

IF YOU HAVEN'T YET, TRY NATIVE PLANTS IN YOUR GARDEN!

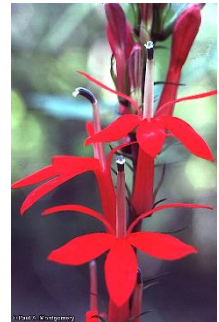
by BOB DAILEY

[Pines and Prairies Chapter of
the Native Plant Society of Texas](#)

They're diverse. They're beautiful. They're hardy. And they've been around well before humans ever set foot on this continent.

Native plants are drought-tolerant which is great for our gardens, and a great way to save precious water. Bees, butterflies, birds, and countless other wildlife species rely on natives for food and habitat. Native plants don't need fertilizer or other soil amendments. Here are some examples of these magnificent plants.

CARDINAL FLOWER (*Lobelia cardinalis*) is a perennial that can grow up to 6 feet and has bright-red flowers. Native to Montgomery, Grimes and Walker counties, it is also native to parts of Harris County. Hummingbirds especially love the long, tubular flowers. The plant blooms from May through October. Cardinal flowers are cold and heat-tolerant and makes a wonderful addition to your landscape.



GAILLARDIA (*Gaillardia pulchella*), also known as Indian Blanket and Firewheel, is an annual, but it reseeds readily. It can grow up to two feet high, but is usually shorter. Gaillardia can bloom throughout the year if there is enough rain. Without abundant rain, it will generally flower in May through August.



PRAIRIE GAYFLOWER (*Liatris*

***pycnostachya*)**. Gayfeather has a lot of names – prairie blazing star, Cat-tail blazing star, and the less poetic – Hairy button snakeroot. A member of the Aster Family, gayfeather blooms June through December. The flower spikes vary from pink to purple. It can grow up to six feet tall, but usually reaches three to four feet. It grows well in most soil and is highly drought- and heat-tolerant.



SCARLET SAGE (*Salvia coccinea*). Other names for it are Tropical Sage and Indian Fire. A member of the mint family, scarlet sage can bloom all year, with showy red (or sometimes pink or white) flowers. It grows in full sun, partial shade, or full shade. It can grow in dry or moist soil, even in caliche. It reseeds very easily and is fairly deer-resistant.



GULF MUHLY (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)

A favorite accent or partial edging plant, Gulf muhly can grow from 1.5 feet to 3 feet. It has a mounded shape when mature. The seed head of muhly is very light and airy and grows on thin stems. When it flowers the purple plumage appears to float above the plant, wafting in the wind. In late fall, the purple flowers will turn to pink.

These are only a few of the hundreds of plants that are native to our area. They provide beauty and accent to your garden, can withstand drought and high heat, flourish on the poorest soil and help support our wildlife.