The Denton County Master Gardener Association is a volunteer organization under the guidance of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Our mission is to provide information that encourages safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices.
DCMGA Master Gardener Favorites

DCMGA members were asked to submit a list of their favorite landscape plants with an emphasis on those that were hardy under North Texas growing conditions.

Texas Superstars® are plants that are:

- Good performers in most of Texas
- Readily available through local nurseries
- Selected after review by Texas Superstar® Executive Board
- Receive advisory input from the statewide Texas Superstar® Advisory Board, which is composed of TAMU horticulturists, nursery professionals, growers, seed company representatives, county horticulturists, arboretum and botanical garden representatives, horticultural writers, and landscape designers.

Note: all pictures not attributed to a photographer are from the gardens of DCMGA members.
Landscape Bed Testing

- Clear area of debris including removing grass and plant roots.
- Get a soil test to determine what minerals should be added to improve your soil. ([http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/](http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/))
- Review soil analysis report
- Use Urban Fertilizer Management Calculator-Basic Edition 1.0 or follow report recommendations ([http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/calc/UNCalc.htm](http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/calc/UNCalc.htm))
Landscape Bed Preparation

- Clear soil of weeds, rocks and grasses
- Dig to a depth of 8 to 10 inches to break up the soil completely. Go over the area several times until the soil is broken into small fragments.
- Add a 4 to 6 inch layer of compost, shredded bark, peat moss, or other organic material to the top of your tilled soil.
- Add the nutrients suggested in the soil test report.
- Before planting, rake and smooth the soil.
Before selecting plants

Consider the hours of sunlight the bed receives
- Seasonal variations
- Morning or afternoon sun?
- Full sun versus partial or dappled sunlight

Are there wet areas where water stands longer than 30 minutes after rain has ended? Or, areas that remain damp?

Select plants that will thrive in your environment. Read plant labels for light and water requirements.
Denton Master Gardener and Texas Superstar Favorites
Artemisia ‘Powis Castle’

**Botanical name:** *Artemisia x 'Powis Castle'*

**General information:**
A silver-leafed perennial, Artemisia ‘Powis Castle’ is soft-textured and contrasts nicely with red, pink, or purple flowers.

**Characteristics**
- **Size:** 3 feet tall and 3 feet wide
- **Flowers:** None
- **Bloom time:** None
- **Leaves:** Silver, fine-textured, aromatic when crushed

**Pests and Disease Problems:** No serious insect or disease problems

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**Growing in North Texas**
Growing quickly, preferring full sun and well-drained soil. The plant is heat tolerant with low supplemental watering needs, once established. Fertilize at planting time with a timed-release product. Cut back the dead foliage to six inches after it freezes in late fall or early winter. Best planted in fall.
Bee Balm

Common names: Bee Balm, cultivar: Raspberry Wine”; also called monarda, horsemint, Oswego tea, or bergamot
Botanical name: Monarda dydima

General information:
Bee balm is a member of the mint family. It is used in making herbal teas and the flowers are edible. It attracts butterflies and hummingbirds.

Characteristics
• Size: 30-36 inches tall
• Flowers: Red to wine colored. 1 ½ - 3” heads are composed of tubular flowers. Buds resemble raspberries.
• Bloom time: June thru August
• Leaves: Square stems and large opposite leaves, dark green in color

Pests and Disease Problems: Bee balm often suffers from powdery mildew. This is most prominent in overcrowded plants, those grown in partial to heavy shade and drought stressed plants. The Raspberry Wine variety is one of the least susceptible to powdery mildew.
Warning: Attracts bees

Growing in North Texas
Plant bee balm in spring or fall in full to partial sun and provide an even supply of moisture throughout the growing season. Water every few days to a depth of 6 – 8 inches. Apply a 10-10-10 fertilizer early in the growing season. Do not over fertilize. Deadhead spent flowers to prolong bloom period. Divide bee balms every 2-3 years in early spring as soon as they emerge from the ground.
Texas Bird of Paradise

Common name: Yellow Bird of Paradise, Desert Bird of Paradise

Botanical name: *Caesalpinia gilliesii*

General information:
A hardy perennial from Argentina, the Yellow Bird of Paradise has naturalized in Texas. The plant offers exotic blooms of long — 5 to 7 inch — yellow petals accented by longer protruding bright red stamens. The blooms take up to 4 hours to open and begin in the afternoon. Once open, that flower only last for one day. In northern Texas, it will die to the ground at the first freeze but will come back in spring. It is both drought and heat tolerant. Its numerous blooms attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

Characteristics
- **Size:** 4 - 8 foot tall by 3 - 5 foot wide
- **Flowers:** yellow
- **Bloom time:** May to September
- **Leaves:** long bluish-green, fine fern-like texture

Pest or Disease Problems: None

Note: Seed pods and seeds are poisonous. Bird of Paradise can be considered aggressive if not deadheaded because the seeds take root.

Growing in North Texas:
Plant in full sun with good drainage. It does well in most all soils, even rock, but hates heavy clay. Allow the soil to dry out before giving it a deep watering. Bird of Paradise is part of the legume family of plants so it has the ability to fix its own nitrogen from the air. Supplemental fertilization should be limited to a yearly application in early spring. Propagation is easy from seeds when sowed directly outdoors in the fall or after the last spring frost.
Black-eyed Susan

Common names: Gloriosa Daisy
Botanical name: *Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldsturm'

General information:
Easy to grow, long blooming perennial. Flowers in summer through fall. Black-Eyed Susans attract butterflies and make excellent cut flowers.

Characteristics
- **Size:** About 2 feet tall by 2 feet wide
- **Flowers:** 3 – 6 inches across, daisy-like
- **Bloom time:** June – July if not dead-headed, otherwise June – September if dead-headed
- **Leaves:** Somewhat coarse green leaves, slightly hairy

Pests and Disease Problems: Powdery mildew may cause white patches to form on leaves. Although the plant is weakened, it usually survives.

Growing in North Texas
Easy to grow. Tolerates summer heat and dry conditions. Full sun to partial afternoon shade with a medium amount of supplemental water after establishment. Remove dead flower heads every two weeks to prolong blooming season. Fertilize at planting time and annually with a timed-release product. Cut the dead foliage back to the ground after a hard freeze. Divide in the spring.
Copper Canyon Daisy

Common names: Copper Canyon Daisy, Lemmon's marigold, mountain marigold, bush marigold

Botanical name: Compositae Tagetes lemonii

General information:
A member of the Aster family is a native of the southwestern United States. It has a sprawling growth with a distinctive, pungent fragrance according to Floridata. The Copper Canyon daisy has golden-yellow blooms from August until frost that are attractive to butterflies and bees. Copper Canyon daisy dies back in winter and comes back from roots in spring.

Characteristics
• Size: 4 feet tall x 4 feet wide bush at maturity
• Flowers: Golden yellow about 1 to 2 inches across
• Bloom time: August until frost
• Leaves: Lacy compound leaves 2 to 6 inches long, with serrated leaflets.

Pests and Disease Problems: none

Growing in North Texas
Easy to grown in North Texas. Tolerates high, sustained summer heat. Prefers full sun, but accepts a bit of shade. Drought tolerant and wants well-drained soil. It will grow successfully in some of the more alkaline soils in North Texas. After the Copper Canyon daisy is established, it requires little supplemental water.
Daylily "Stella D'Oro"


Botanical name: *Hemerocallis* derives from the Greek, *hemera*, "day," plus *kallos*, "beauty"

General information:
Daylilies are herbaceous, clump forming, perennials. Most flowers bloom for a day, but there are several buds on each scape (leafless stalk). Dormant daylilies die back completely in winter.

Characteristics
Vigorous bears circular, bright yellow/gold flowers on erect scapes. Easy care plant used as a border, in drifts or mass plantings, partnered with other perennials, great in small gardens or containers. Drought tolerant; pest and rabbit resistant.

Size: height 11”; width 18”

Flowers: bloom 2.75”; gold flowers with very small green throat, slightly fragrant

Bloom time: early bloomer; rebloom; late spring to autumn

Leaves: arching strap-shaped green leaves

Growing in North Texas
The best location is in full morning sun and full afternoon shade. Daylilies do not like wet, soggy soil. They perform best when planted in raised beds rich in organic material. Plant them only to the base of the crown and divide every 3-5 years.
Fall Aster

Common names: October Skies, Aromatic Aster
Botanical name: *Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*
General information: As its name implies, the fall aster blooms in fall proving a colorful display when other flowering plants may have run out of steam. The plants mound around 2 to 3 feet by sending out stolon's. Native to the Midwest and eastern United States. The stems are slender and rigid and the leaves at the bottom are larger than leaves at the top.

Characteristics: Fall aster is a bushy perennial with numerous branches. It becomes a little leggy in shady locations and has a tendency to lodge or fall over. Cut back to the ground in late spring to have it come back upright and bushier in the fall.

- **Size:** 2 feet tall
- **Flowers:** medium violet-blue flowers about 1-inch in diameter with slight scent.
- **Bloom time:** late September until frost
- **Leaves:** short narrow leaves, rough texture.

Pests and Disease Problems: disease and pest resistant.

Growing in North Texas
This is a wonderful plant for North Texas. Best in sunny locations, but adapts to lightly shaded areas. It is drought tolerant and has no pest or disease problems. Divide after blooms die back. After blooms have died back, cut plant back to the ground. Asters tolerate acidic, rocky or sandy soils. Thin regularly to control spread.
Gregg’s Mist Flower

**Common names:** Gregg’s Mist, Blue Mist, Texas Ageratum  
**Botanical name:** *Conoclinium (Eupatorium) Greggii*  
**General information:**  
This plant is a Central Texas Native. Flowers all summer. A must for butterfly gardens and a good nectar source for bees, butterflies and is especially attractive to the Queen butterfly in the fall. Drought tolerant and suitable for xeriscaping.  
**Characteristics**  
- **Size:** 1 to 3 feet height and 1.5 to 2 feet wide  
- **Flowers:** small thistle like bluish purple blooms  
- **Bloom time:** March to November  
- **Leaves:** deeply divided into lobes, fernlike  

**Note:** According to the University of Texas Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, “The species name ‘greggii’ was named for Josiah Gregg, (1806-1850). He traveled through Texas and Arkansas. In 1848, he joined a botanical expedition to western Mexico and California. He sent specimens to the eminent botanist George Engelman in St. Louis. Subsequently, the American Botanical Society added the Latin name ‘greggii’ in his honor to twenty-three species of plants.”

**Growing in North Texas**  
Prefers hot dry locations. Plant in full sun to part shade. Plant Gregg’s Mist in groupings for best results. Spreads by rhizomes (underground stems) and recovers readily from pruning or dieback. Divide every two years by rooting from summer or fall cuttings.

Botanical names: Hibiscus sp.


Characteristics:
- **Size:** 4-7 feet tall and 2-5 feet wide (depending on variety)
- **Flowers:** white, pink, red, or fuchsia from 6-12 inches
- **Bloom time:** Summer to first frost
- **Leaves:** distinctive lobed leaves, medium green

Pests: grasshoppers. Marshmallow hibiscus may also be bothered by aphids, spider mites and white flies.

Growing in North Texas
Prefers full sun, but tolerates light shade. It grows easily in neutral to acidic soils, but is best in moist, organically rich soils. It requires regular deep watering. **Do not let soil dry out.** Provide good air circulation, but shelter from strong winds. Fertilize regularly starting in spring and continuing through the growing season. Deadhead spent blooms to maintain appearance.
Dwarf Mexican Bush Sage

**Common names:** Dwarf Velvet Sage, Santa Barbara, Woody of Velvet  
**Botanical name:** *Salvia leucantha*  
**General information:**  
Mexican Bush Sage is classified as a Salvia, a member of the mint family. The "Santa Barbara" species of *Salvia leucantha* is a native from Mexico. It is very hardy, drought tolerant and deer resistant. The beautiful lavender flowers are spectacular throughout the fall season and attract hummingbirds and butterflies. It serves as an excellent background plant, border and perennial (to 25 degrees). Cut back twice a year to keep bushy and compact after blooming.

**Characteristics:**
- **Size:** 3-4 feet tall, 3-4 feet wide  
- **Flowers:** Spiked, velvety flowers, purple, purple and white and lavender  
- **Bloom time:** Primarily in fall  
- **Leaves:** Opposite leaves with a silvery underside. Approximately 2.5 inches long and slender.  
- **Pests:** no significant problems

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**Growing in North Texas**  
Bright sun with little or no supplemental water. Prefers well-drained soil. If it does suffer some freeze damage in North Texas, it will bounce back in the late spring. Prune any damaged foliage in late March or cut back to the ground.
Mexican Mint Marigold

**Common names:** Mexican mint marigold, Mexican tarragon, Spanish tarragon, Texas tarragon

**Botanical name:** *Tagetes lucida*

**General information:** Compact perennial looks similar to marigolds and is often listed as a substitute for French tarragon. The leaves have a fragrance similar to anise or licorice. This native to Mexico and Southwest U.S. is drought and heat tolerant. Blooming in summer to late fall, it is excellent for attracting migrating butterflies.

**Characteristics**
- **Size:** 1 to 2 feet high and 18 inches wide
- **Flowers:** bright yellow gold five pedaled flowers
- **Bloom time:** summer to late winter; peaking in fall
- **Leaves:** narrow fine toothed dark green leaves contain essential oils similar in fragrance to tarragon

**Pests:** none

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**Growing in North Texas**

Plant this compact perennial in full sun. This plant tolerates poor soils, but it must be well drained. Mexican Mint Marigold needs regular water to establish and then deep watering weekly to keep it at its best. Divide plants by digging the clumps every 2 to 3 years.
Phlox ‘John Fanick’

**Common names:** ‘John Fanick’ Phlox
**Botanical name:** *Phlox paniculata*

**General information:**
This hardy garden phlox has earned its Texas Superstar® status. It survives in heat, humidity and drought. It is an ideal cottage garden plant or can be used in xeriscaping. Use it in beds and borders to add color and fragrance. This phlox attracts butterflies and hummingbirds.

**Characteristics:**
- **Size:** 1 to 3 feet tall and 1 to 3 feet wide clumps
- **Flowers:** bicolor, pink with rose lavender eyes
- **Bloom time:** early summer to fall
- **Leaves:** dark green slightly waxy leaves

**Pests and Disease Problems:** disease resistant, can be bothered by root rot, spider mites or plant bugs.

**Growing in North Texas**
Prefers full sun or light shade. Requires well drained soils and moderate moisture with good air circulation. Use a light summer mulch and avoid overhead watering. Cut back after first bloom to force a second bloom. Cut to the ground after first frost.
Plumbago

**Common name:** Plumbago, Cape Plumbago, Leadwort, Sky Flower  
**Botanical name:** *Plumbago auriculata*  
**General information:** Tender perennial. Texas Superstar plant. Profuse bloomer (although the white version is not as profuse) in a sunny or shady location and everywhere in-between. Butterfly magnet. Pruning it a few times during the growing season will increase flower production.

**Characteristics**
- **Size:** Height 3-4 feet tall, up to 5 feet wide  
- **Flowers:** usually blue, although a white variety is available  
- **Bloom Time:** May till frost  
- **Leaves:** Oblong, light yellowish green color

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**Growing in North Texas**
The fast growing plumbago, if left alone has a rambling habit. It looks lovely planted to spill over a rock wall. Otherwise, use as filler plant with enough space to allow the arching branches room to spread out.
Rain Lily (White)


**Botanical name:** *Zephyranthes candida*

**General information:** Zephyranthes are commonly called rain lilies because they often bloom after it rains. Native to the southeastern United States, Central and South America, the plant’s foliage resembles sedge or monkey grass. They work well in borders and small garden spaces.

**Characteristics**
- **Size:** 1 foot tall
- **Flowers:** White star shaped flowers; other colors include pink and yellow
- **Bloom time:** Summer
- **Leaves:** small glossy deep green
- **Plant Type:** perennial

**Pests and Disease Problems:** none

**Growing in North Texas**
Start from bulbs, planting in full sun, partial shade or even full shade in moist, well-drained soil. Prefers some shade in hot summer. Once established, they need little care. Tolerates drought and clay soils. Forms clumps about 12 inches tall and wide. In the early fall, it is covered with large white flowers. Plants are evergreen in winter. Divide after blooming.
**Autumn Sage**

**Common names:** Autumn sage, Autumn Salvia, Cherry Sage, Gregg salvia, Red Chihuahuan sage, Texas red sage

**Botanical name:** *Salvia greggii*

**General information:**
A popular evergreen shrub, native to much of Texas. May be grown in containers, borders, or mass plantings. The branches originate near the base of the plant resulting in a vase-shaped appearance. Small 1-inch flowers from spring through fall. Many colors are now available. Salvia is attractive to hummingbirds.

**Characteristics:**
- **Size:** 3 feet tall and 3 feet wide
- **Flowers:** red, but also available in pale yellow, orange, salmon, fuchsia, purple, red-violet and burgundy
- **Bloom time:** spring through fall
- **Leaves:** small, pale green and slightly aromatic

**Pests and Disease Problems:**
General resistant to damage from pests or disease.

**Growing in North Texas**
Plant in spring or early summer in prepared soil in full or filtered sun. Apply fertilizer at planting and annually. Water during extended periods of hot, dry conditions. Prune back to 4 inches in late winter and again in late summer to maintain a tidy shape. Tolerates heat.
**Salvia 'Henry Duelberg'**

**Common names:** 'Henry Duelberg' salvia, Duelberg sage, Mealy sage

**Botanical name:** *Salvia farinacea*

**General information:** Texas Superstar plant. A native Texas plant, it grows with long, narrow clusters of leaves. Plants have square stems and five petalled flowers that have a fragrance like sage. Low maintenance, heat tolerant, perennial. Attracts bees and butterflies. Used as bedding plant, cut flower, mixed border, or wildflower. Not preferred by deer or goats. Mildew resistant.

**Characteristics**
- **Size:** 3 feet wide and 3 feet in height
- **Flowers:** Spikes of showy blue velvet masses. This variety flowers more than other cultivars.
- **Bloom time:** Spring through frost
- **Leaves:** Slender bright green leaves that grow in clusters

**Pests and Disease Problems:** None known

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**Growing in North Texas**

Plant in full sun in any soil type. Low to medium water requirements. Shear frequently between bloom cycles to promote re-bloom. Once seeds heads dry, the seeds can be collected and sown in the fall or after last frost. Can be cut down to the ground after first frost.
Salvia 'Mystic Spires Blue'

Botanical name: *Salvia. longispicata x farinacea 'Mystic Spires Blue’*

General information: Jimmy Turner, the Director of Horticulture Research at the Dallas Arboretum, says, “It blooms constantly - all summer - with 10 to 12 inch spikes of deep blue flowers, and stays short enough to use in residential landscapes without staking.”

Characteristics
- **Size:** 1 to 3 feet height and 1 foot wide
- **Flowers:** 10 inch spikes of deep blue, fades to white
- **Bloom time:** late spring through summer
- **Leaves:** dark green; heavy stems, compact plant

Pests and disease problems: none

Growing in North Texas
Easy to grow Texas Superstar® perennial needs full sun, well drained soil. Blooms attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Prune in the spring after growth returns. If necessary, after first frost, cut back to 1 foot tall. Do not cut this plant to the ground. Propagate new plants from seed, stem cuttings in spring/summer, or division of the root ball.
Skullcap

**Common name:** Skullcap, Pink Skullcap, Cherry Skullcap  
**Botanical name:** *Scutellaria suffrutescens*

**General information:**  
A perennial herb — part of the mint family — skullcap is a native to the northeastern region of Mexico. The name comes from its resemblance to the medieval cap worn by men. It has a neat, compact mounding growth habit that works well as an edging plant or ground cover. The tiny snapdragon-like blooms are plentiful and look lovely spilling over a rock wall.

**Characteristics**  
• **Size:** 8 - 12 inches tall by 2 feet wide  
• **Flowers:** Fuchsia  
• **Bloom time:** May through November  
• **Leaves:** small, resembles thyme  

**Pest or Disease Problems:** None

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**Growing in North Texas**  
Plant in full or part sun in average soil with good drainage. Once established, the water requirements are low even during the hot summer months. Early spring is a great time to prune out the old woody limbs. Propagate skullcap indoors during the winter months from seed or root a stem cutting during the growing season.
Sticky Jerusalem Sage

Common names: Sticky Jerusalem Sage,
Botanical name: *Phlomis russeliana*

General information:
Hardy herbaceous perennial originally from Turkey and Syria. Tall stalks of soft yellow whorls and fuzzy grey green leaves add a unique Mediterranean style to a garden. Excellent xeriscaping or rock garden plant. This plant is not invasive, but its thick spreading basal rosettes block weeds making it a quick easy ground cover. The gray-green foliage complements its bright yellow flowers, which dry well for indoor flower arrangements.

Characteristics:
- **Size:** 1 to 3 feet tall and 1 to 3 feet wide
- **Flowers:** soft butter yellow hooded blooms arranged in whorls, similar to *Monarda*
- **Bloom time:** June to September
- **Leaves:** large olive green heart shaped leaves; slightly fuzzy, aromatic

**Pests:** Snails and slugs are attracted to basal rosettes, but the plant quickly outgrows their damage. Leafhoppers can be a problem.

**Growing in North Texas**
Likes full sun, but can be planted in light shade. This plant adapts to most moderately well drained soils. Drought tolerant, but requires supplemental water in hot summer months. Propagate by division in spring or fall.
Lamb’s Ear

Common names: Lamb's Ear 'Helen Von Stein' also called Big Ears
Botanical names: Stachys byzantina

General information: Excellent perennial cultivar. Grows in clumps and provides a nice textural change among green plants. Use as border or ground cover.

Characteristics
• Size: 10 inches tall and 30 inches wide
• Flowers: Non-flowering variety
• Leaves: Large silver-gray fuzzy leaves

Pests and Disease Problems: Foliage may rot in wet sites or when rainfall is too high.

Growing in North Texas
Space 15-24 inches apart. Prefers full sun but will tolerate some shade. Well drained soil. Tolerates heat and humidity. Neutral pH soil. Blooms can be pruned to keep plant neat and tidy. Transplants can be started at any season. Mature plants can be divided.
New Gold™ Lantana

**Common Name:** Lantana Gold  
**Botanical name:** *Lantana x hybrida* 'New Gold'

**General Information:** Texas Superstar plant. Drought tolerant, heat loving, low maintenance perennial with a wealth of golden yellow flowers. A very adaptable and popular perennial.

**Characteristics:**  
- **Hardiness:** Zone 8b  
- **Exposure:** Full sun  
- **Size:** Height 2 feet tall, 4 feet wide  
- **Bloom Time:** Spring till frost  
- **Leaves:** rough ovate shaped

**Pest or Disease Problems:** None

**Note:** All parts of the plant are poisonous if ingested.

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**Growing in North Texas**

Blooms best in full sun. It will grow in many types of soil, but prefers good drainage and a deep watering once a week. An occasional shearing during the growing season will increase its vigor as it blooms on new growth.

Provide winter protection with a heavy layer of mulch or plant near a south-facing wall. Propagate from seeds after the last frost or make stem cuttings in summer.
Lenten Rose

Common names: Lenten Rose, Christmas Rose
Botanical name: Hellebore
Characteristics: Perennial Hellebores, in the Ranunculaceae – Buttercup family, are the stars of the late winter/early spring garden. They remain evergreen and prefer shade. A rugged and easy-to-grow plant, hellebore is lovely grouped under trees and shrubs or in a woodland garden.

Characteristics:
• Size: 18 to 24 inches tall and 24 to 30 inches wide
• Flowers: clusters appear on thick stems above the foliage: flower color may be white, pink or light rose-purple.
• Bloom time: Winter through early spring
• Leaves: Palmate, serrate, thick, 8-16" wide, glossy, basal, dark green leaves (7-9 leaflets).

Pests and Disease Problems: No serious insect or disease problems. Leaf spot and crown rot are occasional problems.

Growing in North Texas
Best grown in organically rich, well-drained soil in part shade to full shade. Propagate by division of the clumps (best in spring) and from seedlings which grow up around the plants. Very hardy and drought tolerant once established.
Texas Gold Columbine

Common names: Texas Gold Columbine, Hinckley’s Columbine, Hinckley’s Gold, Capote Columbine
Botanical name: Aquilegia chrysantha ‘Hinckleyana’

General information:
This columbine is a Texas native from the Big Bend region and a Texas Superstar plant. It has a large yellow blooms and a great heat tolerance. This cool season perennial can add a blast of color to a shady area in the garden. The neat rounded growth habit will work well in a formal landscape or a mass planting will provide a spectacular spring show.

Characteristics:
• Size: 2 feet tall by 2 feet wide
• Flowers: yellow-gold with long spurs
• Bloom time: March through May
• Leaves: bluish gray-green, scalloped edges

Pests and Disease Problems: Spider mites and/or leaf miners may attack foliage during the heat of summer, if so, prune plant to just above the crown. The plant will leaf out again in the fall when daytime temperatures cool down.

Note: The flower nectar attracts butterflies and bees, and is the larval host plant for the Columbine Duskywing.

Growing in North Texas
Plant in an area that has excellent drainage and rich soil. This columbine will do well under a deciduous tree where it will be shaded in the heat of summer, but receives some sunlight during the winter growing months.

Keep soil moist with 1-inch a water every 7 to 10 days. Apply a slow-release, high nitrogen fertilizer in October, December and February. Cut back dead growth. The Columbine will come back in the spring and can be propagated through division every couple years.
Texas Gold Columbine

Photo: Texas Superstars
Texas Lilac Vitex

Botanical name: *Vitex agnus-castus*

General information:
A favorite in Texas gardens, the Texas Lilac Vitex grows quickly and offers easy maintenance.

Characteristics
- **Size:** 10-15 feet tall, up to 15 feet wide
- **Flowers:** Profuse spikes of lavender flowers bloom heavily in the early summer and then sporadically throughout the summer and fall.
- **Bloom time:** May to September
- **Leaves:** Palmate, compound leaves with five to seven leaflets. Leaves have a spicy fragrance when crushed. Fall color is yellow.
- **Plant Type:** Deciduous shrub (loses leaves in winter)

Pests and Disease Problems: none

Warning: The Vitex’s juice or sap is an irritant that can cause painful blisters.

Growing in North Texas
North Texas gardeners enjoy this *Texas Superstar Plant* as either a large shrub or small tree and it works well in xeriscape gardens. Vitex grows best in full sun -- at least 6 hours per day. Once established, Vitex requires only a little supplemental water Vitex accepts a wide range of soil conditions. Fertilize at planting time and each spring. Trim Vitex in late winter to early spring.
Turk’s Cap

Common names: Turk’s Cap, Drummond Waxmallow, Texas Mallow, Mexican Apple, Red Mallow, May Apple, Wild Turk’s Cap, Bleeding Heart
Botanical name: *Malvaviscus arboreus var. drummondii*

General information:
Listed by Texas AgriLife Extension Service as a Texas native in South Texas, Turk’s cap grows rapidly, producing a profusion of flowers in bright red, pink or white from summer through frost. Turk’s Cap is drought tolerant once established and is popular with hummingbirds and butterflies. It grows in sun, partial sun and shade, although it may become leggy in full sun.

Characteristics
- **Size:** 2 – 3 feet tall, but in ideal growing conditions may reach 9 feet. Spread is 3 to 5 feet.
- **Flowers:** red tube-shaped, other turk’s cap cultivars have pink (‘Pam Puryear’) or variegated (‘Fiesta’) flowers
- **Bloom time:** Summer through fall
- **Leaves:** Dull green, deciduous

Pests and Disease Problems: no serious problems

Growing in North Texas
Depending on the severity of the winter, Turk’s cap may behave as a perennial or an annual, although established plants usually come back from roots when the weather warms. The plant prefers fertile, well-drained soil, but tolerates a variety of soil conditions. Requires some supplemental water in summer. Removing an established Turk's cap may be difficult because the plant’s root system runs deep with dense netting.
Victoria Phlox

Common names: “Victoria Perennial”, “Victoria Phlox”, “Garden Phlox”
Botanical name: *Phlox paniculata* ‘Victoria’

**General information:**
A hardy 3-foot tall perennial with attractive blossom clusters, the Victoria Phlox’s foliage is a lighter green than the more common phlox variety, ‘John Fannick’ and has a more open growth habit. This *Texas Superstar* performs well as a perennial border and its fragrant flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

**Characteristics**
- **Size:** 3 feet tall, 2 feet wide
- **Flowers:** Magenta Pink
- **Bloom time:** June to September
- **Leaves:** Light green narrow pointed leaves up to 3 inches long and 1 inch wide
- **Plant Type:** Deciduous perennial (dies back in winter)

**Pests and Disease Problems:** powdery mildew

**Growing in North Texas**
Full sun. Medium water requirements -- once or twice a week during the growing season. Phlox requires fertile, well-drained soil. Fertilize at planting time and annually with a timed-release product. Fall is the best planting time. Propagate Phlox by division every 3 years or use rooted stem cuttings. Remove faded flowers to prolong the bloom period. Cut back the dead foliage (to the ground) after it freezes in late fall or early winter.