

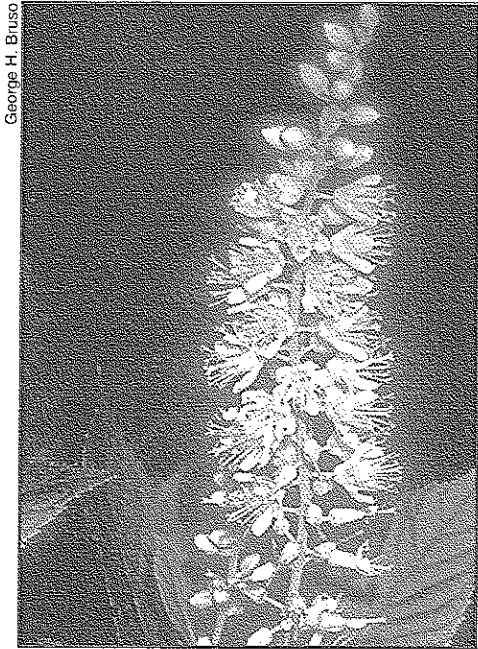


LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER

Educating people about the environmental necessity, economic value, and natural beauty of native plants.

September/October 1998

Volume 15, Number 5



George H. Brusco

Clethera alnifolia
Summer sweet pepperbrush

Native Shrubs: Replanting Our Landscape Heritage

sity. Plants were essential to human survival then, as now, providing medicines, tools, and food. Is our natural heritage represented in our landscapes today? Is our sense of place?

Including native plants and shrubs in landscape design marks a return to "common sense" gardening, and to landscapes that restore biodiversity and a sense of place. It is logical to use plants that evolved in a region because they are adapted to the climate and will require less maintenance. Although most native shrubs are deciduous, they provide many design options and enhance wildlife (and human) habitats. Native shrubs benefit wildlife by providing cover, food, and nesting habitat. In turn, wildlife helps plants disperse seeds and perform pollination functions. It is wonderful to smell summer sweet pepperbush (*Clethera alnifolia*) sweet fragrance and to see hummingbirds dancing around the plant's flowering panicle, or watch butterflies visiting Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginicus*). These experiences, and a thousand others like them, remind us of the reality of where we are and our part in nature's system.

DESIGNING WITH NATIVE SHRUBS

As with any landscape project, begin by identifying your landscape needs and understanding a bit about the *plant com-*

munity type that suits the physical site. Plant communities are groups of plants that share an environmental niche. The goal is to capture the essence of the community model and incorporate that into the design. The key is matching the correct species of shrubs to the correct environmental and design niche.

The first basic questions relate to the physical conditions of the site. What is the project's geographic area or region? What are the soil conditions? Is the soil pH acid, alkaline, or neutral? What are your landscaping needs? *Continued on page 4*

By Rick Huffman, ASLA

Landscapes should reflect the heritage and culture of a region, and say something about who we are and where we live in the world. Native landscapes provide what the ancient Greeks called "genus loci," a sense of place.

Of course, North America's natural landscape has changed quite a bit from the landscapes our ancestors knew. Early explorers, Bartram, DeSoto, Douglas, Michaux, Nuttall, and Townsend, documented and described America's native flora and original landscape composition. The forests were rich mosaics of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. Open areas, such as prairies and savannas provided wonderful vistas of color and diver-

Planning for the Seventh Generation

Think for a moment of those who will live here seven generations from now. What will be our legacy to them? Will we leave healthy habitats and vital ecosystems, or sterile and depleted biomes? These questions and many others will be explored by scientists, land managers, and educators at the Natural Areas Association Conference and Pow Wow at Mission Point Resort, October 6-10 on Mackinac Island, Michigan. Contact the Natural Areas Association, PO Box 30180, Lansing, MI 48909; (517) 373-6705, for more information and a registration packet.

Director's Report

As this report is written, Texas is experiencing a serious drought and a record heat wave.

Day after day, reports about our climate make national news. As the drought and heat drag on, the press has shown an increasing interest in the Wildflower Center as a model for using appropriate plant materials and conserving water resources. For example, a Dallas television station recently taped an extended feature story about the Center. We are able to use the Wildflower Center to make the powerful, yet simple point that native plants have adapted over eons to the extreme conditions of our climate, and that they have evolved strategies for surviving drought conditions. While our natural areas do look drier than normal, the plants are surviving, waiting for the next rain to green up again.



In the more formal areas of the Center, we have been able to maintain the quality of our displays with supplemental watering. Nevertheless, our watering regimes are conservative; we apply only what we need to keep our displays attractive. Even on the hottest of days the Wildflower Center is a biologically rich and naturally beautiful place to visit. The underlying message is this: even in the most extreme conditions native plants are the "natural choice."

On the national front, we are very proud to announce an affiliation with Westchester Community College in Valhalla, New York. Inspired by Wildflower Center board member Betsy Stern, the college has developed a Native Plant Center, which offers lectures and courses in native plant studies, and includes a native plant demonstration garden at the front entrance of the college. This garden, installed in late April, is the first of several gardens located on the Westchester campus. The campus has a variety of micro-climates, which are perfectly suited to display the

diversity and beauty of native plants from the New York region. Beginning this fall, the college will offer classes in native landscaping for local residents. The first class, Wildflowers of the Northeast in Autumn, will be taught by Carol Levine beginning on September 12. Other instructors include Sara Stein, author of the native plant classic, *Noah's Garden*. The Native Plant Center at Westchester Community College is committed to the principles and the mission of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, and is endorsed by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center as an affiliate center. Over the next several years we hope to add other affiliate gardens and centers, perhaps one in your region!

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Executive Director

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A Case Study: PlanIt Texas Partners Meet at Red Corral Ranch

In a remarkable partnership, a number of organizations with very different ideas about land use and natural resources have formed PlanIt Texas to find new ways to resolve environmental conflicts. The 22-member coalition includes groups as diverse as the Nature Conservancy of Texas, Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers, Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers, and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. PlanIt Texas members, including Wildflower Center interns and Natural Areas staff and more than 100 area ranchers and landowners, gathered last May for a conference at the Red Corral Ranch near Wimberley, Texas.

Together, they explored the impacts of the Endangered Species Act on private landowners, techniques for surveying and providing habitats for small animals, revegetation techniques,

land and water conservation measures, and wildflower and prairie ecosystem management.

The PlanIt Texas Field Day at the Red Corral Ranch emphasized and reinforced the complementary relationship between sound ranching principles and sound ecological principles, built bridges between persons with very diverse interests and concerns, and provided the Center's interns with invaluable perspectives on collaboration, community cooperation, and education.

Collaborations of this nature are challenging and effective. Are there situations in your community or region where this model might work? Visit your local library or nonprofit assistance organization for more information. Get involved!

Fall Season Planting: Nature Does It, Should You?

We can learn a lot from watching the best and when it comes to growing native plants, no one does it better than Nature. Wild plants generally scatter seeds over the late summer and fall months. It's a natural investment in the next spring's growing season. By scattering seeds in the soil in the fall, we can give many native plants a good start for the next season, too. Good fall planting often means great spring blooming.

Growing plants is often a little unpredictable. Some of the seeds planted, those with good seed-to-soil contact, may bloom the next season. Others will be eaten or otherwise damaged and never germinate. Native plants have adapted chemical and mechanical systems that trigger germination when environmental conditions are right. Some native plants, such as lupines and pines, have seed coats that must be scratched, or even burned, before the seeds will germinate. Still others might need freezing and thawing action. Nature is a good teacher, and we can help our plants by following Nature's lead.

Start with your soil

When thinking about your garden, consider your landscape areas, the soil types, and available light and moisture. Know the native species for your area. Determine what plants are appropriate to your conditions. Determine your landscaping goals. And get rid of your weeds (invasive or non-native plants). Although tilling the seed bed, then treating the weeds with Roundup™ or other non-residual herbicide works well to remove weeds in mid-summer, if you plan to remove weeds from your soil in September or October, then black plastic, late summer sun, and patience will do the trick. A layer of black plastic over the area you want "weeded" will create a micro-climate perfect for quick germination of any unwanted seeds that may be resting in your soil. Plan to keep the soil covered with the plastic long enough for the seeds to germinate. Without sun or water, and with plenty of heat, the plants will wither and die.

Beth Anderson



Mixing seed and sand.

If you have warm-season grasses already established in your yard, mixing other native plants in the fall months works very well. If, however, you have cool season or non-native turf grasses planted, the grass's growing cycle might interfere with the productivity of the native seeds. If you are mixing wildflowers into grasses, mow the grass as short as possible and rake the thatch away. Remember that you must have good soil-to-seed contact for native seeds to sprout.

Add your seeds

Your soil is ready. You have your seeds. It's time to plant. Scooping a handful of seeds and scattering them across your prepared soil is a great way to seed small areas. You may want to mix a bit of dry sand with your seeds to make seed distribution easier. A seed driller (set to a maximum depth of 1/4 inch) will work well if you are planting a larger area. Good soil-to-seed contact is essential. You might want to rake a thin layer of soil over the seeds you have scattered.

NWFPC

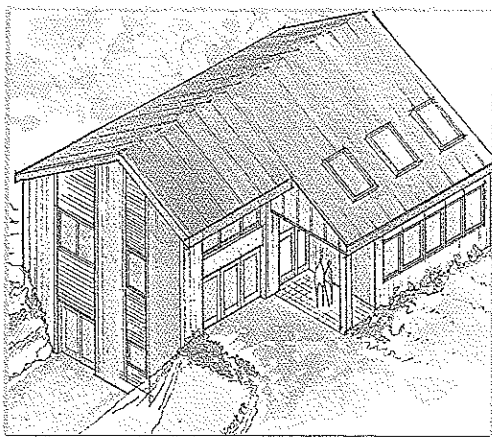


Scattering seed.

Many native plants prefer soil with low fertility so you may not need to supplement your planting with anything more than water.

Sprinkle your seeds with a little water for the first few weeks. Keep in mind that northern species might need to sit in the frozen ground for months preparing to germinate, while southern species might need occasional watering to keep the soil moist, but not saturated, until they are ready to sprout.

The final component necessary to any garden is patience. Perennials planted now will spend their first year setting strong, deep roots, then flower the second or third year. Annuals planted now will bloom next spring, go to seed, and continue the cycle on their own. Nature's growing combination is easily adapted: soils, seeds, seasons, and plenty of patience can help your natural garden grow beautifully.



An Audubon Center Grows in Pennsylvania

The Audubon Center for Native Plants in Fox Chapel, Pennsylvania received a \$115,000 grant from Peoples Plus, a regional energy supplier. The grant will enable the Audubon Center to expand its nursery, greenhouses, educational facilities, and retail spaces, as well as expand the promotion, protection, and propagation of more than 1,500 native plant species. The Audubon Center's horticulturist John Totten believes in preserving what nature has provided, protecting native plants, and helping local residents to re-establish native plants in their yards. Although he doesn't endorse collecting wild plants, Totten and his crew will carefully harvest seeds from the area's native plants and grow seedlings in the nursery facilities, then sell the seedlings to home gardeners. The Wildflower Center congratulates the Audubon Center and looks forward to reporting more news on its accomplishments and growth.

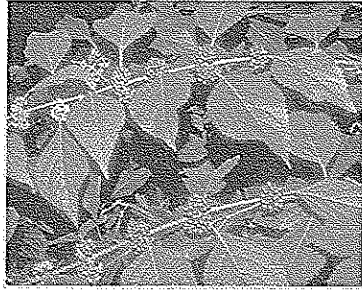
Native Shrubs

continued from page 1

Do you need screening, foundation plantings, accents, or erosion control? Once these parameters are determined, design and plant selection can begin.

Native shrubs can fill design needs for flower, fragrance, and fall color, and define spaces as outdoor rooms. Designing with native shrubs allows you to create something different and unique while working within tried and true design principles. Instead of traditional foundation plantings, focus on loose groupings of several species. This approach breaks the monotony and offers a variety of colors, textures, and forms.

W.D. Bransford



Callicarpa americana
Beautyberry

Some of my favorite species (for use in South Carolinian gardens) are

inkberry holly (*Ilex glabra*), Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginicus*), summer sweet pepperbrush (*Clethra alnifolia*), and beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*). These are hardy, versatile, and cost-effective shrubs.

In our urban landscapes, there is often a need for a privacy hedge. Some great evergreen choices are wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), Florida

anise (*Illicium floridanum*), and eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), which can serve as a large shrub or small tree. A sampling of large shrubs



Patsy Chaney

Amorpha fruticosa
False indigo

for shade to part shade includes oak leaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*), catawba rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), possum haw viburnum (*Viburnum nudum*), and all the native azaleas. These are just a few of many choices, so be sure to investigate your own regional options.

Native shrubs can offer new frontiers for American gardeners, while returning our landscapes to a more natural form. Next time you plant, think about breaking the mold--and doing the right thing--by landscaping for wildlife, helping preserve our regional landscapes, and enhancing our understanding of and respect for nature.

Rick Huffman is the president of Earth Designs, Inc. of Pickens, South Carolina, and is the founder and president of the South Carolina Native Plant Society.

Consider these regional native shrub species when planning your landscape:

NORTHEAST

<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Gray dogwood
<i>Corylus americana</i>	American hazelnut, filbert
<i>Epigaea repens</i>	Trailing arbutus
<i>Ledum groenlandicum</i>	Labrador tea, muskeg tea
<i>Lonicera dioica</i>	Limber honeysuckle
<i>Rhododendron prinophyllum</i>	Roseshell azalea, early azalea

MID-ATLANTIC

<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Buttonbush
<i>Crataegus phaenopyrum</i>	Washington hawthorn
<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Winterberry, Michigan holly, black alder
<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	Mountain laurel
<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	Wax myrtle, southern bayberry
<i>Rhododendron catawbiense</i>	Purple rhododendron

SOUTHEAST

<i>Amorpha fruticosa</i>	False indigo, indigo bush
<i>Baccharis halimifolia</i>	Sea myrtle, groundsel bush
<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	American beautyberry, French mulberry
<i>Hypericum prolificum</i>	Shrubby St. John's wort
<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Spicebush
<i>Rhododendron arborescens</i>	Smooth azalea

MIDWEST

<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	Downy serviceberry, shadbush, Juneberry
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Bearberry, kinnikinnik
<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Red-twig dogwood, red-osier dogwood
<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	Fragrant sumac
<i>Rosa blanda</i>	Early wild rose, smooth rose
<i>Salix discolor</i>	Pussy willow

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

<i>Ahus incana</i>	Speckled alder, mountain alder
<i>Artemisia frigida</i>	Prairie sagewort, fringed sage
<i>Betula glandulosa</i>	Bog birch, dwarf birch
<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>	Rabbit brush, chamisa
<i>Ephedra viridis</i>	Mormon tea
<i>Lonicera involucrata</i>	Black twinberry, bear berry honeysuckle

NORTHWEST

<i>Arctostaphylos columbiana</i>	Hairy manzanita
<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>	Big sagebrush, Great Basin sagebrush
<i>Cercocarpus ledifolius</i>	Curl-leaf mountain mahogany
<i>Garrya elliptica</i>	Silk-tassel bush
<i>Juniperus communis</i> var. <i>saxatilis</i>	Dwarf juniper
<i>Mabonia aquifolium</i>	Oregon grape

SOUTHWEST

<i>Abutilon hypoleucum</i>	Rio Grande abutilon
<i>Anisacanthus thurberi</i>	Chuparosa, desert honeysuckle
<i>Chrysactinia mexicana</i>	Damianita
<i>Dalea formosa</i>	Feather plume, feather dalea
<i>Larrea tridentata</i>	Creosote bush
<i>Sambucus mexicana</i>	Mexican elderberry

CALIFORNIA

<i>Aesculus californica</i>	California buckeye
<i>Arctostaphylos manzanita</i>	Manzanita
<i>Artemisia californica</i>	California sagebrush
<i>Encelia californica</i>	Bush sunflower
<i>Fallugia paradoxa</i>	Apache plume
<i>Forestiera neomexicana</i>	Desert olive, elbow bush, forestiera

ALASKA

<i>Betula nana</i>	Dwarf birch
<i>Potentilla fruticosa</i>	Potentilla, shrubby cinquefoil
<i>Ribes laxiflorum</i>	Trailing black currant
<i>Rosa acicularis</i>	Wild rose
<i>Rubus spectabilis</i>	Salmon berry
<i>Salix candida</i>	Horay willow, sage willow

For more information about shrubs native to your area, contact your favorite native plant nursery or call the Wildflower Center Clearinghouse at (512) 292-4200 for ordering information about native shrubs in your area.

From **f** **i** **e** **l** **d**

NORTHEAST

Easthampton, MA: *Plant & Community Inventory of Camp Cook, September 12*
Contact: The New England Wild Flower Society, 180 Hemenway Road, Framingham, MA 01707; (508) 877-7630

Valhalla, NY: *Native Plant Workshop with Sara Stein, October 3* Contact: Native Plant Center at Westchester Community College, 75 Grasslands Road, Valhalla, NY 10595; (914) 785-6670

MID-ATLANTIC

New Hope, PA: *Fall Native Plant Sale, September 12-13, 19-21* Contact: Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve, Route 32, PO Box 685, New Hope, PA 18938; (215) 862-2924

Troy, OH: *Fall Foliage Hike, October 18*
Contact: Brukner Nature Center, 5995 Horseshoe Bend Rd., Troy, OH 45373; (937) 698-6493

SOUTHEAST

Atlanta, GA: *Using Native Ferns in the Garden, September 8* Contact: Georgia Native Plant Society, PO Box 422085, Atlanta, GA 30342-2085; (770) 343-6000
Mobile, AL: *Fall Plant Sale, October 17-18* Contact: The Mobile Botanical Gardens; (334) 342-0555

NORTH CENTRAL/MIDWEST

Chanhassen, MN: *Fall Festival, September 26* Contact: Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, 3675 Arboretum Drive, Chanhassen, MN 55317; (612) 443-2460

Indianapolis, IN: *Fall Plant Identification Hike at Scott Starling Nature Sanctuary, October 18* Contact: Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society, Indianapolis, IN; (317) 290-0612

OKLAHOMA/TEXAS

Austin, TX: *Fall Field Day, September 19*
Contact: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave., Austin, TX 78739; (512) 292-4200

Oklahoma City, OK: *AABGA Regional Meeting: The Search for Significance, September 24-26*

Contact: Myriad Gardens Foundation, 301 W. Reno, Oklahoma City, OK 73102; (405) 297-3995

Amarillo, TX: *Native Plant Society 1998 Annual Symposium, October 15-18*

Contact: Native Plant Society of Texas (512) 238-0695

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Gunnison, CO: *Colorado Native Plant Society Annual Workshop/Field Day, September 18-20* Contact: Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Office, Gunnison, CO; (970) 641-0471

Salt Lake City, UT: *National Roadside Vegetation Management Association Annual Conference, October 6-9* Contact: (302) 832-2960

SOUTHWEST

Albuquerque, NM: *Landscaping for Wildlife and Butterflies, September 3*

Contact: Native Plant Society of New Mexico, PO Box 5917, Santa Fe, NM 87502; (505) 268-7889

Phoenix, AZ: *Fall Landscape and Plant Sale & Used Book Sale, October 24-25*

Contact: Desert Botanical Garden, 1201 N. Galvin Parkway, Phoenix AZ 85008; (602) 941-1225

NORTHWEST

Bellevue, WA: *Gardening with Native Plants, September 26* Contact: Washington Native Plant Society/Central Puget Sound Chapter, PO Box 28690, Seattle, WA 98118; (425) 451-1992

Kennewick, WA: *Columbia Trail Field Trip, October 3* Contact: Washington Native Plant Society/Columbia Basin Chapter; (509) 547-3471

CALIFORNIA

Sacramento, CA: *Native Plant Fair & Sale at Shepard Garden & Arts Center, September 26*

Contact: California Native Plant Society/Sacramento Valley Chapter; (916) 446-3974

Santa Barbara, CA: *Fall Plant Sale, October 17* Contact: Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, 1212 Mission Canyon Rd., Santa Barbara, CA 93105; (805) 682-4726

Many of these organizations host a number of native plant workshops, activities, and events through the season. Please contact them directly for a full calendar of local events or visit our web site at www.wildflower.org for more information. If there is a native plant event that we should include on any of our web listings, please call (512) 292-4200 x 114, or e-mail ATTN: Editor, wildflower@wildflower.org and share your news!



What's Missing?

Here in the Central Texas Hill Country, the answer is rain, and along with it our usual profusion of late spring and early summer wildflowers. Dependable salvia and sunflowers in all their many varieties appear despite it all!

As I write, we are in the clutches of implacable heat and drought. More than six inches of rain in January and February followed last year's wet fall. March arrived with a promise of abundance in nature. Then the faucet turned off. As of mid-July, our rainfall at the Center is nearly seven inches below average. In fact, May was the second driest since weather-keeping records began in the mid-1800s.

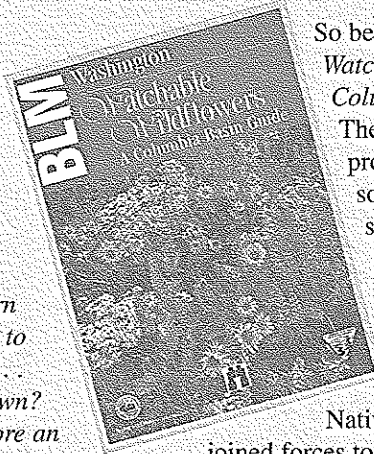
In spite of our dry soils, the bluebell (*Eustoma grandiflorum*), which is native across most of Texas, is also doing very well at the Center. Back in the 1930s or 40s, a Japanese botanist came to America and collected bluebell seed. He grew the seed as parent plants and developed a hybrid named *Listianthus* with a double-frilled bloom. As the habitat for bluebells began disappearing, and with it the bluebells, the hybrid came into use by florists and I worried that native bluebells would turn up on my "missing list." Now, with the help of organizations like the Wildflower Center and native plant societies, the demand for wildflowers and the knowledge of how to grow them has increased. Bluebells and many other native plants are now sometimes available in pots in nurseries.

I would like to hear from you, our members and supporters, about native plants in other states. What flourished? What did not? Has the use of wildflowers and native grasses caught on in your community? Of course, we want the success stories, and yes, the failures as well. Please write to this column.

Lady Bird Johnson

Washington's Watchable Wildflowers: A Columbia Basin Guide

From the freeway, the eastern half of the state may appear to be an endless open space What if you were to slow down? What if you decided to explore an unpaved back road? What if you chose, this time, to stop and walk among the sagebrush, grasses, and wildflowers?



So begins *Washington's Watchable Wildflowers: A Columbia Basin Guide*.

The following 38 pages provide plenty of reasons to slow down, stop, and get out.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) botanists, renowned photographers, and the Washington Native Plant Society

joined forces to bring you a book that is both easy to read and provides plenty of technical information about the plants and this lovely place.

The Columbia Basin's wildflowers, pictured in full and glorious color, are just a part of the book, which also explores a variety of niches, habitats, and human influences on the land. Ten smaller brochures include regional plant lists, which provide botanical and common names and bloom seasons. For more information about *Washington's Watchable Wildflowers*, please contact the Wenatchee Resource Area Office, BLM, 915 Walla Walla Street, Wenatchee, Washington, 98801; (509) 665-2100. (The book is available for \$4.00, plus \$1.50 postage and handling.)

Join Us! You may join as a new member, renew your membership, or give the gift that blooms a full year! Simply fill out this form and mail with a check or your credit card information. Members receive many benefits, but most importantly, membership supports the Wildflower Center's education programs.

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Call (512) 292-4200 x 137 for more information on membership levels and benefits. Thank you for your support.



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