

## GARDENS IN BLOOM

(week of March 7, 2021)

The South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center currently offers limited classes, and no weekend Rep-Tales and Parrot Talk, per our COVID-19 protocol, health and safety of guests. Fulfilling its horticulture, environmental education and conservation mission, **GARDENS IN BLOOM**, each week spotlights a featured tropical and native plant—to enjoy on a visit this week!

### **VERBENA FIREHOUSE MIX** (*Verbena canadiensis*)

Firehouse™ Verbena series, developed by Ball Seed Co. as an annual verbena for use in flowerbeds, pots and hanging baskets, typically grows 10 inches tall, spreading to nearly 2 feet! It is powdery mildew-resistant, and more heat tolerant than other annual verbenas.

Firehouse™ series comes in red, pink, white, purple and blended combinations, with tubular blossoms, creating mounds of flowers approximately 3 inches across for strong visual impact.

Butterflies and bees nectar off verbena flowers, particularly important in early spring when other plants are dormant, or not blooming after freezing weather.

**See hanging baskets of Firehouse™ Verbena located in our Butterfly House!**



### **HENBIT** (*Lamium amplexicaule*)

Commonly called *Henbit* or *Henbit Deadnettle*, this native wildflower often is considered a weed in lawns and flowerbeds, but is one of the first wildflowers blooming again post-freeze! This year, it is important to preserve as many of these early spring “weeds” as possible for butterfly and bee nectar sources while cultivated gardens are bare.

In the mint family, *Lamiaceae*, along with salvias, coleus and many common herbs, the tubular pink/lavender blossoms with white throats and purple spots on the petals emerge from circles of leaves near the stem tip. More rounded green leaves grow in whirls every few inches along the stem. Plants typically stand 6-12 inches tall, with stems growing longer, laying down on the ground, reaching 2 feet or more, if allowed.

Henbit is distributed in much of North America, especially along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coastal areas, plus in Europe. Although treated as a noxious weed in many areas, herbalists say it has astringent, diuretic, diaphoretic, purgative, with anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties.

**See Henbit in grassy areas between the Sensory Garden and Monkey Mansion, and sporadically along the Brennecke Nature Trail and other grassy fields.**

