

What's Blooming? (August 2, 2020)

The South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center currently cannot offer Saturday educational seminars, weekend Rep-Tales and Parrot Talk, or Orchid-ology series, due to State “gathering” restrictions, guest health and safety. Carrying out its horticulture, environmental education and conservation mission, **What's Blooming**, each week will spotlight a blooming plant in the Exhibit Areas; and a native in the Habitat and Trails area—which you can enjoy on a visit that week!

LADY OF THE NIGHT ORCHID (*Brassavola nodosa*)

Lady of the Night Orchid is an graceful orchid that gets its common name from the elegant white blossoms which are fragrant at night, but not during the day. The bright white petals attract a moth with a long proboscis which pollinates the flower.



Most orchids are epiphytes, growing naturally on trees or rocks and needing little soil. This orchid is vigorous grower and grows best mounted on wood, or in a hanging situation with fir bark medium. It is native to Mexico and Central America, northern South America, and West Indies.

See multiple specimens hanging in the Samuel Jones Orchid Conservatory.

RETAMA (*Parkinsonia aculeata*)

Retama goes by multiple names including Mexican paloverde and Jerusalem thorn. This small tree is known for its vibrant green trunk and long thin leaves providing dappled shade for plants below.



Retama blooms profusely during summer and fall with delicate yellow blossoms with red/orange throats and a mildly sweet fragrance, noticeable on still mornings. A member of the legume family, it produces bean pods after flowering. It is extremely drought-tolerant, easy to grow, often found growing wild along drainage ditches, showing its versatility to withstand dry and wet conditions. It is also extremely adaptable to a wide range of soil types.

This fast growing tree can reach 15-20 feet tall and similar width. Its rapid growth produces weak wood frequently breaking in high winds, making it a marginal tree for urban landscapes, working better in rural landscapes where water is an issue. Retama was adopted as one of the city trees of Corpus Christi on October 2, 1957. *See along the walkway to Admin & Education buildings.*