



Texas bluebonnets, scarlet sage, Indian blankets & prairie spiderwort

"9 NATIVES" PROJECT ENCOURAGES URBAN START TO COMPENSATING FOR LOSS OF PRAIRIE HABITAT FOR POLLINATORS

By MARGARET PIERCE
Garden Club of Houston

gchouston.org

As our native prairies have been destroyed by development and invasive plants, we have endangered and even lost many species of animals, and have created a host of other problems as well.

We can choose plants wisely to create miniature prairies to support pollinators. But not all of us are ready or able to replace our entire yard with prairie.



www.natureswayresources.com

Katy Prairie Conservancy has created a 9 NATIVES program to promote pockets of prairie in city gardens. From KPC's master list of area-appropriate natives, this smaller starter list (below) provides a complete urban appropriate habitat for pollinators with four-season interest.

The Garden Club of Houston, Memorial Park Conservancy, and Katy Prairie Conservancy partnered to grow a collection of these plants that will be shared with the community in a variety of ways.

Remember, diversity is a prairie's strength. Establish these nine, and then discover nine new natives to add. Enough pollinator-friendly urban havens will make a major positive impact on our ecosystem.

- 1. TEXAS BLUEBONNET, *Lupinus texensis*. Reseeding annual that blooms with a cluster of blue pea-like flowers with white tips in March to May. Grows 1-2 ft. tall in sun and sandy or clay soil. Our state flower is larva host for butterflies and may be toxic to humans or animals, if ingested. Reseed or plant transplants in fall.
- 2. SCARLET SAGE, *Salvia coccinea*. Reseeding annual or perennial with red tubular flowers that bloom from spring to the first frost. Grows 1-3 ft. tall x 1-2 ft. wide in sun, part shade, and shade. Tolerates moist to dry soils. Very tolerant of frequent trimming to keep plant bushy. Provides nectar for hummingbirds, bees, and other insects.
- 3. INDIAN BLANKET, *Gaillardia pulchella*. Reseeding annual or short-lived perennial with red, yellow, brownish-centered, daisy-like flowers that bloom from spring to the first frost. Grows 1-2 ft. tall x 1 ft. wide in sun or part shade; prefers well-drained, sandy soils. Cut back when leggy, leaving some stems until seedhead matures. Water in summer to prolong bloom. Pollen source.
- 4. PRAIRIE SPIDERWORT, *Tradescantia occidentalis*. Perennial with clusters of blue or pink, 3-petalled blooms that open spring to summer. Grows 2-3 ft. tall x 1 ft. wide in sun to part shade in moist to dry, sandy or clay soils. Water before soil becomes too dry to prevent summer dormancy.

NATURE'S WAY
RESOURCES
an organically based service company

www.natureswayresources.com



Black-eyed susans, lemon beebalm, rattlesnake master, Gulf muhly and little bluestem.

- 5. BLACK-EYED SUSAN, *Rudbeckia hirta*. Reseeding annual or short-lived perennial with yellow, dark-centered flowers that bloom from late spring to fall. Grows 2-3 ft. tall x 1-2 ft. wide in full sun and in dry to moist, well- drained soil. Larva host for butterflies; provides nectar for pollinators and seeds for birds.
- 6. LEMON BEEBALM, *Monarda citriodora*. Reseeding annual with whorled lavender-pink to white flowers; blooms May - July or into fall, if watered. Grows 12-30 in. tall x 12 in. wide in sun or part shade, tolerates dry soil of any type. Nectar source. Plant has lemony aroma.
- 7. RATTLESNAKE MASTER, *Eryngium yuccifolium*. Perennial with yucca-like foliage and clusters of greenish-white, 1-inch thistle-like globular flowerheads cresting above the foliage during May - August. Grows in full sun and in moist well-drained soils. One of the best pollinator attracting wildflowers. Self-seeder.
- 8. GULF MUHLY, *Muhlenbergia capillaris*. Perennial bunchgrass with stunning pink/purple feathery blooms in October that turn tan in winter. Grows 2-3 ft. tall x 2-3 ft. wide in sun and is adaptable in moist to dry, sandy or clay soils. Only maintenance required is cutting to about 8" tall in January or February.
- 9. LITTLE BLUESTEM, *Schizachyrium scoparium*. Perennial bunchgrass grown for its structure - a dense clump of colorful stems that ranges from blue-green in late summer to golden rust in late fall. Grows 1.5-3 ft. or taller in sun or part shade and in dry, sandy or clay soil. One of the dominant climax grasses of the prairie, it's a larva host for skipper butterflies and its silver-white seeds provide food for small birds.

For more information about the 9 Natives, please visit <http://www.katyprairie.org/nine-natives/>

101 Sherbrook Circle • Conroe, Texas 77385-7750
(936) 321-6990 Metro • (936) 273-1200 Conroe • Fax (936) 273-1655