

and some improvements. Flower is more true daisy and the color is darker. Will flower three to four days later than Stardom.

'Debonair': Possibly the best new cultivar in years. Has even plant growth, free breaking, and sturdy. Most durable flower of all pinks. Flowers early. This should be a must in garden mum programs.

NATIVE ORNAMENTALS FOR THE U.S. SOUTHWEST

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Lone Star Growers, located in San Antonio, Texas, is a wholesale nursery specializing in production of container-grown ornamentals. Besides ornamental shrubs and trees we also grow annual and perennial color crops, tropical foliage, and southwestern natives.

The Native Plant Program developed at Lone Star Growers is based on company philosophy that we owe something to the community in which we make our living. We are introducing to the trade plants that are well adapted to their environment. Texas is facing a growing water crisis, and plants must be drought tolerant as well as hardy to survive. Although the skepticism was great at the time that the program would not be economically feasible, Lone Star believed then, as it does now, that native plants are the way of the future.

The program itself started as an introduction department where species could be evaluated in several areas: their ornamental value, hardiness, and regional adaptability; and also where their propagation techniques and cultural needs could be determined.

Over 800 species from Texas and surrounding areas have been collected and are currently being evaluated. In the past three years we have brought over 200 into commercial production.

Over the last two years we have seen an explosion in the interest and demand for natives in the industry. The promotion of natives through Xeriscape, the Texas Department of Agriculture and county extension agencies have gone a long way in creating an acceptance of native plants as useful ornamentals.

In response, this past spring has brought the development of a new department solely devoted to the production of natives from propagation to large container specimens. This department will be able to offer a wide range of natives to the consumer, rather than

growing the faster and easier to grow to the exclusion of the others. The Research and Development department will continue to evaluate new natives and make selections of superior cultivars. We are donating plants to other area nurseries for evaluating hardiness.

For many years the word "native" was considered synonymous with "weed" by a large number of people. This idea is an obstacle we still face despite growing popularity of the natives. There are other misconceptions that will cause problems in the long term.

Most of the misconceptions stem from lack of knowledge of the plant material. One of the most serious mistakes made is interpreting *low* maintenance as *no* maintenance. Native plants are just as varied in characteristics as other plants. The oversimplification of their care can only lead to disappointment.

The use of natives in landscapes is growing but still seems to be limited too many times to the "wild" or naturalistic landscape. In order to establish a solid market, natives will have to be mainstreamed in both formal and informal landscape designs along with accepted ornamentals.

Some of the most popular natives are already close to losing their native identity but many of the 200 plants that Lone Star is growing are still very new to the trade. Outlined here are some that promise to be real winners in the near future.

TREES

Chilopsis linearis 'Burgundy Lace' (TM), desert willow, is a small deciduous tree which has been in cultivation for many years but has not been widely used. The tubular flowers are about 2 in. long and are produced throughout the summer. 'Burgundy Lace' (TM) was selected for its solid burgundy flowers. With its attractive blooms and adaptability to many soils and cultural conditions, this tree should be planted more. It is propagated by semihard or hardwood cutting.

Ungnadia speciosa, Mexican buckeye, is native throughout central Texas and northern Mexico and is one of the outstanding natives. It grows as a tree or a large multistemmed shrub and can reach 30 feet high. The deciduous foliage is similar to a pecan; the rose-colored flowers, which appear before the leaves, makes this tree from a distance resemble a redbud. Mexican buckeye will bloom at an early age, sometimes when only one year old. This gives Mexican buckeye a distinct advantage over many flowering trees that may take years to bloom. It is easy to grow and is adapted over most of Texas and Louisiana. Propagation is by seed collected in late summer. Seeds need no pregermination treatment.

Diospyros texana, Texas persimmon, is a small multitrunked

tree reaching 30 feet but is usually only 10 to 15 feet. Its most outstanding features are the intricate branching and smooth gray bark. The leaves are persistent to deciduous depending on the severity of the winter. The females bear black edible fruit approximately 1-in. in diameter. Propagation is by seeds, which need no pregermination treatment.

Myrospermum sousanum, arroyo sweetwood, is a newly discovered species. It was found in April, 1982, by a party lead by our native plant expert, Mr. Lynn Lowrey, in the state of Nuevo León, Mexico. This is a beautiful flowering tree with light green deciduous foliage. It may reach up to 40 feet. Arroyo sweetwood is a profuse bloomer, producing white legume flowers in terminal spikes through April. The tree has proven to be adapted to south and central Texas. Seed matures in late summer and need no pregermination treatment.

Quercus polymorpha, 'Monterrey oak', is a large evergreen spreading oak, similar in shape and size to *Quercus virginiana*, southern live oak. Monterrey oak has large leathery leaves up to 7 in. long and the new growth has an attractive reddish cast. This tree will provide an attractive alternative to the southern live oak in Texas.

SHRUBS

Rhus virens, evergreen sumac, is one of the best evergreen shrubs for hot, well-drained locations where many exotics will not survive. It is a rounded shrub, which can reach 10 feet but can be sheared for hedge plantings. It is adapted over most of Texas. Propagation is easiest by seed, but it can also be propagated by cuttings. Seeds need scarification.

Berberis trifololata (*Mahonia trifoliolata*), agarita, has evergreen, holly-like leaves. It forms a dense, rounded shrub usually to 6 feet. Agarita is one of the earliest spring bloomers in Texas, with yellow fragrant flowers in March. The flowers are followed by edible red berries. Agarita is very drought resistant and adapted throughout Texas as long as it is given good drainage. It grows best in full sun. Seeds require cold stratification.

Bauhinia congesta, Anacacho orchid tree, is more often seen as a large multistemmed shrub up to 20 feet tall. This deciduous shrub is only found in one place in Texas, the Anacacho Mountains in southwest Texas. But, it is also native throughout northern Mexico. This bauhinia has small emerald leaves, which are cleft to the petiole. It produces an abundance of white flowers in March and April, continuing on and off throughout the summer. This bauhinia is adapted throughout the central and southern portions of Texas. Seeds germinate easily with no pregermination treatment.

PERENNIALS

Bouvardia ternifolia, scarlet bouvardia, is an outstanding perennial. The scarlet tubular flowers are 1 to 1½ in. long and are borne in terminal cymes. It blooms from midsummer to frost and is adapted throughout central, west and south Texas, up into New Mexico. Bouvardia does best in well-drained soils and in full sun. Propagate by semihardwood cuttings throughout the growing season.

Chrysactinia mexicana, damianita, is a mounding evergreen perennial reaching 12 to 15 inches. The dark green foliage is very aromatic. Golden yellow blooms are produced all summer. This little evergreen shrub can be used in rock gardens, borders, and edging. It does best in full sun and in well-drained soils. Damianita is adapted through central and west Texas.

Salvia greggii, autumn sage, comes in a variety of color selections including red, coral, white, pink, and burgundy. This has been one of our most popular newcomers. As well as blooming profusely all summer, this woody perennial is also evergreen in central Texas. It is widely adapted throughout the state, very drought resistant and a versatile native. Propagate by seed or semihardwood cuttings.

Pavonia lasiopetala, rock rose, is a very showy drought resistant native with pink hibiscus-like flowers. It will grow in full sun or light shade. When mature it is 4 feet by 4 feet. Deciduous.

Poliomintha longiflora, Mexican oregano, is used as an herb in the markets of Mexico. The small evergreen leaves smell very much like the commonly-used spice oregano. In addition to this it produces light lavender flowers throughout the summer. The combination is a striking landscape plant. Full sun and well-drained soils are preferred. Propagation is easy by semihardwood cuttings.

Unfortunately, space is limited, and I am only able to describe a few of the many beautiful natives available in the trade today.

I would like to end with something Mr. Lynn Lowery once wrote: "If we judge the natives' quality and usefulness by how similar they are to common plant material, their main value will have been discarded. We have the opportunity of greatly enlarging the possibilities in plant use if an open mind prevails."