



Native Plant Garden

What is a “native” plant? There isn’t a universal definition, but most people consider native plants those that were here before European settlers arrived and brought plants with them.

Some of the plants brought from outside this country or moved from one distant location inside the country to another in the last 200–300 years have become “naturalized.” Many of these introduced species of plants work quite well in our Texas landscapes, although a few non-native plants, like Kudzu and the Tallow Tree, became very aggressive and invasive to the detriment of our native plants.

RESOURCES

There are many resources to help you choose which plants will suit our local environment. Here are a few of them:

Aggie Horticulture
aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/texasnativeshrubs

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center –
 Native Plant Information Network
www.wildflower.org

Native Plant Society of Texas – Houston Chapter
npsot.org/wp/houston

In addition to local nurseries, some local native plant organizations, the Audubon Society, and environmental organizations offer periodic native plant sales.

QUESTIONS?

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ADVANTAGES OF NATIVE PLANTS

#1 Native plants require less water than non-native plants once they are established. Not ALL native plants can get away with less water – just the ones accustomed to our local weather, soil, and the amount of annual rainfall, and of course an amount of sun or shade similar to what they received in the wild. (You wouldn’t choose a cactus for our clay soil unless you were willing to put in a lot of work amending that soil!)

#2 The need for fertilizers and pesticides is decreased. Native plants have survived well without care for hundreds of years in their natural environment.

#3 Native plants provide food and habitat for butterflies, bees and other beneficial insects that pollinate our food crops and home landscapes. (Did you know that at least 97% of insects are beneficial, not only for pollination but by keeping non-beneficial insects from harming your plants?)

#4 Maintaining biological diversity is another reason for native plants. For instance, the total number of some species of birds and insects in the U.S. have decreased significantly in the last 50 years, partially due to habitat loss. With the rapid development our area is experiencing, natives are the best choices to reduce habitat loss. Native plants support these birds, insects and other wildlife by providing habitat and food.

Since homeowners generally don’t want to replace their whole landscape, even a few native plants in your landscape will offer the benefits listed above. If your neighbors also plant a few native plants in their yards, it will provide a connected “corridor” for insects and wildlife. If you plant it, they will come.