

Perennial spring blooms that attract butterflies: Fragrant Phlox, *Phlox pilosa*

Description: *Phlox pilosa* L., called Fragrant Phlox, Downy Phlox or Prairie Phlox, is found in north central Texas, primarily in the dry soils of prairies and dry wooded areas. It is a small herbaceous perennial that is usually 6-8 inches high and 6-12 inches wide. Its leaves are long and narrow, usually 2 inches and less than a fourth of an inch wide. The leaves and stems are sticky to the touch and are covered with glandular-tipped hairs. Fragrant Phlox propagates by seed.



Photos courtesy of Marilyn Blanton (left) & Kathy Saucier (right)

Flowers and Fruit: Fragrant Phlox blooms in mid-spring, primarily April and May. Its flowers form a terminal cluster at the top of the stem. Each flower has 5 lobes and is a little more than an inch across. The flowers range from lavender-pink to lavender-purple and emit fragrance when sunlight hits them.

Planting sites: Plant Fragrant Phlox in full sun to partial or dappled sun. It will do best in clay loam or sandy loam and will tolerate some rock in its soil. As with most other Texas natives, Phlox cannot tolerate “wet feet” – it needs good drainage. Phlox works well naturalized among other natives that bloom in summer since their foliage is sparse or no-existent the rest of the year.

Watering Instructions: Similar to many other Texas natives, Fragrant Phlox will need supplemental water during the first growing season and during an extended drought. If not watered during an extended drought, the plants may go totally dormant during summer.

Comments: In addition to being grown for its lovely spring blooms and fragrance, nectar from Fragrant Phlox feeds butterflies, bees and skippers, including the American Painted Lady, Sulfur, Swallowtail, and Cloudywing butterflies.

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.