Central Texas has beautiful displays of Bluebonnets, Mealy Blue Sage, Hymenoxys, Mexican Hat, Indian Paint Brush, Primroses and Winecups along the highways every spring followed by Prickly Pear, Coreopsis, Calylophus and Black-eyed Susan. Fall Aster, Gayfeather and Mexican Mint Marigold show off in the fall. You can enjoy an ever-changing garden by using Texas natives in your yard or in pots on your patio.

Using native plants can make your gardening experience more rewarding and enjoyable. By having large beds of native plants and reducing your lawn area you will spend less time, maintenance and money in your garden. Native plants provide cover and food for wildlife and they require less water, fertilizer, chemicals and time. Natives are mostly deer resistant and they adapt to our weather extremes.

There are 5000 Texas native species and most require well-drained soil. Since Central Texas has clay soil we must amend our soil to make it acceptable for our natives. Try a mixture of 1/3 compost, 1/3 soil and 1/3 decomposed granite or expanded shale. Water your new plant well before you plant it. Take the plant out of its pot and tease the roots so that they will stretch out in their new home. Plant it on a berm or a raised bed to keep it above the clay. Put a two to three inch layer of cedar mulch around your new plants to protect them from weeds and weather extremes. Be careful not to let the mulch lay against the stem of the plant which could cause it to rot. Remember to water frequently. It will take several weeks for your native to get established. Now enjoy your garden. Every few weeks a different plant will be the star of your garden and will show off and be the center of attention. To learn more about natives plants visit [aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu). If you have a question for a master gardener send it to [ask.bcmga@gmail.com](mailto:ask.bcmga@gmail.com)