

Shrub for sun and hummingbirds:
Flame Acanthus (*Anisacanthus quadrifidus* var. *wrightii*)

Description: Flame Acanthus (*Anisacanthus quadrifidus* var. *wrightii*) is a heat-loving, drought tolerant small shrub that is native to Texas. It grows 3 to 5 feet tall and 3 to 4 feet wide. It has light to medium green, 2” long, 3/4” wide, lance-shaped leaves and bark that peels and flakes as the plant grows. It is deciduous and late to leaf out in the spring.



Photo courtesy of Marilyn Blanton

Flowers and Fruit: Starting in June and continuing through the summer, Flame Acanthus is covered with long, slender, tubular, orange to red flowers that are 1.5 inches long in a terminal

spike. Hummingbirds and butterflies are drawn to the flowers. Although it is very drought tolerant, supplemental watering of Flame Acanthus in the dry summer months will encourage re-blooming.

Planting sites: Flame Acanthus should be planted in full sun to mostly sun in many types of soils. It should have good drainage; avoid planting it in areas where it may experience “wet feet” or it may rot.

Watering Instructions: Like most Texas natives, Flame Acanthus will need supplemental water during the first growing season; after it is established, it will thrive with existing rainfall.

Comments: Flame Acanthus is a hummingbird magnet. It can be used in perennial borders or as a specimen plant. It may be also used as a perennial hedge. Flame Acanthus benefits from periodic pruning and may even be sheared to the ground in the early spring; however its branches provide protection for wintering birds, so it should not be pruned until new growth is apparent. Its peeling bark provides winter interest.

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.