

## Sources of Native Plants for the Rio Grande Valley

### Brownsville

Gentry's Garden Center (956) 350-9805  
Tony's Nursery (956) 541-5322

### Edinburg

Reyes Nursery (956) 380-1528

### Harlingen

Grimsell Seed Co. (956) 423-0370  
Heeps Nursery (Mike Heep) (956) 457-6834\*  
Mother Nature's Creations (956) 428-4897\*  
Stuart Place Nursery (956) 428-4439  
Wild August Nursery (956) 535-2117

### McAllen

Valley Garden Center (956) 682-9411

### Mission

Shady Acres Nursery (956) 581-7783

### Rio Grande City

Rancho Lomita Nursery (956) 486-2576\*

### San Benito

J&J Plants & More (956) 361-4420  
River Oaks Nursery (956) 399-4078

### Weslaco

Mid-Valley Garden & Pond (956) 973-1998  
Valley Nature Center (956) 969-2475\*

#### *\*Offer Native Plants Only*

*This list revised September, 2011. Any registered nursery handling Valley native plants which wishes to be added to this list, please contact Valley Proud Environmental Council, 513 E. Jackson, Harlingen, Texas 78550 (956) 412-8004.*

### Excellent Resource Book for Planting

*"Wildflowers and Other Plants of Texas Beaches and Islands" 2002 by Dr. Alfred Richardson*

Available at Valley Nature Center, Weslaco  
and The Wild Bird Center, Harlingen

## Information on Native Wildscape Certification for Residential and Commercial Property is available from:

1. **TEXAS WILDSAPES BACKYARD HABITAT PROGRAM**  
[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/wildscapes](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/wildscapes)  
Nongame and Urban Program  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, TX 78744  
(512) 389-4644
2. **BACKYARD WILDLIFE HABITAT PROGRAM**  
[www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat](http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat)  
National Wildlife Federation  
11100 Wildlife Center Drive  
Reston, VA 20190-5362  
(703) 438-6000 / 1-800-822-9919

The Native Plant Project has published five handbooks on Native Trees, Plants, Shrubs, Pond and Wetland Plants. Information from these handbooks has been included in this Guide. The Native Plant Project is located at:

### NATIVE PLANT PROJECT

[www.nativeplantproject.org](http://www.nativeplantproject.org)

P. O. Box 2742

San Juan, TX 78589

#### *Handbooks are available from:*

### VALLEY NATURE CENTER

[www.info@valleynaturecenter.org](mailto:www.info@valleynaturecenter.org)

301 South Border Avenue

P. O. Box 8125

Weslaco, TX 78599

(956) 969-2475

#### *For advice on revegetating private land holdings, contact:*

Maxwell Pons, Jr.  
The Nature Conservancy of Texas  
10000 Southmost Road  
Brownsville, Texas 78521  
(956) 546-0547

*This third edition was prepared  
and printed in memory of  
Valley Proud Environmental Council  
founder James R. Matz*



513 E. Jackson Street, Ste. 304  
Harlingen, Texas 78550  
**956.412.8004**  
[www.valleyproud.org](http://www.valleyproud.org)

## A Guide For Selecting And Planting Native Ground Cover, Wild Flowers, Shrubs And Trees On South Padre Island And In The Laguna Madre Area

*While these trees and shrubs are specifically recommended for South Padre Island and the Laguna Madre area, they are native plants which can be planted anywhere in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.*

THIRD EDITION 2011

## SELECTING NATIVE SHRUBS AND TREES

The choice of a native shrub or tree, like any other plant, should be dictated by landscaping need and the desired effect. Given the limits of purpose and site, finding a native shrub or tree which will handsomely fulfill every requirement is no problem. Once a choice is made, there remain only a few location and planting tips to be observed.

### Obtaining Plants

First, buy your plant from a reputable, reliable nurseryman. DO NOT transplant from the wild. Not only is this rarely successful, it diminishes our threatened natural plant and animal habitats. A healthy, vigorous looking small shrub or tree is much preferred over a large one and smaller specimens suffer less transplant shock. With smaller plants, chances of survival and rapid growth are very high, they are cheaper, and within a year their size equals those which were initially two to three times larger.

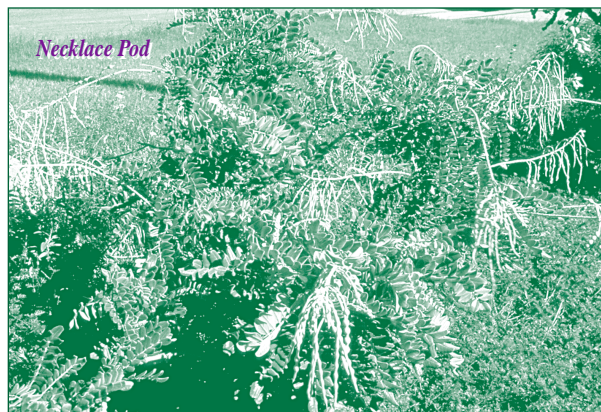


photo: Dr. Gene Lester

### Site Location

Poorly drained areas should be avoided or mounded for drainage and the tree/shrubs planted on top of the mound. It is difficult for native shrubs to grow on a site where a large portion of the soil near the root area is covered by blacktop or paving. Make sure the plant has plenty of growing space and do not plant too close to houses or pathways.



Texas  
Sabal Palm

photo: Dr. Gene Lester

## PLANTING NATIVE SHRUBS AND TREES

### When to Plant

The best times to plant in the Lower Rio Grande Valley are late autumn (to allow for root establishment and dormancy before any freeze) and mid-February after danger of freezing has passed. Planting during the hotter months can be done but requires much more water, care and maintenance and is equally more stressful on the plant and you than during the cooler late autumn through early spring months. The one exception is Palm trees which do best when planted late Spring through early Fall while the soil is warm.

### Preparing the Site

A hole should be dug sufficiently deep and wide enough to hold the full root system. In very poor soils the hole should be wider and deeper. As the hole is dug, the soil from the top 4 to 6 inches, which is richer, should be kept separated from the subsoil. Discard the subsoil and replace with the top soil or improve the subsoil by mixing at least 1:1 subsoil to moist peatmoss or excess media from the pot in which the shrub was growing.

### Setting the Shrub or Tree

The top of the root system or ball should NOT be lower than the top of the hole. The shrub or tree usually dies when planted too deep. Remove the shrub or tree from the container. If roots are so numerous they are encircling the soil ball, cut the root ball vertically to a depth of two inches with a sharp knife to encourage the roots to grow outward. After setting the shrub or tree in the hole, soil should be added gradually by working the first lot of soil in firmly at the base of the root ball, then filling the hole with more soil. The shrub or tree may be raised and lowered during the filling process to eliminate air pockets, thus bringing the roots in closer contact with the soil. When the hole is filled, tamp the area firmly with your feet.

### Watering

The soil around the shrub or tree must be watered thoroughly after the plant is set in place. A ring of soil at the perimeter of the filled hole, four inches high, should be made for holding water. The frequency of watering depends on the type of soil, the size of the shrub or tree and the amount of rainfall. The soil ball around a newly planted shrub or tree can dry out rapidly and Valley showers cannot be depended upon to supply sufficient moisture during the critical first year of growth. During mid-spring, summer and mid-fall months water all newly planted shrubs or trees for the first 4 to 6 weeks as often as three times a week by filling to the top of the soil ring. Every two weeks thereafter for the first year, you should provide ample moisture for your shrub or tree to survive and grow. Then let nature do the watering.



Yucca

photo: Dr. Steve Bentzen

## NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS

### LARGE TREES

1. TEXAS HUISACHE (*Acacia smallii*)
2. HONEY MESQUITE (*Prosopis glandulosa*)
3. TEPEGUAJE (*Leucaena pulverulenta*)
4. TEXAS SABAL PALM (*Sabal texana*)

### SMALL TREES

1. COMA DEL SUR (*Bumelia celastrina*)
2. TENAZA (*Pithecellobium pallens*)
3. YUCCA PALMA, PITA (*Yucca treculeana*)

### SHRUBS

1. TEXAS BABY-BONNETS (*Coursetia axillaris*)
2. SHRUBBY BLUE SAGE (*Salvia ballotiflora*)
3. CENIZO, PURPLE SAGE (*Leucophyllum frutescens*)
4. CHILIPQUIN (*Capsicum annum*)
5. DALEA (*Dalea thyrsoiflora*)
6. DOVE CROTON (*Croton numilis*)
7. TAMAULIPAN FIDDLEWOOD (*Citherexylum berlandieri*)
8. GOLDEN EYE DAISEY (*Viguiera stenoloba*)
9. HACHINAL (*Heimia salicifolia*)
10. MANZANITA (*Malpighia glabra*)
11. NECKLACE POD, YELLOW SOPHORA (*Sophora tomentosa*)
12. REBEQUITA (*Simisia calva*)
13. SNAKE EYES (*Phaulothamnus spinescens*)
14. WHITE BRUSH (*Aloysia gratissima*)
15. DRUMMOND'S TURK'S CAP (*Malvaviscus drummondii*)

### PERENNIAL WILDFLOWERS

1. BEACH EVENING PRIMROSE
2. DWARF WILD PETUNIA (*Ruellia sp.*)
3. LILA DE LOS LLANOS (*Echeandia chandlevi*)
4. PIGEONBERRY (*Rivina humilis*)
5. TEXAS LANTANA (*Lantana horrida*)
6. WILD PETUNIA (*Ruellia brittoniana*)

### GROUND COVER

1. INDIAN BLANKET (*Gaillardia Pulchella*)
2. PADRE ISLAND MIST FLOWER (*Eupatorium betonicifolium*)
3. FROG FRUIT

### ORNAMENTALS

These ornamentals grow well on the Island and provide food for hummingbirds or butterflies.

1. ALOE VERA (*Aloe barbadensis*)
2. CAPE HONEYSUCKLE (*Tecoma capensis*)
3. PAPAYA (*Carica papaya*)
4. SHRIMP PLANT (*Beleperone guttata*)

Plants on this list were recommended by Mike Heep, who did his Master's Thesis on barrier island plantings, and Dr. Will Carter. Most of these trees and shrubs have been planted at the South Padre Island Convention Centre.