

GARDENS IN BLOOM

(week of August 30, 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.

Carrying out its horticulture, environmental education and conservation mission, the Botanical Gardens brings us **GARDENS IN BLOOM**, each week spotlighting both a blooming plant in the Exhibit Area; and a native in or near the Habitat and Trails area—to enjoy on a visit this week!

PLUMERIA (*Plumeria rubra*) “Danai Delight”

Plumeria, also known as frangipani, often used in authentic Hawaiian leis, always are favorite flowers for semi-tropical climates like ours, although native to tropical Americas. In our **Plumeria Garden**, *Danai Delight* has been a strong bloomer this summer providing a stunning display of pale pink petals with dark edges and a sunny orange/yellow throat.

Plumeria need full sun and well-drained soil. They can be grown in pots, but need regular fertilization. If planted in the ground, they should be removed and stored inside during the winter, unless growing on the south side of the house protected from winter winds. If unsheltered, they do not like temperatures below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, and could be damaged by frost or freeze. Cold tolerance varies by variety and location.



Danai Delight is one of about 90 large plumeria plants / small trees featured in the Plumeria Collection at the Botanical Gardens. The Plumeria Society of South Texas originated and maintains “The Grove,” in full bloom now. The Amy Shelton McNutt Charitable Trust gifted the Willoughby Viewing Ramp and Platform, which allows close-up viewing of treetop blooms! Don’t wait too long to visit, since plants flower less approaching fall. Our plumeria are removed from the ground and stored bare-root in greenhouses starting November 1, through early March.

ZEXMENIA (*Wedelia acapulcensis*) var. *hispida*

Zexmenia, also known as hairy wedelia or Texas creeping ox-eye, is a wildflower growing naturally along Rio Grande and Coastal Plains, extending into the Edwards Plateau. Preferring well-drained soils, Zexmenia provides bursts of yellow flowers from spring through early fall, popping up within short native grasses. If grown in shade, it flowers less and may become leggy. It will freeze back during cold winters, but regrows each spring, so leave dead-looking plants in the ground.

An ideal butterfly plant providing nectar for all species, it is a host plant for *Bordered Patch*, *Sierran Metalmark* and *Lacinia Patch* butterflies, so expect caterpillars to eat leaves from time to time.



Zexmenia is one native more available in retail nurseries due to dense growth habit and ability to flower in pots. Its drought tolerance and preference for sun makes it a great landscape plant growing in mounds or short shrub to heights of 10 to 30 inches depending on pruning.

Look for Zexmenia in the Butterfly Garden, along the walkway to the Hummingbird Garden, and in small patches growing naturally along the edge of native mesquite brush.