

What's Blooming?

(July 26, 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 COVID-19 “gathering” restrictions, as well as health and safety of our guests. Carrying out its horticulture, environmental education and conservation mission, we have a new feature, **GARDENS IN BLOOM**, which each week will spotlight a blooming plant in the Exhibit Section; and a native in the Habitat/Trails area—which you can enjoy on a visit that week!

ADENIUM CRIMSON STAR

The Velvet-Leaf ‘Crimson Star’ Desert Rose actually is a cross between the common desert rose (*Adenium obesum*) and a rare velvet leaf dwarf variety (*A. swazicum*). Its narrow gray-green leaves have a velvety texture; and the dark crimson flowers have narrower petals than the common desert rose.



(see in patio area in front of Orchid Conservatory)

SPINY HACKBERRY

(a.k.a. Desert Hackberry, Grajeno, Chaparral)

Desert hackberry (*Celtis pallida*) is one of the most common native shrubs in local brush land. Native to South Texas and Chihuahuan Desert, this extremely drought-tolerant shrub grows between eight and 20 feet tall with a multi-stemmed trunk, producing tiny yellow flowers after summer rains, followed by small edible orange berries.



Fruit provide food for a variety of birds and mammals. White-tailed deer browse the stems and foliage. It also is a larval host plant for American Snout butterfly (*Libytheana carinenta*) and great nectar plant for other butterfly species.

Commonly growing as an understory shrub, in poor soils, with full sun or partial shade, it is important for erosion control; and can be used as native “green screen” for its dense growth and thorny branches.

(see along Brennecke Nature Trail)