



Issue: Native Landscaping

Photo by: Karen Bruett



HCA is a passionate community caring for the unique features, spring-fed streams, heritage ranch lands, spectacular beauty and culture of the Texas Hill Country for the benefit of future generations.

Rain Gardens

Make the most of natural rain that falls on your property by creating depressions that allow rainwater runoff from impervious areas like roofs, driveways, walkways, parking lots and compacted lawn areas the opportunity to be absorbed and filtered by deep rooted native plants such as *Eastern Gamagrass* or *Maximilian Sunflower*. Visit a model landscape 1700 College St (Junction, TX).

Native Shortgrasses

Buffalograss and *Curly Mesquite* are a few of the many shortgrasses native to central Texas that create responsibly beautiful lawns.

Much of the water that recharges our aquifers, feeds our springs and maintains our rivers is filtered through deep rooted native plants. By working together to restore native vegetation, we can all help maintain an adequate supply of fresh, quality groundwater for our future.

What Makes a Plant "Native"?

A native plant is one that occurs naturally in a certain place or region as opposed to being introduced or cultivated by humans.

Native Plants Are Adapted to Local Conditions:

Because indigenous plants evolved over the millennia under local conditions, they are better adapted to our harsh "boom and bust" weather patterns, rocky soils, and periodic infestations of pests and pathogens. When planted in situations that are similar to where they are found in the wild, native plants require fewer resources of time, money, and water in order to thrive.

"Become native to your place. Choose a path of stewardship and a lifetime of wonder and learning" ~ Bill Neiman, Native American Seed

Invasive Species

Many of our woodlands, prairies, and other natural landscapes are being overwhelmed by exotic invasive species. These aggressive intruders are able to crowd out and smother plant communities, resulting in an impoverished and depleted landscape. When the variety of native plants is diminished, the landscape is less able to support a healthy "Web of Life". All indigenous creatures, including micro-organisms, insects, birds, reptiles, and mammals depend on a species-rich landscape to flourish. Therefore, what you plant on your property really does matter. Exotic grasses, non-native wildflowers, and woody plants from Asia have the potential to negatively affect not only your own property, but your neighbor's as well.



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Wildflower Meadows

Provide continuous blooms of color with native wildflowers such as *Indian Blankets*, *Prairie Verbena*, *Standing Cypress*, *Texas Bluebonnets* and *Gayfeathers*.

Pocket Prairies

Land stewards both large and small can reverse the dramatic plunge in biodiversity by simply creating a prairie ecosystem to fit in any area. The addition of *Sideoats Grama*, Eastern Gamagrass,

Wildlife Habitat

Increases the diversity of birds, butterflies, and many other creatures in areas where native habitat is limited. Attract painted buntings with Texas Cupgrass, monarch butterflies with native Milkweed, and lesser goldfinches with Bush Sunflower.

Helpful Resources:

Native Plant Society of Texas
www.nspot.org

Native Prairie Association of Texas
www.texasprairie.org

Native American Seed
www.seedsource.com

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
www.wildflower.org

Texas Master Naturalist
www.txmn.org

Texas Invasives
www.texasinvasives.org

Consider reducing the size of your lawn

It's hard to maintain a lush lawn on the thin and rocky soils of the Texas Hill Country without relying on frequent watering, fertilizing, and expensive additions of garden topsoils. While it's tempting to lay large areas of sod as a quick fix to battered construction sites, in the long term, it's not a good solution for your budget or the environment. The better way to go is to first, shrink your lawn area, and then select an appropriate drought-resistant grass variety for your specific location.



Photo By: Native American Seed

Benefits of Natural Landscaping

Many people are drawn to the Texas Hill Country because of its scenic vistas, rolling hills, spring-fed streams and extravagant wildflower displays. Yet somehow, during home construction, or the expansion of development and its accompanying infrastructure, we end up erasing those very qualities that attracted us to Central Texas in the first place. Take the time to educate yourself on alternatives to a hasty replication of traditional suburban landscape models by observing those natural features that could be incorporated into your residential design. These include groves or mottes of various sized trees, woodland shrub plantings, dry stream beds, and reduced turf areas that allow more room for wildflower meadows.

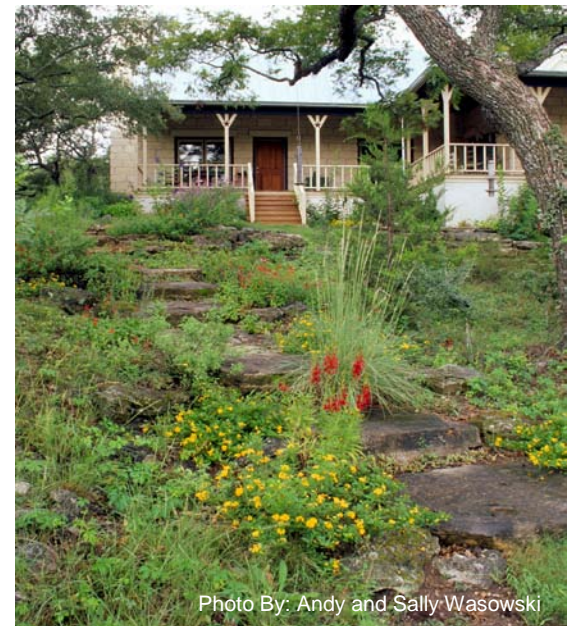


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For more information, visit
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