



DROUGHT- TOLERANT PLANTS FOR HILL COUNTRY GARDENS

By Hill Country Master Gardeners

Gardening in drought conditions is not easy, especially when the Texas Hill Country gardener also faces thin alkaline soil, extreme temperatures and hungry deer. The following list includes beautiful, low-maintenance plants that will thrive in these conditions. Most of them are natives, but some are well- behaved adapted plants. Many will also attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

PERENNIALS COMMON NAME	NATIVE/ ADAPTED	DEER RESISTANT*	COLOR	BLOOM PERIOD	SIZE
Artemisia, 'Powis Castle'	Adapted	Yes	Silver foliage	N/A	3-4'
Blackfoot Daisy <i>Melampodium leucanthum</i>	Native	Yes	White	Spring to Fall	1'
Black-eyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia goldsturm</i>	Native	Yes	Yellow	Spring to Summer	2'
Butterfly Weed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Native	Yes	Orange	Spring to Fall	2 to 3'
Columbine, Yellow <i>Aquilegia chrysantha var. hinkleyana</i>	Native	Yes	Yellow	Early Spring	18"
Coneflower <i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>	Native	Yes	Purple/ pink	Summer to Fall	18-24"
Copper Canyon Daisy <i>Tagetes lemmonii</i>	Adapted	Yes	Yellow	Fall	3'
Coreopsis <i>Coreopsis sp.</i>	Native	Yes	Yellow, Orange	Spring to Fall	1'
Damianita <i>Chrysactinia mexicana</i>	Native	Yes	Yellow	Spring to Fall	2'
Daylily <i>Hemerocallis sp.</i>	Adapted	No	Many colors	Spring to Summer	1 to 3'
Fall Aster <i>Aster sp.</i>	Native	No	Purple	Fall	3 to 4'
Four-Nerve Daisy <i>Tetranneuris scaposa</i>	Native	Yes	Yellow	Spring to Fall	1'
Gaura <i>Gaura lindheimeri</i>	Native	Yes	White/Pink	Spring to Fall	3'
Iris <i>Iridaceae sp.</i>	Adapted	Yes	Various	Spring	2'
Lantana <i>Lantana sp.</i>	Adapted/ Native	Yes	Many Colors	Spring to Fall	1 to 4'

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Lily of the Nile <i>Agapanthus sp.</i>	Adapted	Yes	Blue/White	Summer	2'
Marigold, Mexican Mint <i>Tagetes lucida</i>	Adapted	Yes	Yellow	Fall	2'
Mexican Oregano <i>Poliomentha longiflora</i>	Native	Yes	Pink	Summer	1 to 2'
Mexican Petunia (Dwarf) <i>Ruellia brittoniana</i> "Katie"	Adapted	No	Blue/Pink or White	Summer to Fall	6" to 1'
Narcissus <i>Amaryllidaceae sp.</i>	Adapted	Yes	White/ Yellow	Spring	1 ½'
Penstemon, Hill Country <i>Penstemon triflorus</i>	Native	Yes	Magenta	Spring	1 to 2'
Plumbago <i>Plumbago auriculata</i>	Adapted	Yes	Blue	Summer	3 to 4'
Rock Rose <i>Pavonia lasiopetala</i>	Native	No	Pink	Summer	3 to 4'
Russian Sage <i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>	Adapted	Yes	Blue/ Lavender	Summer to Fall	3 to 4'
Sage, Big Red <i>Salvia penstemonoides</i>	Native	Yes	Red	Summer	3 to 4'
Sage, Mealy Blue <i>Salvia farinacea</i>	Native	Yes	Blue/ Purple	Spring to Fall	2'
Sage, Mexican Bush <i>Salvia leucantha</i>	Adapted	Yes	Blue/ Purple	Spring to Fall	3 to 4'
Sage, Scarlett <i>Salvia coccinea</i>	Native	Yes	Red	Spring to Fall	2'
Skullcap, Pink <i>Scutellaria sufrutescens</i>	Adapted	Yes	Pink	Spring to Fall	1'
Skullcap, Purple <i>Scutellaria wrightii</i>	Native	Yes	Purple	Spring to Fall	1'
Society Garlic <i>Tulbaghia violalea</i>	Adapted	Yes	Lavender	Spring to Fall	1'
Square-bud Primrose <i>Calylophus berlandieri</i>	Native	No	Yellow	Spring to Fall	1 to 2'
Turk's Cap <i>Malvaviscus arboreus</i>	Native	Yes	Red	Spring to Fall	3 to 5'
Prairie Verbena <i>Verbena bipinnatifida</i>	Native	Yes	Many colors	Spring to Fall	6" to 1'
Yarrow <i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Native	Yes	White/ yellow	Spring to Fall	1 to 2'
Zexmenia <i>Wedelia hispida</i>	Native	Yes	Orange	Late Summer to Fall	1 to 2'

SHRUBS	NATIVE/ ADAPTED	DEER RESISTANT*	USUAL HEIGHT (feet)	FOLIAGE D = Deciduous E=Evergreen S= Semi-Evergreen	COMMENTS
Agarita <i>Mahonia trifoliata</i>	Adapted	Yes	6	E	Holly-like foliage, red berries, yellow flowers in spring, needs good drainage
American Beautyberry <i>Callicarpa americana</i>	Native	Yes	5	D	Medium shrub, purple fruit in late summer, early fall
Black Dalea <i>Dalea frutescens</i>	Native	Yes	2	D	Ferny foliage & pea-like flowers; does well in poor soil, excellent nectar source
Buckeye, Red <i>Aesculus pavia</i>	Native	Yes	12	D	Attractive funnel-shaped flowers in spring, attracts hummingbirds
Cactus, Prickly Pear <i>Opuntia sp.</i>	Native	Yes	3	E	Yellow flowers, rosy purple fruit, prickless variety also
Chile Pequin <i>Capsicum annuum</i>	Native	Yes	2	D	Grows in sun or shade, hot peppers
Crape Myrtle <i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	Adapted	No	Various 2-30	D	Summer blooming, various colors
Dogwood, Roughleaf <i>Cornus drummondii</i>	Native	No	14	D	Fast-growing with white flowers; fruit in late summer relished by birds
Germander, Bush <i>Teucrium fruticans</i>	Adapted	Yes	3	E	Compact, relative of natives. Silvery gray-green foliage
Flame Acanthus <i>Anisacanthus quadrifidus var. wrightii</i>	Native	Yes	4	D	Orange/red flowers in summer and fall
Holly, Dwarf Yaupon <i>Ilex vomitoria "Nana"</i>	Dwf Native	Yes	3	E	Compact mounding, excellent heat and drought tolerance
Honeysuckle Bush, White <i>Lonicera albiflora</i>	Native	No	4	S	White blooms in spring, red berries in fall
Kidneywood <i>Eysenhardtia texana</i>	Native	No	14	D	Heat & drought tolerant, fragrant citrusy flowers attractive to butterflies

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Lindheimer's Senna <i>Senna lindheimeriana</i>	Native	Yes	3	D	Yellow flowers, gray foliage; tolerant of poor, rocky soil
Mexican Silktassel <i>Garrya ovata</i> <i>subsp. lindheimerii</i>	Native	Yes	10	E	Purplish berries into winter, sun to part shade
Mistflower, White <i>Ageratina havanensis</i>	Native	No	3	D	Mounded shape; fragrant white blooms. Attracts hummingbirds & butterflies
Pomegranate, Dwarf <i>Punica granatum</i> "Nana"	Adapted	Yes	3	D	Tolerates rocky limestone soil; single red flowers followed by colorful fruit
Pride of Barbados <i>Caesalpinia</i> <i>pulcherrima</i>	Native	Yes	10	D	Large shrub or small tree, spectacular red & yellow flowers in summer
Rosemary, Upright <i>Rosemarinus officinalis</i>	Adapted	Yes	5	E	Bronze foliage spring to fall, dwarf available also
Sage, Autumn <i>Salvia greggii</i>	Native	Yes	3	S	Many colors, prune back in winter
Skyflower, <i>Duranta</i> <i>erecta</i>	Adapted	Yes	6	D	Sprawling shrub producing light blue flowers followed by small golden fruit; attractive to butterflies
Texas Barberry <i>Mahonia swaseyi</i>	Native	Yes	4	E	Holly-like foliage, yellow flowers in spring, yellow blushed with red berries. bronze foliage in fall
Texas Sage/Cenizo <i>Leucophyllum</i> <i>frutescens</i>	Native	Yes	5	E	Lavender flowers, several varieties exist, very drought tolerant
Thryallis <i>Galphimia glauca</i>	Adapted	No	4	E	Produces profuse yellow flowers, drought tolerant
Yellow Bells/ Esperanza <i>Tecoma stans</i>	Native	Yes	5	D	Showy yellow blooms
Yucca, Red <i>Hesper-</i> <i>aloe parviflora</i>	Native	Yes	3	E	Red flower spikes, dark green grass-like leaves
Woolly Butterfly Bush <i>Buddleja marrubifolia</i>	Native	Yes	4	D	Orange flowers with velvety ash-gray foliage; needs full sun & well-drained soil

GROUND COVERS	BOTANICAL NAME	DEER RESISTANT*	NATIVE/ ADAPTED	FOLIAGE D = Deciduous; E=Evergreen S= Semi-Evergreen	COMMENTS
Dalea, Gregg	<i>Dalea greggii</i>	Yes	Native	D	Beautiful silvery blue foliage, purple flowers May to September
Frog Fruit	<i>Phyla nodiflora</i>	Yes	Native	D	White flowers, Apr-Oct; 3-5"
Germander, Trailing Silver	<i>Teucrium cossonii</i>	Yes	Adapted	E	Creeping, blue silver foliage, purple flowers in spring
Horseherb	<i>Calyptocarpus vialis</i>	Yes	Native	D	Yellow flowers March through November
Leadwort Plumbago	<i>Ceratostigma plumbaginoides</i>	No	Adapted	D	Blue, 5-10 inches tall
Liriope	<i>Liriope muscari</i>	No	Adapted	E	Grass-like, variegated and giant varieties exist
Pigeonberry	<i>Rivina humilis</i>	No	Native		Pink/purplish flowers with red berries
Purple Heart	<i>Tradescantia pallida</i>	Yes	Native	D	Lavender-purple flowers
Rosemary, Prostrate	<i>Rosemarinus officinalis</i>	Yes	Adapted	E	Drought tolerant, blue flower, marginal in unusual cold
Santolina, Green	<i>Santolina virens</i>	Yes	Adapted	E	Drought tolerant, green lacy foliage, yellow flowers
Santolina, Grey	<i>Santolina chamaecyparissus</i>	Yes	Adapted	E	Drought tolerant, gray lacy foliage and yellow summer flowers
Sedum	<i>Sedum kamtschaticum</i> "Ellicombianum"	Yes	Native	E	Golden-yellow flowers spring to fall
Silver Ponyfoot	<i>Dichondra argentea</i>	No	Native	E	Silver stem with silver leaves; greenish-yellow-white flowers May-June

VINES	BOTANICAL NAME	DEER RESISTANT*	NATIVE/ ADAPTED	FOLIAGE	COMMENTS
				D = Deciduous; E = Evergreen S = Semi-Evergreen	
Alamo Vine	<i>Merremia dissecta</i>	No	Native	D	White flowers with dark burgundy centers, bloom May-November
Carolina Jessamine	<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Yes	Adapted	E	Yellow spring flowers, watch for leaf spot
Corona de Cristo	<i>Passiflora foetida</i>	No	Native	D	Yellow, green or purple flowers May-October
Crossvine	<i>Bignonia capreolata</i>	No	Native	S	Red/yellow tubular flowers in spring
Honeysuckle, Coral	<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	No	Native	S	Coral/red flowers except in winter
Jasmine, Confederate	<i>Trachelosperum jasminoides</i>	No	Adapted	E	Fragrant spring flowers, don't plant on north side
Leatherflower, Purple	<i>Clematis pitcheri</i>	No	Native	D	Dark purple 4-sepal flower, blooms May-September
Leatherflower, Vasevine/Scarlet	<i>Clematis texensis</i>	No	Native	D	Deep coral to true red flowers; blooms July to first frost
Lindheimer Morning Glory	<i>Ipomoea lindheimerii</i>	No	Native	D	Blue flowers, blooms April – October
Mustang Grape	<i>Vitis mustangensis</i>	No	Native	D	White/Red flowers; Blooms April-June
Passionflower	<i>Passiflora incarnata</i>	No	Native	D	Blue flowers, blooms April – September
Rose, Lady Banksia	<i>Rosa banksia</i>	No	Adapted	S	Spring blooming white or yellow, quite drought tolerant, huge, can be trained
Snapdragon Vine	<i>Maurandella antirrhiniflora</i>	No	Native	D	Purple, violet flowers bloom March-October
Trumpet Vine	<i>Campsis radicans</i>	Yes	Native	D	Orange/red tubular flowers in summer; suckers a lot
Virginia Creeper	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Yes	Native	D	Clings to walls easily, red/orange fall color

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	COLOR	BLOOM PERIOD	SIZE
Bear Grass (Native)	<i>Nolina texana</i>	White/Straw	Summer to Fall	1'
Bluestem, Big	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	White/Straw	Summer to Fall	4 to 5'
Bluestem, Little	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	White/Straw	Summer to Fall	3 to 4'
Gramma, Side Oats (The State Grass of Texas)	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Purple Tinted	Summer to Fall	1 to 2'
Muhly, Gulf	<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>	Pink	Summer to fall	2'
Muhly, Lindheimer's (Native)	<i>Muhlenbergia lindheimeri</i>	Straw	Summer to Fall	3'
Muhly, Pine	<i>Muhlenbergia dubia</i>	Green/Tan	Summer to fall	1 to 3'
Muhly, Purple	<i>Muhlenbergia filipes</i>	Violet/Tan	Summer to Fall	2 to 3'
<i>Note: All Ornamental Grasses are deer resistant</i>				

LAWN GRASSES	COMMENTS
Buffalo Grass	Native, spreading, most drought tolerant, requires less care than others. Needs full sun. "Thunder Turf" and "Habiturf" are seed mixes that are mainly Buffalo with other grasses.
Zoysia	Spreading non-native, number of varieties. Best is "JaMur" and "El Toro," which can tolerate filtered or partial shade.

LARGE TREES	NATIVE/ADAPTED	SIZE HT (feet)	FOLIAGE D = Deciduous; E=Evergreen S= Semi-Evergreen	COMMENTS
Ash, Texas <i>Fraxinus texensis</i>	Native	30	D	Strong, long life, good shade tree, attractive fall color
Cedar Elm <i>Ulmus crassifolia</i>	Native	50	D	Upright growth habit, makes good shade tree
Cherry, Escarpment Black <i>Prunus serotina</i> <i>var. eximia</i>	Native	40	D	Spring flowers, golden orange fall color
Maple , Bigtooth <i>Acer grandidentatum</i>	Native	45	D	Fantastic fall color
Maple, Shantung <i>Acer truncatum</i>	Adapted	25	D	A Texas Superstar™ tree, red fall color
Oak, Bur <i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Near-Native	80	D	Large, beautiful tree
Oak, Chinquapin <i>Quercus muehlenbergii</i>	Native	50	D	Beautifully shaped shade tree
Oak, Lacey <i>Quercus glaucoides</i>	Native	45	D	Attractive blue/gray foliage
Oak, Mexican White <i>Quercus polymorpha</i>	Adapted	75	S	Semi-evergreen, fast growing
Pecan <i>Carya illinoensis</i>	Native	80	D	Texas state tree, needs plenty of room and deep soil

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Crape Myrtle <i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	Adapted	No	Varies	D	Deciduous, smooth bark, summer flowers, various sizes & colors
Desert Willow <i>Chilopsis linearis</i>	Native	Yes	30	D	Pink or burgundy orchid-like flowers in summer, full sun
Eve's Necklace <i>Sophora affinis</i>	Native	Yes	20	D	Good understory tree, pink spring flowers & interesting fruit seed pods
Holly, Possumhaw <i>Ilex decidua</i>	Native	Yes	15	D	Red berries remain after leaf drop
Holly, Weeping Yaupon <i>Ilex vomitoria "pendula"</i>	Native	Yes	15	E	Pyramidal habit, pendulous branches
Holly, Yaupon <i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	Hybrid Native	Yes	25	E	Excellent small specimen tree, red berries in winter
Hop Tree <i>Ptelea trifoliata</i>	Native	Yes	25	D	An attractive, tall shrub or small understory tree, nectar source.
Loquat <i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>	Adapted	Yes	20	E	Tropical look, moderately drought tolerant
Mexican Buckeye <i>Ungnadia speciosa</i>	Native	Yes	20	D	Multi-trunk understory tree, pink blooms in spring
Mexican Plum <i>Prunus mexicana</i>	Native	No	20	D	Understory, white blooms in spring, will need supplemental water during drought
Rusty Blackhaw <i>Viburnum rufidulum</i>	Native	Yes	15	D	White flowers, blue/black fruit, understory tree, great fall color
Sumac, Evergreen <i>Rhus virens</i>	Native	Yes	12	E	White flowers in late summer, red berries in fall
Sumac, Flameleaf <i>Rhus lanceolata</i>	Native	Yes	20	D	Red fall color, suckers a lot
Texas Madrone <i>Arbutus texana</i>	Native	No	30	E	Multi-trunk, understory, slow growing, red berries in fall
Texas Mountain Laurel <i>Sophora secundiflora</i>	Native	Yes	25	E	Purple spring flowers, watch for caterpillars, unusual bark
Texas Persimmon <i>Diospyros texana</i>	Native	Yes	30	D	Smooth bark makes an interesting specimen, small black edible fruit

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Texas Pistache <i>Pistacia texana</i>	Native	Yes	20	E	Red berries in fall, multi-trunk
Texas Redbud <i>Cercis canadensis</i> <i>var. texensis</i>	Native	Yes	20	D	Pink spring flowers, good understory tree, best if protected from west sun
Vasey Oak <i>Quercus pungens</i> <i>var. vaseyana</i>	Native	No	25	S	Good specimen tree for small areas, semi evergreen, holly-like leaves
Wax Myrtle <i>Myrica cerifera</i>	Adapted	Yes	12	E	Can tolerate wet areas, but also somewhat drought tolerant

* **Note:** "Deer-resistant" plants are less likely to be eaten by deer, but keep in mind that no plant is deer-proof.

Hill Country Master Gardeners
3658 Hwy. 27
Kerrville TX 78028
Tel. (830) 257-6568
Website: hillcountrymastergardeners.org