as human activities threaten their habitats. [281](#) [282](#) [283](#) [284](#) [285](#) [286](#) [287](#) [288](#) [289](#) [290](#)
- 34. RED MORNING GLORY** (*Ipomoea imperati*) Large mats of vegetation and deeply anchored roots of the beach morning glory make it an

- important plant in helping stabilize the dunes of Padre Island and other coastal beaches. Blooming from April through December, the flowers open each morning and close in the afternoon. [291](#) [292](#) [293](#) [294](#) [295](#) [296](#) [297](#) [298](#) [299](#) [300](#)
- 35. GAYFEATHER** (*Liatris spp.*) also called blazing stars, grows in open areas throughout the state. Blooming from late summer to fall, the purple or pink spikes contrast strikingly with prairie grasses. [301](#) [302](#) [303](#) [304](#) [305](#) [306](#) [307](#) [308](#) [309](#) [310](#)
- 36. STANDING CYPRESS** (*Leptocarpus rubra*) ranges from East Texas west to Gillespie and Taylor counties. The bloom is a spectacular display of scarlet trumpets displayed from May to July. [311](#) [312](#) [313](#) [314](#) [315](#) [316](#) [317](#) [318](#) [319](#) [320](#)
- 37. LANTANA** (*Lantana urticoides*), a three- to five-foot shrub, grows in various habitats throughout the state. Under favorable conditions, the bright, multicolored blossoms flower from spring until the first frost. [321](#) [322](#) [323](#) [324](#) [325](#) [326](#) [327](#) [328](#) [329](#) [330](#)
- 38. PITCHER PLANT** (*Sarracenia alata*) is a carnivorous plant that grows in swampy areas of East Texas. Attracted by sweet nectar secreted by a pitcher plant's glands, insects crawl into the inviting green tube. Unable to maintain a foothold on the smooth inner surface, the insects slip further into the tube, where downward curving hairs prevent their escape. [331](#) [332](#) [333](#) [334](#) [335](#) [336](#) [337](#) [338](#) [339](#) [340](#)
- 39. TEXAS MOUNTAIN LAUREL** (*Sophora secundiflora*), also called mesquit bean, is an evergreen shrub or small tree found in Central and Southwest Texas. In early spring, mountain laurels produce lovely clusters of purple flowers with a distinct grape fragrance. The hard, red beans that appear in the fall are poisonous. This species is unrelated to the southern mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) found in eastern states. [341](#) [342](#) [343](#) [344](#) [345](#) [346](#) [347](#) [348](#) [349](#) [350](#)
- 40. BLACK-EYED SUSAN** (*Rudbeckia hirta*) is a prairie species found throughout Texas. Its bright yellow flowers with a chocolate brown center bloom from May through September. Hardy black-eyed Susan makes an excellent wildflower for roadsides. [351](#) [352](#) [353](#) [354](#) [355](#) [356](#) [357](#) [358](#) [359](#) [360](#)
- 41. WILD PHLOX** (*Phlox drummondii*) occurs most frequently in spectacular masses of color among sandy post oak woods and along roadsides in South Central Texas. While red is the most common color, you will also see various shades of pink, blue and purple. Phlox blooms in early spring. [361](#) [362](#) [363](#) [364](#) [365](#) [366](#) [367](#) [368](#) [369](#) [370](#)
- 42. TEXAS BLUEBONNETS** (*Lupinus texensis*) blanket large portions of the state in early spring. All six species of lupine that grow in Texas have been designated as the official state flower by the State Legislature. [371](#) [372](#) [373](#) [374](#) [375](#) [376](#) [377](#) [378](#) [379](#) [380](#)
- 43. CHOCOLATE DASY** (*Berlandiera lyrata*), often called green eyes, grows in Central and West Texas on rocky limestone soils. When the yellow ray flowers drop, the green spots underneath look like eyes. Chocolate daisy blooms from June to October. [381](#) [382](#) [383](#) [384](#) [385](#) [386](#) [387](#) [388](#) [389](#) [390](#)
- 44. TEXAS THISTLE** (*Cirsium texanum*) grows in all areas of the state except the Panhandle. It is almost identical to the Scottish thistle that's the symbol of the Encyclopedia Britannica. Bumblebees swarm around the flowers, which bloom from April to August. [391](#) [392](#) [393](#) [394](#) [395](#) [396](#) [397](#) [398](#) [399](#) [400](#)
- 45. BLACKFOOT DASY** (*Melanampodium leucanthum*) thrives on calcareous soils of West and Central Texas. A low-growing perennial, the flowers form a dense, compact mound. Blackfoot daisies flower from early spring through fall. [401](#) [402](#) [403](#) [404](#) [405](#) [406](#) [407](#) [408](#) [409](#) [410](#)
- 46. MOUNTAIN PINK** (*Centaurium berychii*) thrives on the barren, gravel-strewn limestone hills of Central Texas and westward. The flowers, which bloom in early summer, branch to form a perfect bouquet. Called quinine weed by pioneers, the plants were dried and used to reduce fevers. [411](#) [412](#) [413](#) [414](#) [415](#) [416](#) [417](#) [418](#) [419](#) [420](#)
- 47. WINECUP** (*Callitriche digitata*) is found in most parts of the state, except the West. The delicate burgundy flower blooms in early spring on sandy soils in open woods and scrublands. [421](#) [422](#) [423](#) [424](#) [425](#) [426](#) [427](#) [428](#) [429](#) [430](#)
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- 52. SAND VERBENA** (*Abronia ameliae*) blooms from April to August on dry plains, sandy hills and beaches, mostly in southern Texas. Not actually in the verbena family, sand verbenas is a showier relative of the fallurians or heart's delight, in the four o'clock family. [471](#) [472](#) [473](#) [474](#) [475](#) [476](#) [477](#) [478](#) [479](#) [480](#)