

13. Hogplum (*Colubrina texensis*)

A deciduous shrub with star-shaped greenish yellow flowers that bloom in April & May. The small brown to black fruit and seeds are eaten by birds and small mammals and remain on the plant a long time. It also provides cover for birds, small mammals and reptiles.

14. Huisache (*Acacia farnesiana*)

A thorny tree in the Legume (bean) family. The fragrant yellow flowers that bloom in February & March are frequently used in perfume. Bees make a tasty honey from the nectar. Javelina & deer eat the fruit. Many birds feed on the seeds and use it for nesting, loafing and cover. Medicinal uses include remedies for headaches, indigestion, dysentery and skin disease.

15. Sugar hackberry (*Celtis laevigata*)

'Palo blanco' (Spanish meaning white wood), it has gray, warty bark and is a very valuable food source. White-tailed deer browse on the foliage. It's a food plant for butterfly larvae. The orange fruit ripens in late summer, stays on the tree even when the leaves drop, and is eaten by many species of birds along with mammals (including humans).

16. Prickly pear (*Opuntia engelmannii*)

Has a high (80%) water content making it a valuable source of water for many types of wildlife. The fruit is eaten by mammals, birds, and reptiles. People often eat the fruits & pads. Some studies show that the pads lower cholesterol and control diabetes.

17. Baccharis (*Baccharis neglecta*)

Also called 'poverty-Weed' or 'false willow,' this plant is generally found on disturbed sites. Although its leaves resemble a willow, it is in the Sunflower Family. Silvery white plumes of flowers are found on the female plants. Monarchs often use it as a resting site during their fall migration.

18. Whitebrush (*Aloysia gratissima*)

Also called 'beebrush,' this shrub has small vanilla-scented white flowers spring to fall, generally after rains. Its value to wildlife is in providing a protective over-story for birds, mammals and reptiles. Bees make a delicious light-colored honey from the flowers.

19. Texas persimmon (female)

Edible to humans, the dark purple/black fruit is only on female trees and is a valuable wildlife plant for birds and mammals.

Most information contained in this pamphlet was derived from "A Field Guide to Common South Texas Shrubs" Written by Richard B. Taylor, Jimmy Rutledge, and Joe G. Herrera. and "Trees, Shrubs, & Vines of the Texas Hill Country" By Jan Wrede

To download a version of this pamphlet complete with color photos please visit

www.mitchelllakeaudubon.org



Guide to the Native Plant Trail

Learn about South Texas trees and shrubs!

Learn how to identify them as well as their benefits to wildlife and people.

Trail Project completed by
Eagle Scout Matthew DeGennaro
Troop 1988/Crew 2407 Spring 2008

Guide developed by
Stacey Merkt, MLAC Education Intern and
Matthew DeGennaro, Eagle Scout

None of the information in this pamphlet should be considered a recommendation or endorsement of any medical or nutritional usage of the plants profiled therein. This information is presented only for informational purposes and should not be used for any other reason.

1. Retama (*Parkinsonia aculeata*)

Sometimes called 'palo verde' (Spanish meaning green stem). Very drought-hardy shrub or tree with bright yellow flowers spring to fall. Seeds eaten by quail. Historically, Native Americans made a coarse flour from seeds and in Mexico branches and leaves used as a tea to treat diabetes and fever.

2. Brasil (*Condalia hookeri*)

Evergreen shrub or small tree with branches that end in sharp spines. Valuable for mammals and birds because the edible blue fruit ripens throughout the season.

3. Coma (*Sideroxylon celastrinum*)

Medium-sized, semi-evergreen spiny shrub or small tree with dark green, teardrop-shaped leaves. Appears similar to a live oak tree with thorns. Fruit and seeds eaten by various species of birds and mammals. In Mexico, the fruit is eaten by people.

4. Granjeno/Spiny hackberry (*Celtis pallida*)

A common medium-sized evergreen shrub with strongly zigzagged, smooth, gray branches and stout, paired thorns. Small, plump, orange fruit is important to birds and other wildlife and is also edible to humans. The high protein leaves are browsed by deer and act as larval host for the American snout and other hackberry butterflies.

5. Native grasses v. Bermuda grass:

This area shows the difference between native grasses (which grow in bunches, leaving some bare ground needed for ground-feeding birds and small mammals) and the matted cover of Bermuda grass. Look for some silver bluestem native grass that has a fluffy seed head in the fall.

6. Guayacan (*Guajacum angustifolium*)

A stout evergreen shrub with fine, thick leaves that appear to be growing directly from the stems. Fragrant purple flowers produced in March/April attract bees. The fruit is heart-shaped with wings. It is a limited food source for birds and sometimes used as cover for both birds and mammals. Bark extract can treat rheumatism.

7. Amargosa (*Castela erecta*)

A spiny shrub with small, red, flattened fruits. Distinguished from lotebush by the silvery underside of its leaves. White-tailed deer browse the leaves and eat the fruit, but due to its bitter taste, it is of limited wildlife food value. Birds sometimes nest in it. Medicinal uses include intestinal disturbances, fever, skin disease & jaundice.

8. Spanish dagger (*Yucca treculeana*)

'Palma pita' or 'palma loca' in Spanish, it grows up to 10' tall. White flowers are edible and an occasional food source (along with leaves) for deer. It provides nesting sites for several bird species and food for butterfly and moth larva. Native Americans used leaf fiber to make rope, baskets, mats, and sandals.

9. Honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*)

The most common tree found throughout south Texas, it's very important to wildlife, providing browse for white-tailed deer, bean pods and seeds for birds & mammals. It also provides nesting, roosting and loafing cover for birds. The flowers are a good bee & butterfly food. Bean pods were ground into flour by Native Americans. Bark was eaten to remedy dysentery, sore throats and open wounds.

10. Christmas cactus/Tasajillo (*Opuntia leptocaulis*)

A shrub-like cactus that grows best under the protection of other vegetation. The many small, bright red, juicy berries are a good food source for white-tailed deer & small mammals.

11. Lotebush (*Ziziphus obtusifolia*)

A deciduous, spiny, multi-branched shrub, it commonly associates with brasil, mesquite and prickly pear cactus. The small black, solitary fruit is eaten by many birds and mammals. It's also used as a cover by rodents and quail.

12. Texas persimmon (male) (*Diospyros texana*).

'Chapote negro' in Spanish, it is a small tree with gray bark. Leaves are browsed by deer and are a food source for butterfly larvae. Flowers attract bees and butterflies. Look for the female further along on the Trail.