

## GARDENS IN BLOOM

(week of August 23, 2020)

The South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center currently cannot offer Saturday morning educational seminars, weekend Rep-Tales and Parrot Talk, or Orchid-ology series, due to State of Texas COVID-19 “gathering” restrictions, as well as health and safety of our guests.

However, carrying out its horticulture, environmental education and conservation mission, the Botanical Gardens brings us **GARDENS IN BLOOM**, which each week will spotlight both a blooming plant in the Exhibit Area; and a native in or near the Habitat and Trails area—which you can enjoy on a visit that week!

### GOLD STAR ESPERANZA

*Tecoma stans*

Gold Star Esperanza is in full bloom in summer. Also known as “yellow bells,” Esperanza produces clusters of inch-long bright yellow blossoms, covering the shrub which can reach eight feet in the landscape. It is deciduous, dropping leaves in winter, so frequently is grouped with shrubs retaining leaves all year.

Gold Star Esperanza is a Texas Superstar, recognized by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service as a top-performer throughout the state. A cultivar with larger flowers and leaves, it produces denser growth than its native counterpart found in Northern Mexico and West Texas. It prefers good drainage, but grows in both clay and sandy soils.

After flowering, green seed pods frequently form due to pollinator activity, but can be removed to extend flowering season into fall.

**Esperanza greets guests in our parking area, and in both EarthKind and Hummingbird Garden, providing nectar for butterflies and hummers.**



### FIDDLEWOOD

*Citharexylum berlandieri*

Fiddlewood is a woody member of the verbena family (*Verbenaceae*) along with lantana, verbena, frog fruit and vitex. It is sometimes referenced as “Berlandier's Fiddlewood” after French-Swiss physician Jean Louis Berlandier (1805-1850), who collected plants in Texas and northern Mexico.

Fiddlewood is a drought-tolerant plant growing naturally in well-drained clay and clay loam soils in brush thickets along the Coastal and Rio Grande plains. It has dark green, glossy foliage which can be trimmed into a dense shrub or small tree, growing best in partial shade, but can take full sun for part of the day.

It forms long clusters of tiny white, fragrant flowers several times from February through August, creating a good butterfly nectar source. After pollination, they produce orange-red berries, providing food for songbirds.

**Fiddlewood is blooming beside the Butterfly House, where it screens the view and wind from exhaust fans on the Orchid Conservatory.**

