

---

# Native Pollinator Plants of South Texas

---



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



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 25 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.

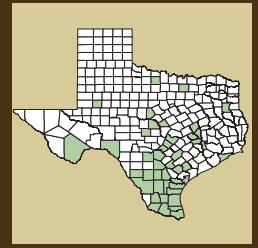
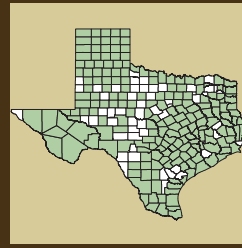
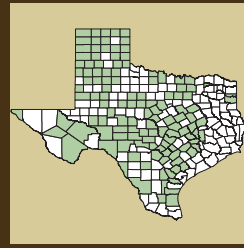
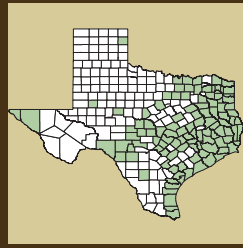
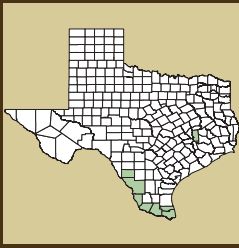






Insect and other animal pollinators play a pivotal part in the production of an estimated one out of every three bites of food that humans eat and in the reproduction of at least 80 percent of flowering plants. The commodities produced with the help of animal pollinators generate significant income for 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](http://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](mailto:stn@tamuk.edu).



Rio Grande Clammyweed

Mistflower

Engelmann's Daisy

Sunflower

Texas Lantana

*Polanisia dodecandra*  
ssp. *riograndensis*

*Conoclinium* spp.  
*Chromolaena* spp.

*Engelmannia peristenia*

*Helianthus* spp.

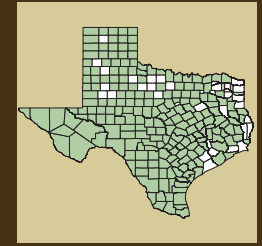
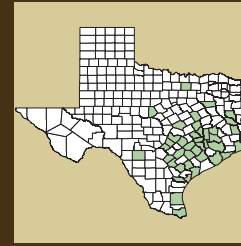
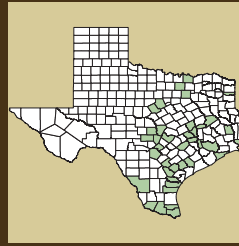
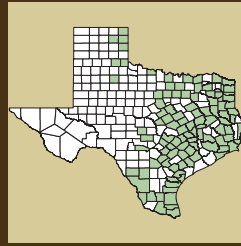
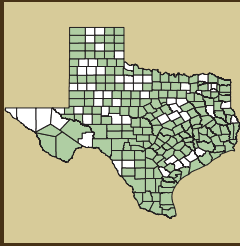
*Lantana urticoides*



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*

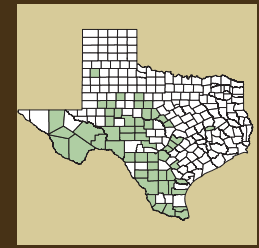
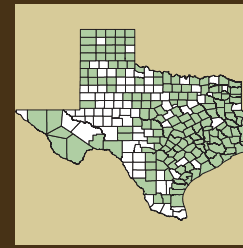
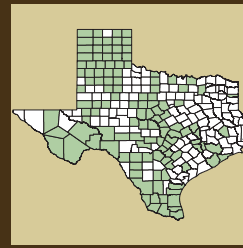
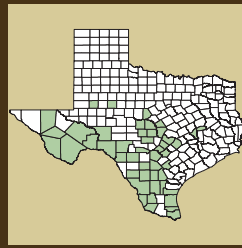
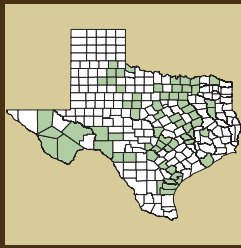
*Malvaviscus arboreus*

*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 <i>Monarda</i> 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 <i>Dalea</i> 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

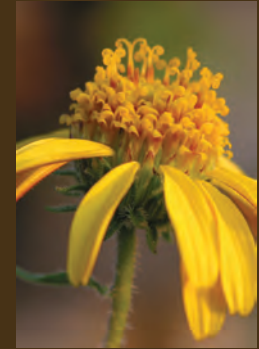
*Acacia angustissima*

*Aloysia gratissima*

*Ratibida columnifera*

*Liatrix* spp.

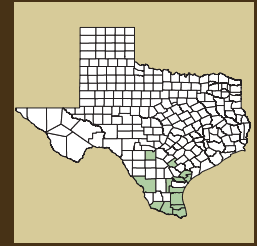
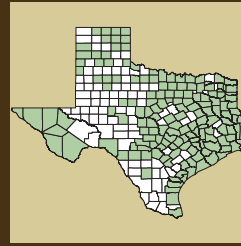
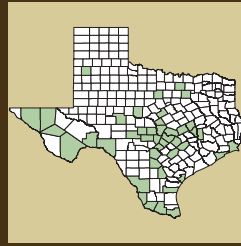
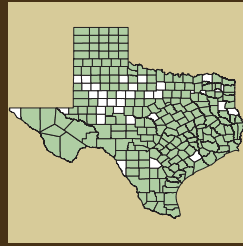
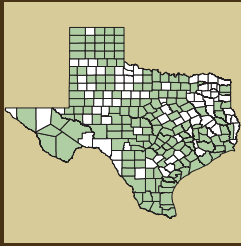
*Simsia calva*



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

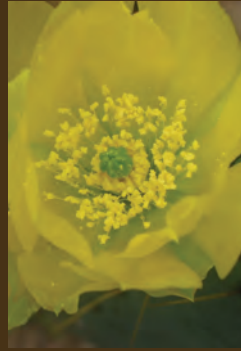
*Gaillardia pulchella*

*Asclepias* spp. and  
*Cynanchum* spp.

*Opuntia engelmannii*

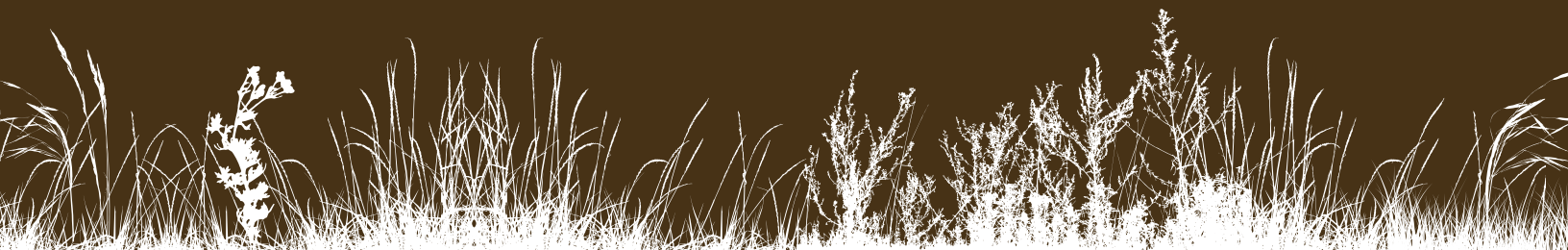
*Solidago* spp.

*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 ( <i>Asclepias</i> spp.) and four species of climbing milkweed ( <i>Cynanchum</i> 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.
---------	--	---	---	--	---





United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Delivering conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world.



E. "Kika" de la Garza Plant Materials Center

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/plantmaterials/pmc/>



700 University Blvd., MSC 218 | Kingsville, Texas 78363  
361.593.4037 | <https://www.cwri.tamuk.edu/research-programs/south-texas-natives>

The Xerces Society | <https://www.xerces.org/>

Pollinator Partnership | <https://www.pollinator.org/>

NRCS Plants Database | <https://plants.usda.gov/java/>

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. NRCSTX1220Reprint