

## Heat tolerant summer blooms: Texas Lantana, *Lantana urticoides*

**Description:** *Lantana urticoides*, Texas Lantana is a small- to medium-sized shrub native to central and south Texas. It can grow as tall as 6 feet and as wide as 5-6 feet; it takes well to pruning and most garden specimens are usually kept smaller than this. It has egg-shaped leaves with serrated margins, 1 to 2 1/2 inches long. The leaves are opposite, rough to the touch and very aromatic.



Photo courtesy of Kathy Saucier

**Flowers and Fruit:** The flowers of Texas Lantana appear in rounded clusters at the ends of long paired stems, usually extending above the leaves. They are tubular with flaring lobes, similar to verbena, and bloom until frost. Each flower on Texas Lantana changes so you will see a mixture of color on a single flower cluster. The ¼ inch fruits are blue-black to black.

**Planting sites:** Texas Lantana thrives in areas that receive full sun. It can also be grown in light shade. Texas Lantana grows best in sandy or gravelly soils, but will tolerate other soil types. Do not plant it where it will experience “wet feet” or it may rot.

**Watering Instructions:** Similar to many other Texas natives, Texas Lantana will need supplemental water during the first growing season. After it is established, it is extremely drought tolerant and can survive on existing rainfall.

**Comments:** Texas Lantana is the xeric plant of choice for areas that receive full sun, even hot reflected sun. It flowers consistently and continually from mid-summer until frost. It attracts hummingbirds as well as a wide range of butterflies and beneficial insects. Many birds will eat its fruit. Once established, it requires virtually no care except pruning. Its woody stems should be cut back at the end of winter to keep it compact, and periodically during its growing season because it flowers on new wood.

Look for the NICE! Plant of the Season signs and information sheets on your next visit to a participating North Texas nursery. Thank you for using native plants in your landscapes.

Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas Meetings are the 4th Thursday in Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Sep & Oct, TWU’s ACT building 6:30 pm, 2nd floor.