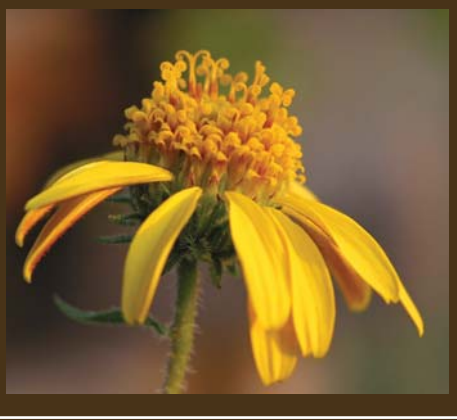
# Native Pollinator Plants *of* South Texas



United States Department of Agriculture
NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

E. "Kika" de la Garza Plant Materials Center

South Texas Natives

Helping People Help the Land

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has a Plant Materials Program to provide plants that can help solve natural resource problems. Scientists at the plant materials centers seek out plants that show promise for meeting an identified conservation need. Selected plants that are beneficial to conservation are released to the private sector for commercial production. This work is carried out in 27 centers across the country. There are three plant material centers in Texas (Nacogdoches, Kingsville and Knox City) which work cooperatively with state and Federal agencies, commercial businesses, and seed and nursery associations.

South Texas Natives is a program of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Their mission is to develop and promote native plants for restoration on public and private lands in south Texas.

South Texas Natives and the Kingsville Plant Materials Center work collaboratively to develop native plant seed sources for restoration needs. Developing native plant species that can be used to provide habitat to pollinators and other wildlife are important goals of the Kingsville Plant Materials Center and South Texas Natives.

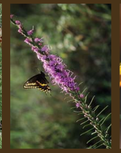
# Helping People Help the Land

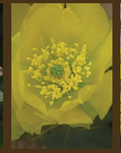
Insect and other animal pollinators play a pivotal part in the production of an estimated one out of every three bites of food that humans eat and in the reproduction of at least 80 percent of flowering plants. The commodities produced with the help of animal pollinators generate significant income for agricultural producers. For example, domestic honeybees pollinate an estimated $14.6 billion worth of crops in the United States each year, produced on more than 2 million acres. *Source: www.pollinator.org*

The plants featured in the publication are pollinator-friendly plants common to south Texas. While some have been or are being evaluated by the E. “Kika” de la Garza Plant Materials Center or the South Texas Natives Program, they are all important plants for pollinators. Some can be found commercially for planting, and others can be found in pastures, rangeland and other open areas providing important habitat for insect and other animal pollinators. These plant species should be considered for use in urban landscapes and range plantings to benefit pollinators. For information about where to obtain seed or plant material of these species please email stn@tamuk.edu.

| | Rio Grande Clammyweed | Mistflower | Engelmann's Daisy | Sunflower | Texas Lantana |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Polanisia dodecandra* ssp. *riograndensis* | *Helianthus angustifolius* | *Engelmannia peristenia* | *Helianthus* spp. | *Lantana urticoides* |
| |  |  |  |  |  |
| Duration | Annual | Perennial | Perennial | Annual \| Perennial | Perennial |
| Bloom Time | March - November | April – December | February – November | March – December | March – December |
| Bloom Color | Pink | White to Blue | Yellow | Yellow \| Orange | Yellow to Red |
| Height (ft) | 2 to 5 | 1 to 5 | 1 to 3 | 3 to 5 | 2 to 6 |
| Soil Types | Coarse | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Coarse |
| Drought Tolerance | High | Medium | High | High | High |
| Light Requirement | | | | | |
| Propagate | Seed | Seed \| Cuttings \| Division | Seed \| Division | Seed | Cuttings \| Seed |
| Remarks | This plant attracts numerous pollinator species and other insects. The seeds are eaten by a variety of game birds and wildlife. Zapata Germplasm Rio Grande Clammyweed is commercially available. | Mistflowers are excellent generalist nectar sources. Several species are found in south Texas and vary in bloom period and light requirements. | Engelmann's daisy begins to produce blooms in early spring. Seeds are eaten by several species of birds and the foliage is readily eaten by livestock. | Numerous species of sunflowers occur in south Texas. They are good generalist sources for pollen and nectar. Sunflower species that produce hollow or pithy stems are important nest sites for cavity nesting bees. | Texas lantana is an easy to grow native and will attract a variety of pollinators. |

| | Beebalm | Partridge Pea | Red Sage | Turk's Cap | Dalea |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Monarda* spp. | *Chamaecrista fasciculata* | *Salvia coccinea* | *Malvaviscus arboreus* | *Dalea* spp. |
| |  |  |  |  |  |
| Duration | Annual \| Perennial | Annual | Annual | Perennial | Annual \| Perennial |
| Bloom Time | March – November | June – December | March – December | May – November | March– December |
| Bloom Color | White to Greenish Yellow | Yellow | Red | Red | Purple \| White \| Yellow |
| Height (ft) | 1 to 3 | 1 to 3 | 1 to 3 | 1 to 4 | 1 to 3 |
| Soil Types | Coarse | Medium to Coarse | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Medium | Fine to Coarse |
| Drought Tolerance | High | Medium | High | Medium | High |
| Light Requirement | | | | | |
| Propagate | Seed | Seed | Seed | Seed \| Cuttings | Seed |
| Remarks | Five species of *Monarda* occur in south Texas. The flowers are usually small and white, but each species produces large showy bracts ranging from white to purple. | Partridge pea is also known as sleeping plant, and is considered toxic to livestock. The seed is utilized heavily by quail and other birds. This plant also has extrafloral nectaries on the stems. | Red sage is easy to grow from seed. It will attract hummingbirds and numerous other pollinators. This plant has good shade tolerance. | This plant will specifically attract hummingbirds and swallowtail butterflies. It thrives under shady conditions. | Nine species of *Dalea* occur in south Texas. Seeds are eaten by quail and other birds. Cuero Germplasm purple prairieclover is commercially available. |

| | Prairie Acacia | Whitebrush | Mexican Hat | Gayfeather | Awnless Bush Sunflower |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Acacia angustissima* | *Aloysia gratissima* | *Ratibida columnifera* | *Liatris* spp. | *Simsia calva* |
| |  |  |  |  |  |
| Duration | Perennial | Perennial | Annual \| Perennial | Perennial | Perennial |
| Bloom Time | May – November | April – December | April – September | July – November | February – December |
| Bloom Color | Creamy White | White | Yellow \| Red | Purple | Yellow |
| Height (ft) | 3 to 4 | 4 to 10 | 2 to 3 | 1 to 3 | 1 to 2.5 |
| Soil Types | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Coarse |
| Drought Tolerance | High | High | High | Medium | High |
| Light Requirement | | | | | |
| Propagate | Seed \| Division | Seed | Seed | Seed \| Division | Seed |
| Remarks | This legume spreads by rhizomes. Its flowers will attract a variety of insects. Rio Grande Germplasm and Plains Germplasm prairie acacia are both commercially available. | Whitebrush and sweetstem are important nectar producing plants for honey. Both species have fragrant flowers over a long bloom period. | Mexican hats are easy to grow and will reseed themselves readily. They are good generalist sources for pollen and nectar. Long-horned bees are frequently found on this species. | Four species of gayfeather occur in south Texas. Gayfeathers are highly attractive to a wide variety of pollinators, especially butterflies. | Awnless bush sunflower is a good generalist source for pollen and nectar. It and the similar species orange zexmenia are host plants for the bordered patch butterfly. |

| | Indian Blanket | Milkweed | Prickly Pear Cactus | Goldenrod | Frostweed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Gaillardia pulchella* | *Asclepias* spp. and *Cynanchum* spp. | *Opuntia engelmannii* | *Solidago* spp. | *Verbesina microptera* |
| |  |  |  |  |  |
| Duration | Annual \| Perennial | Perennial | Perennial | Perennial | Perennial |
| Bloom Time | February - December | March - December | April - June | September - November | September - November |
| Bloom Color | Yellow \| Red | White \| Orange | Yellow \| Red | Yellow | White |
| Height (ft) | 1 to 2 | 1 to 6 | 3 to 10 | 2 to 6 | 2 to 4 |
| Soil Types | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Coarse | Fine to Coarse |
| Drought Tolerance | High | High | High | High | Medium |
| Light Requirement | | | | | |
| Propagate | Seed | Seed \| Root \| Cuttings | Seed \| Pads | Seed | Seed |
| Remarks | Indian blankets are easy to grow and will reseed themselves readily. They are good generalist sources for pollen and nectar. | There are eight species of milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.) and four species of climbing milkweed (*Cynanchum* spp.) that occur in south Texas. These are host plants for monarch and queen butterflies. Some can be difficult to establish. | Fruit and pads are eaten by wildlife as well as humans. Prickly pear is an important species in south Texas as it will bloom during drought. It is also used as nesting sites by the cactus wren. | There are four species of goldenrod in south Texas. They are important species for fall nectar and pollen production. Contrary to popular belief, goldenrods are not wind pollinated and do not contribute to hay fever. | Frostweed is an important species for fall nectar and pollen production. It is frequently visited by monarch and queen butterflies during fall migration. |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South Texas Natives

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361.593.4037 | *www.ckwri.tamuk.edu/research-programs/south-texas-natives/*


## Additional Resources

The Xerces Society | *www.xerces.org*

NRCS Plants Database | *plants.usda.gov/pollinators/NRCSdocuments.html*

North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (NAPPC) | *www.nappc.org*