

GARDENS IN BLOOM

(week of September 6, 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 a featured blooming plant in the Exhibit Area; and native in or near the Habitat and Trails area—to enjoy on a visit this week, and even consider for your landscape!

BROWN BUD ALLAMANDA (*Allamanda cathartica* 'Hendersonii')

Brown Bud Allamanda, also known as Golden Trumpet and Yellow Allamanda, is a tropical shrub producing bright yellow trumpet flowers with a deep throat and flared petals. “Brown Bud” refers to the bronze on the petals’ underside, creating the “brown” color of the tight flower buds, until petals unfurl revealing the golden yellow flower up to five inches across.

Once established, Brown Bud Allamanda can grow 6 to 8 feet in a year. Semi-woody branches elongate, often needing support of a fence or trellis, leading some to consider it a vine. Technically it is not, because it lacks twisting, vining growth habit or tendrils to cling to structures. Full sun will minimize this elongated stem growth.

It has bright green, glossy leaves in a whorled attachment pattern, occurring in fours at locations along the stem. Regular fertilizing will maintain its leaves. Otherwise, there will be leaf drop and barren stems except for a few leaves and flowers near the tip. If Allamanda becomes too leggy, cut it back and new branches will emerge near the base.

Native to tropical Americas, Allamanda grows well in pots in our area, allowing it to be relocated for freezing weather. Southern coastal gardens may allow planting in the ground if able to be protected from north winds, but you still risk permanent freezing.

See Brown Bud Allamanda in the Butterfly Garden, growing in pots.

ROCK ROSE (*Pavonia laciopetala*)

Rock Rose, also known as Rose Pavonia or Rose Mallow, is a wildflower growing naturally along the Rio Grande Plains extending into the Edwards Plateau, usually found on the edge of brush in caliche soils with good drainage. Its drought tolerance and ability to grow in both sun and partial shade make it a great Xeriscape (water-wise) plant, and more-readily available in retail nurseries than most natives.

Pavonia produces an abundance of 1 to 1.5-inch flowers with five light pink petals and a tight center cluster of bright yellow stamen. This hardy member of the hibiscus and cotton (*Malvaceae*) family keeps its leaves until freezing weather resulting in leaf drop. Early spring pruning encourages dense compact growth and more flowering. It grows 3 to 4 feet in height and width.

Pavonia is a good nectar plant for butterflies and hummingbirds with consistent flowering spring through fall, including peak migration seasons.

See *Pavonia* in the Botanical Gardens Butterfly Garden surrounding the Butterfly House, and Butterfly Hill behind the Sensory Garden.

