

Operation NICE! Plant of the Season–Spring 2009

Trailing Winecup (*Callirhoe involucrata*)

Standing Winecup (*Callirhoe pedata*, formerly *Callirhoe digitata*)

Description: These two Winecup species are native to Texas and surrounding states. Their striking color makes them easy to recognize. These easy-to-grow perennials have very similar flowers and enlarged roots. The most noticeable difference between them is their growth habits. Trailing Winecup grows to about one foot high and has sprawling stems that can grow as long as three feet, while Standing Winecup is an erect plant that grows one to two feet tall. There are other differences between the species; Trailing Winecup is distinguished by a three bract-like structure under the bracts known as an involucre. It may go dormant in the hottest part of the summer but returns to overwinter as a rosette with attractive dark green lobed leaves. Standing Winecup has more delicate foliage and is not evergreen.

Flowers/bloom period: Both species bloom in the spring, mainly in April and May. Depending on conditions, they may bloom as early as late February and last into June. The flowers are 2 inch reddish-purple (magenta) cups. They have 5 petals surrounding a fused column of stamens characteristic of flowers in the Mallow family. They are pollinated by bees and develop an interesting seed capsule.

Planting sites: Winecups grow in full sun to partial shade. They are adaptable to a wide range of soils but need a well drained site.

Watering instructions: New plants should be watered until they are established. After that, they should survive with existing rainfall and are drought tolerant.

Comments: Both species are proficient bloomers and add magnificent color to a landscape. They are complemented by other natives such as Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) and Fragrant Phlox (*Phlox pilosa*). Standing Winecup could replace Bleeding Heart or Hardy Geraniums in a border. Trailing Winecup does well at the top of a retaining wall or along a curb; it may be used instead of Ice Plant, Ajuga or trailing forms of either Lantana or Verbena. Winecups attract butterflies and serve as the larval host plant for the gray hairstreak butterfly. Give Winecups room to spread and enjoy them for many years to come.

Look for the Natives Instead of Common Exotics! (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 landscape!

Trinity Forks Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas meets on the fourth Thursday of January, February, March, April, May, September and October, in the TWU ACT building, second floor, at 6:30 p.m. Meetings are free; all are welcome. For more details, visit www.npsot.org/trinityforks.

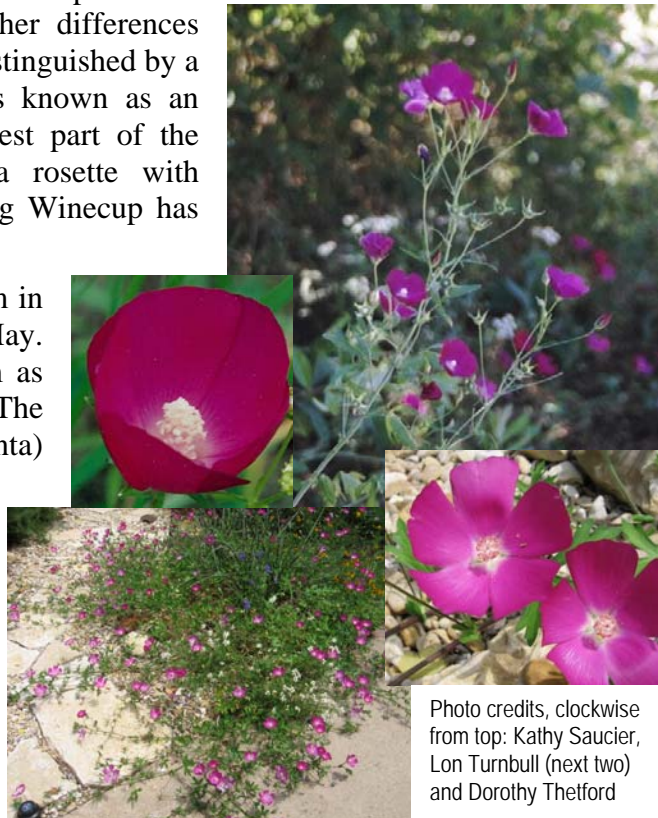


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