

Recommended Valley Shrubs Part 1

Trecul's Yucca or Palma pita (*Yucca treculeana*)

Flowers: Creamy-white, very showy clusters 1.5 to 2 ft. high, late winter to early spring at top of plant.

Leaves: Evergreen, narrow 1.5 ft long, sharp-pointed tips.

Growth: Fast, 1 ft. per year, height 25 ft.

Sun: Full to partial shade.

Soil: Many types, well-drained, drought tolerant

Note: Wildlife: birds, butterflies, deer and javalinas have many uses of this plant.

Mexican Trixis or Hierba del Aire (*Trixis inula*)

Flowers: Bright-yellow, nearly 1 inch wide, much of the year.

Leaves: 4 inches long, green, no spines or claws.

Growth: Medium, 3 to 6 ft.

Sun: Shade.

Soil: Loamy, well-drained, drought-tolerant.

Note: Very nice attractive shrub.

Mexican Caesalpinia or Retamilla (*Caesalpinia mexicana*)

Flowers: Many, bright-yellow, rounded clusters, much of the year.

Leaves: Dull-green leaflets, pale underneath, no spines or claws.

Growth: Fast, to 30 ft. usually half that.

Sun: Adapts to full sun.

Soil: Many types.

Note: One of the most popular native shrubs for landscaping.

Desert Yaupon or Capul (*Schaefferia cuneifolia*)

Fruit: Showy orange to bright-red, 1/4 inch wide, late fall through winter.

Leaves: Small pale-green clusters that fall off during drought, no thorns.

Growth: Slow, to 6 ft. usually 2 to 4 ft.

Sun: Full.

Soil: Many types, well drained, low water use.

Note: Makes an excellent tightly trimmed hedge.

Low Croton or Salvia (*Croton humilis*)

Flowers: White, long drooping clusters, all year especially after rains.

Leaves: Green, 3 inches long, no spines or claws.

Growth: Slow, to 3 ft. rarely to 7 ft.

Sun: Shade.

Soil: Any kind of sandy soil.

Note: Attractive to human eye, hungry butterflies and seed-eating birds.

Torrey's Croton or Salvia (*Croton incanus*)

Flowers: Whitish-green, clustered at leaf base near branch tips, all year.

Leaves: 2.5 inches long, pale-green above gray-green beneath.
Growth: Medium, to over 6 ft.
Sun: Partial shade to full sun.
Soil: Clay sand, gravel, caliche.
Note: A very open, straight-branched shrub, no spines or claws.

Texas Baby-Bonnets (*Coursetia axillaris*)

Flowers: Pale-pink to white clusters over entire plant in March.
Leaves: Dull-green leaflets, no spines or claws.
Growth: Fast, 5 to 7 ft. in height.
Sun: Partial shade to full sun.
Soil: Loam, clay, caliche.
Note: A rare plant, makes a beautiful full hedge.

Texas Kidneywood or Vara Dulce (*Eysenhardtia texana*)

Flowers: White, fragrant, elongated showy clusters at branch ends, all year.
Leaves: Dull-green leaflets, distinctive aroma, no spines or claws.
Growth: Fast, 6 to 12 ft. in height.
Sun: Full sun to light shade.
Soil: Sandy to caliche, drought tolerant
Note: Attractive to humans as well as birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

Coral Bean or Colorin (*Erythrina herbacea*)

Flowers: Large, scarlet-red clusters at branch tips, in late winter-early spring.
Leaves: 3-leaflet clusters 3 inches long, claws on branches and trunk.
Growth: Medium, 6 to 12 ft. can get to 25 ft.
Sun: Full sun to light shade.
Soil: Loamy or sandy, low water use.
Note: An extremely attractive shrub, careful placement to avoid thorns.
Beans are scarlet-red and very toxic.

Yellow Sophora or Tambalisa (*Sophora tomentosa*)

Flowers: Elongated, showy bright-yellow clusters, spring to fall.
Leaves: Grayish-green, soft, velvety leaflets.
Growth: Medium, 3 to 6 ft. in height.
Sun: Full.
Soil: Sandy, low water use.
Note: Beautiful, short, rounded shrub with long showy seed pods.

Brush-Holly or Coronillo (*Xylosma flexuosa*)

Fruit: Female plant, loaded with clusters of bright-red berries throughout year.
Leaves: Evergreen, shiny, oval, dark on top and pale underneath.
Growth: Slow to medium, 5 to 10 ft in height, can get to 25 ft.
Sun: Full sun to shade.
Soil: Many kinds, low water use, drought-tolerant.

Note: Fruit for birds. Plant has single, slender, straight thorns.

Shrubby Blue Sage or Mejorana (Salvia ballotiflora)

Flowers: Light to deep-blue 1/2 inch long in clusters over entire plant anytime of year.

Leaves: Oval, light-green, 1.5 inches long, very aromatic when crushed.

Growth: Fast, 5 to 8 ft., no spines or claws.

Sun: Full sun to partial shade.

Soil: Well drained gravel, sandy, sandy loam, caliche, drought-tolerant.

Note: Very attractive to humans and butterflies.

(Information source: Native Shrubs of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas Landscape Uses and Identification. Native Plant Project, PO1433, Edinburg, TX)

Article written by the Cameron County Horticulture Education Committee.

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