

WILDFLOWER GUIDE

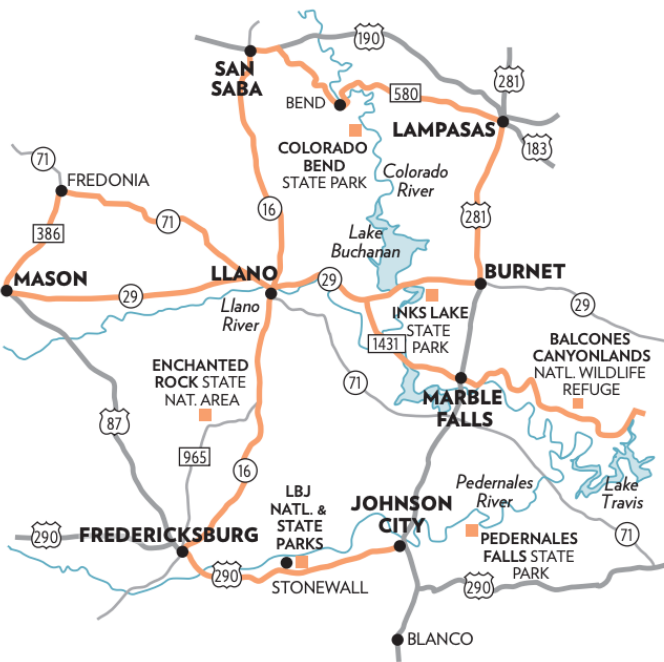


WILDFLOWER DRIVES

HILL COUNTRY

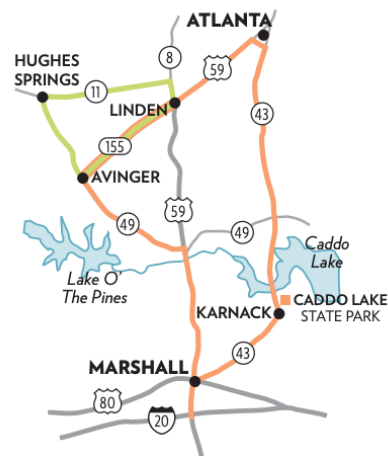
The Hill Country is blessed with a bountiful bouquet of wildflowers each spring when the weather cooperates. Almost any portion of this route offers the possibility of spotting glorious displays. The roads between **Marble Falls, Burnet, Lampasas, San Saba, Mason, Llano, Fredericksburg** and **Johnson City** are some of the most tried-and-true trails. Along the routes look for bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, pink evening primroses, daisies, winecups, prairie verbena and goldeneye phlox. Enjoy the drive along gently rolling hills past granite boulders, pastures and trees. Driving the whole route would cover almost 300 miles and is best enjoyed over several days, but choosing any smaller section should provide plenty of opportunities to see wildflowers and stop at some of the attractions and towns along the route.

For more festivities, consider planning a trip when Burnet holds its Bluebonnet Festival in April (burnetchamber.org). For more area information, go to visitfredericksburgtx.com and marblefalls.org.



NORTHEAST TEXAS

The communities of **Linden, Avinger** and **Hughes Springs** host the Wildflower Trails of Texas (wildflowertrailsoftexas.org), celebrating yellow-fringed orchids, lobelia, coralbean, coreopsis, Indian paintbrush, phlox and other wildflowers. The celebration includes the Wildflower Trails of Texas Festival in Linden, which is generally held the fourth weekend of April. The 40-mile triangle among the three cities can serve as a warm up before expanding the trip into a 128-mile exploration of Northeast Texas wildflowers by adding the towns of **Atlanta, Karnack** and **Marshall**. Along the expanded route, look for coneflower, dogwoods, field pansy, Indian blanket, spiderwort, crimson clover, bachelor buttons, Mexican hats, bluebonnets and wild indigo. A detour at Karnack to Caddo Lake State Park leads to potentially blooming dogwoods, redbuds and mayapple and the potential to find water horehound, jack-in-the-pulpit, green dragon and wild violets, among other wildflowers.



EAST TEXAS

The beautiful wildflowers and flowers found in East Texas have their own appeal. This **Palestine, Rusk, Alto, Nacogdoches** and **Crockett** route offers the benefit of seeing dogwood and redbud trees along with winecups and other wildflowers. In Palestine, visit the 254-acre Davey Dogwood Park when the trees are covered in blooms or visit for the Dogwood Festival the last two weekends of March and first weekend in April. Stop at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center in Nacogdoches to view the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Demonstration Garden, and though flowers in the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Gardens are not native, don't pass up the opportunity to visit while in town. (In March, tours are often offered on Saturdays as part of the Azalea Trails activities.) Further north, the **Henderson** Department of Tourism (visithendersontx.com) offers three driving routes to explore Rusk County's history and scenic beauty, highlighting crimson clover, Indian paintbrush, coreopsis and evening primrose.

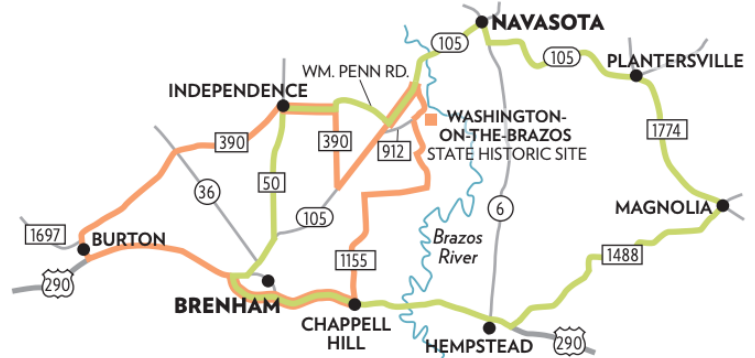


BRAZORIA COUNTY The coastal areas of Texas have their share of blooms. This scenic drive explores the beauties of Brazoria County. It includes a 70-mile loop (FM 1462 to SH 36, to FM 2004 to SH 288) through **West Columbia, Angleton, Lake Jackson** and **Brazoria**, with tendrils leading to a state park and two national wildlife refuges. Brazos Bend State Park hosts an incredible variety of wildflowers, including spider lily, floating bladderwort, basket flower, black-eyed Susan, bluebonnets, morning glory vine and wild indigo. At Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge, look for sea oxeye daisy, tropical sage, coreopsis, yellow thistle and spider lily. At the San Bernard National Wildlife refuge, keep an eye out for sea oxeye daisy along with irises and water lilies. For more wildflowers, continue driving south to Quintana Beach County Park to look for them growing amongst the dunes.



WILDFLOWER DRIVES

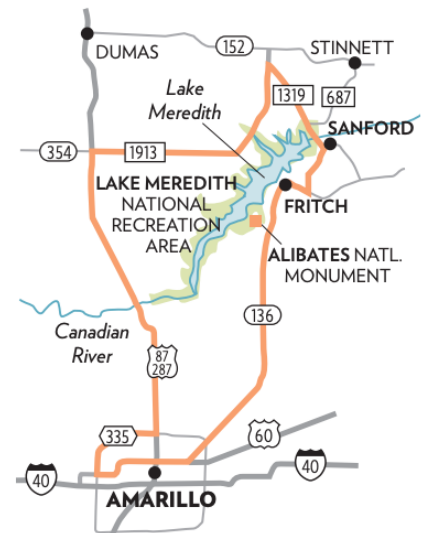
WASHINGTON AND GRIMES COUNTIES This area has two routes that often provide glorious spreads of wildflowers. One is an 80-mile loop from **Brenham** to **Burton**, **Independence**, **Washington** and **Chappell Hill** then back to Brenham (visitbrenhamtexas.com). Along the route, travelers may spot bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, thistles, purple coneflower, verbena, beardtongue, skullcaps, prairie parsley, yellow wild indigo, blue-eyed grass, rattlesnake master, blanket flower and rosinweed. The second—about a 105-mile loop—starts in Brenham but takes a more easterly route that transitions from stands of oaks to forests of pine along FM 1774 and includes **Navasota**, **Plantersville**, **Magnolia** and **Hempstead**. Take note of the jog in the road at Navasota that takes drivers along the access road for SH 6 to get to the adjoining portion of SH 105.



WESTERN HILL COUNTRY This 120-mile figure-eight-shaped loop, which takes in the Texas Hill Country River Region, is a beautiful drive anytime of the year. It is especially outstanding when wildflowers bloom throughout the region and with the fall foliage changes at the Hill Country State Natural Area and Lost Maples State Park. The trip can easily be divided into smaller loops of 50 miles—taking in **Utopia**, **Leakey** and **Vanderpool**—or 70 miles through **Bandera**, **Utopia**, **Vanderpool** and **Medina**. Look for bluebonnets, Indian blanket, evening primrose, penstemon, mountain laurel, Blackfoot daisy and redbud trees. Golden dalea, thistle, prickly pear, skeleton plant, agarita and Mexican hat may be in bloom at the Texas Hill Country State Natural Area. Cardinal flowers, Mexican hats, phlox, prairie verbena and sages may be found at Lost Maples. For more area information, go to visituvaldecountry.com or banderacowboycapital.com.



AMARILLO AND LAKE MEREDITH Along this 135-mile loop through the Panhandle, look for sunflowers, tansy mustard, Gordon's bladderpod, winecups, big top prairie clover, gayfeather, daisies and yucca. While in **Amarillo** (visitamarillo.com), consider a stop at the Wildcat Bluff Nature Center to see yellow puccoon, antelope horns, prairie verbena, prickly poppy, purple coneflower and more. Farther north, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area sees such wildflowers as Blackfoot daisy, lace cactus, chocolate daisy, star thistle and copper globe mallow. Check the recreation area's calendar for wildflower-related activities like a ranger-guided tour of the Alibates Gardens. Just north of **Sanford**, travelers may choose to take FM 3395 (not pictured), for an alternate drive just north of the recreation area between RM 1319 and FM 1913.

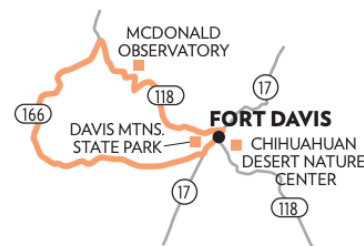


TO HELP IDENTIFY wildflowers along the way, consider picking up one of the many helpful Texas wildflower guides or go to wildflower.org.

BIG BEND COUNTRY This route makes a 230-mile scenic loop through **Alpine**, **Terlingua**, **Lajitas**, **Presidio** and **Marfa**. Inexperienced travelers might think the Big Bend is a desert and mountainous area devoid of wildflowers. However, there are plenty of desert blooms to look for—blind cactus, rainbow cactus, strawberry pitaya, ocotillo, yucca and sotol—along with bluebonnets (a larger version than seen in the Hill Country), catclaw and desert marigolds. Those who detour to the east along FM 170 into Big Bend National Park may find bluebonnets, cacti, yuccas, huisache and mountain laurel among other blooming plants. The park has two flowering seasons—spring and late summer—though some plants will bloom in warm weather after a significant rainfall. Since the flowers can be so dependent upon rain, in drier years, travelers may want to look for unpaved roads, canyons and arroyos, which may have areas of accumulated moisture to feed the flowers. US 385 from **Marathon** provides a scenic 40-mile drive to or from the national park. For more area information, go to visitbigbend.com.



DAVIS MOUNTAINS The 75-mile Davis Mountains Scenic Loop provides a visual treat throughout the year. The Davis Mountains area is considered a “sky island,” isolated from similar mountain ranges, that contains flora and fauna that exist nowhere else in Texas. Wildflowers here tend to put in an appearance with the late summer rains. Along the loop, look for agaves, beargrass, purple feather dalea, Mexican buckeye, flameleaf sumac, scarlet bouvardia, yellow bladderpods, white-flowered peppergrass and purple verbena. Consider a stop at Davis Mountains State Park, which can have blooming shrubs of scarlet bouvardia, trompillo, sumacs, Apache plume, cholla, yucca, catclaw acacia and agarita. Flowers may fill the park in years of abundant rainfall. When near **Fort Davis**, (fortdavis.com) travelers can turn southeast onto SH 118 for a short drive to visit the Chihuahuan Desert Research Center, which features plants of the Chihuahuan Desert.



CUERO AND DEWITT COUNTY

Southeast of San Antonio lies a 132-mile loop that takes in **Cuero** and DeWitt County, the Wildflower Capital of Texas, along with **Goliad, Helena, Gillett, Nixon** and a side trip from **Westhoff** along Cheapside Road. Keep an eye out for bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, Mexican hats, Indian blankets, lazy daisies, phlox, winecups and coreopsis. Consider a detour to Goliad State Park to look for bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, phlox, lantana and winecups. In Cuero, stop by the Chamber of Commerce (cuero.org) for a map of more than 800 miles of wildflower trails and current updates. Those who want to see blooms at a slower pace can check out a wildflower bicycling tour in Cuero during April. For those who prefer to paddle, the Guadalupe Valley Paddling Trail offers a view of wildflowers growing along the Guadalupe River.



WILDFLOWER ETIQUETTE AND SAFETY

- Respect private property. Do not enter without permission.
- Do not trample or pick the wildflowers. Many of the wildflowers are annuals that will not return without these seeding processes.
- If you pull over, choose a safe area, and do not stop/park in areas that prohibit parking. Make sure all four wheels are completely off the roadway and the car is facing the same direction as traffic on that side of the road. Do not obstruct traffic movement.

The right of way is a dangerous place—please make sure to be safe.

NORTH TEXAS

This 120-mile trail makes a nice loop past open fields and pastures, over the Trinity River and along the tree-lined roads near Athens. It takes in the cities of **Ennis, Kaufman, Athens, Kerens** and **Corsicana**. In Athens, The Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center has 10,000 square feet for seasonal wildflower displays. Look for bluebonnets, Indian paintbrush, Arkansas lazy daisies, winecups, wild verbena, horsemint, pink evening primrose, larkspur and other wildflowers. If the loop hasn't provided enough wildflower viewing, consider spending some additional time in Ennis, home to the “Official Texas Bluebonnet Trail,” during April for some of the state's best bluebonnet viewing. The Ennis Garden Club monitors 40 miles of roads around the city, checking each week for the best bluebonnet spots. The Ennis Convention & Visitors Bureau also provides information on the routes (visitennis.org/bluebonnet.htm).

