



# Native and Adapted Plants for North Texas



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# Native and Adapted Plants for North Texas

**N**ative and adapted plants are the ideal choice for an aesthetically pleasing water efficient landscape. Whether you are interested in a well-manicured look, or a more naturalistic landscape design, there are a number of plants with various structures, textures, and colors to meet your needs and help you save precious time and money.

## Benefits of Native & Adapted Plants

Native and better-adapted plants in home and business landscapes serve as environmentally sustainable assets that are usually labor efficient compared with resource intensive varieties. Some of the characteristics leading more Texans to incorporate native and adapted varieties include:

- Drought tolerance
- Heat tolerance
- Water efficiency
- Typically low fertilizer requirements
- Typically low pesticide requirements



## What do you mean by Native and Adapted? .....

**Native** plants are hardy, having evolved in our (sometimes) harsh and unpredictable climate. They thrive on the soils that occur here and on the specific nutrients those soils provide. Native plants also tend to be more resistant to pest pressures of native insects and diseases common to North Texas. A plant might be native to:

- Texas
- North Texas
- Your County
- Your City

**Adapted** plants are also hardy but have been introduced to Texas landscapes through the horticulture industry. Most often, they originate from areas with similar soil types, Climates and /or hardiness zones.

### Top 100 List

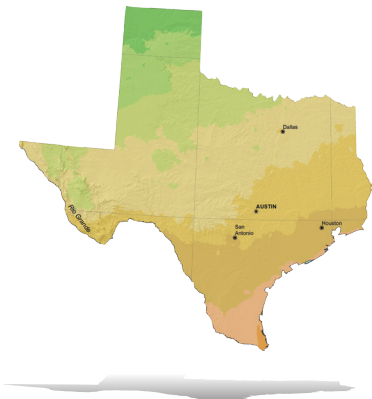
Flip to the back of your booklet for a list of our 100 favorite native and adapted plants for North Texas!

**Remember,** even though a plant is native to Texas, it is important to make sure it is well adapted to our area. i.e. A plant Native to Corpus Christi may not feel so at home in Dallas.

There are also many plants available that have native parents, but have been bred for improved ornamental characteristics.

### Texas Plant Hardiness Zones

*Adapted from USDA national plant hardiness zone map*



Temp (F)	Zone	Temp (C)
-5 to 0	6b	-20.6 to -17.8
0 to 5	7a	-17.8 to -15
5 to 10	7b	-15 to -12.2
10 to 15	8a	-12.2 to -9.4
15 to 20	8b	-9.4 to -6.7
20 to 25	9a	-6.7 to -3.9
25 to 30	9b	-3.9 to -1.1
30 to 35	10a	-1.1 to 1.7

*Average Annual Extreme Minimum Temperature 1976-2005*

### North Texas Zone 8a

**Avg. Low Temp.** 10-15 °F  
**Record Low** -8°F 1980  
**Record High** 113°F 1980  
**Avg. First Freeze** Nov. 22  
**Avg. Last Freeze** March 13  
**Avg. Yearly Rainfall** 40.55" (Can range from 20"-50")

**Common Soils** Poor draining clays & lay loams, mostly alkaline, pH 7.5 to 7.8  
  
Sandy loams and sandy soils can also be present.

## Before you Plant: Soil Preparation, Amendments .....



A number of amendments can be added to your soil to ensure the richest growing environment for your plants. Soil amendments can improve a number of planting bed characteristics like drainage, soil fertility and pH levels. Two of the most common and helpful amendments for improving North Texas soils are compost and expanded shale.

**Compost** is a nutrient rich soil conditioner consisting of broken down organic material. Incorporate or top-dress ½" to 2" of compost into the soil to improve drainage while maintaining your soil's water-holding capacity. Compost:

- Improves soil texture
- Contains macro and micronutrients
- Neutralizes pH
- Increases water holding capacity
- Reduces water evaporation

**Expanded Shale** is a porous, lightweight aggregate with the ability to improve drainage in clay soils and hold moisture at the same time. Expanded shale is most effective as incorporated into soil when establishing a new planting bed. Add up to 3" then till or mix in thoroughly to a depth of 6" with a shovel or spade.

### Don't Guess, Soil Test! .....

One of the best methods for evaluating your soil is to collect and mail a soil sample to the Texas A&M Soil Testing Laboratory. Step-by-step instructions for submitting your sample are available at <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu>. For as little as \$10 per sample, you will receive a detailed analysis of your soil and recommendations on how you can improve soil fertility.

**soiltesting.tamu.edu**

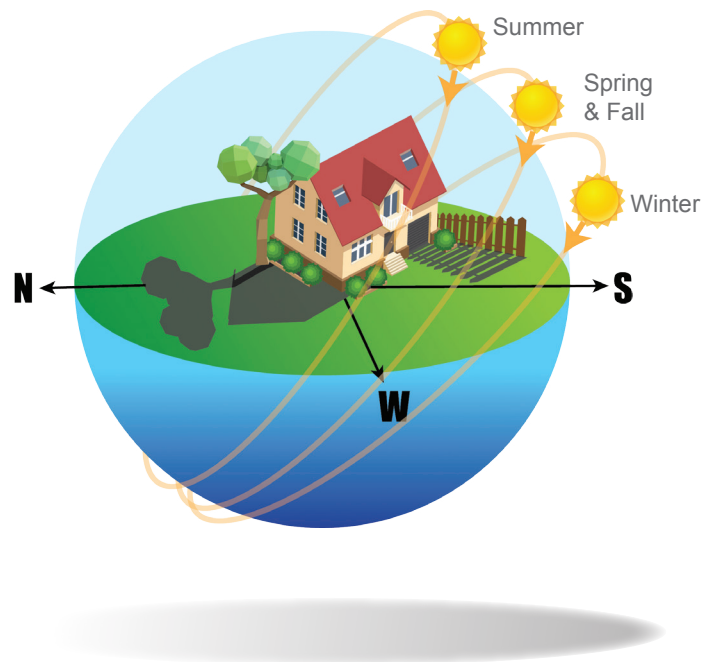
Soiltesting.tamu.edu is your one-stop shop for everything you need to get your soil sample submitted to Texas A&M AgriLife scientists for testing.

## Planting .....

### Spacing and Placement: "Right Plant, Right place"

A healthy native or adapted plant is a valuable asset, but to ensure the best success, it needs to be planted properly and in the right place, depending on its specific requirements. Read your plant's tag and pay close attention to its hardiness zone, light requirements, size and spacing. Pay special attention to sunlight obstructions such as trees, buildings, fences and other plants in your landscape, and consider how shade conditions change with the sun's position at different times of the year.

### The sun's position in the sky at noon during in each season



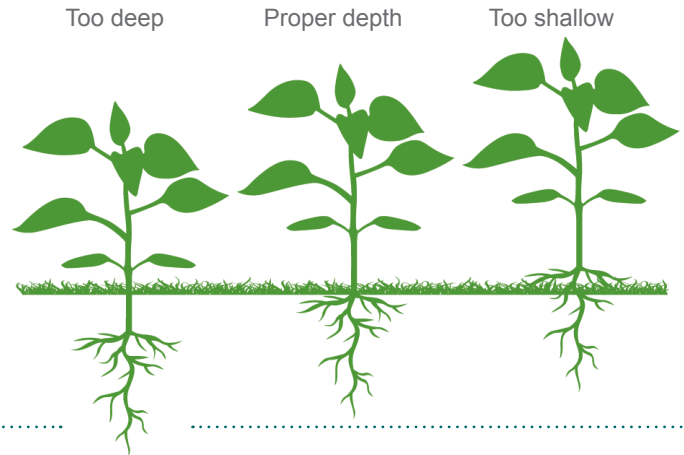
### Proper Planting

Whether you're planting a native or adapted tree, shrub, or herbaceous perennial, it is key to make the transition from the nursery to your landscape as easy as possible and to employ the best planting practices to ensure a long, healthy life for your plant.

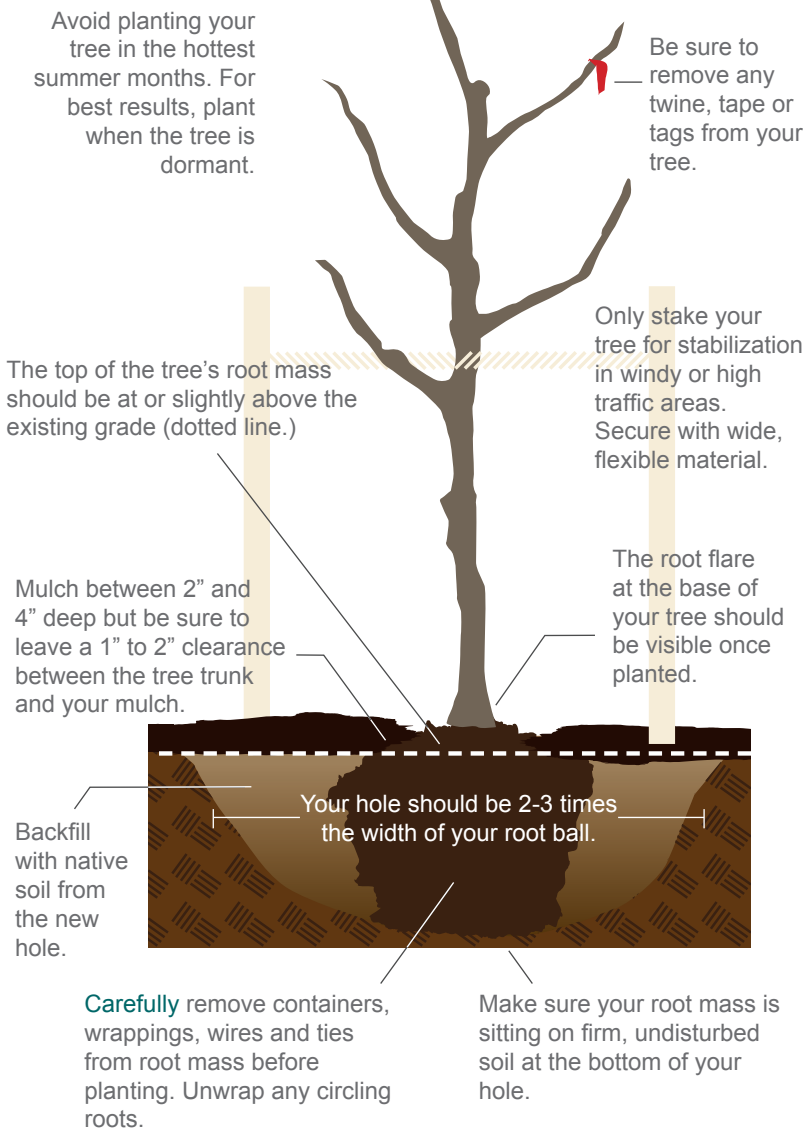
**Planting Width** should be 2 to 3 times as wide as root mass.

**Planting Depth** should be no deeper than root mass.

Don't break the root ball! Unwrap circling or girdling roots.



### Planting a Tree



### Mulching



Applying mulch around your planted areas is crucial to a successful garden. A number of natural materials work well as mulch. Hardwood, cedar, cypress and pine straw mulches are all strong options. Water University recommends between 2" and 4" of mulch for most applications. Be sure to taper off near plant bases to avoid fungal problems and other pest issues.

The benefits of mulching are many; they include:

- Increased water absorbing capacity
- Increased water holding capacity
- Reduced water evaporation
- Reduced erosion
- Weed control
- Soil temperature moderation
- Increased soil nutrition as mulch breaks down



## Maintenance .....

Proper maintenance is one of the most important components of a beautiful and healthy, water efficient landscape. A good design is the first step along your road to success.

It is important to design your landscape in a way that does not exceed your maintenance capabilities. A well designed landscape filled with native and adapted plants, trees, shrubs and turfgrasses will provide you with lots of enjoyment and will require minimal need for upkeep labor throughout the year.

**WaterUniversity.TAMU.edu**



Visit our searchable "Plants of North Texas" database for information on the care and characteristics of more than 200 North Texas plants, including Texas A&M AgriLife Water University's top 100 list, found on the back cover of this booklet.

## Landscape Rule of Thirds



When designing your landscape, utilize the "rule of thirds" by planting 1/3 drought tolerant turfgrass, 1/3 native and adapted planting beds and 1/3 pervious hardscape. This will give your landscape more visual appeal, usable space and a reduction in water use requirements.



### Irrigation



Drip, multi-stream rotor sprinkler and soaker hoses help save water, money and, if maintained properly, can be an incredible asset. Adjust controllers as needed to avoid over watering and monitor your system regularly to check for leaks.

### Mowing



Remove no more than 1/3 of the length of your lawn (leaf blade) each time you mow. This will help keep your turfgrass healthy. Remember, a big lawn translates to more mowing, so follow the landscaping rule of thirds. Always use your clippings as mulch.

**Don't bag it! Mulch it!**

### Mulching



Maintain 2" - 4" of mulch by adding new mulch annually as needed. This will help you save water and control weeds in your native and adapted planting bed. Keep in mind the array of other benefits your mulch will bring as it breaks down and enriches the existing soil.

### Pruning



Remove dead material from your plants as needed. This will make way for lush new growth and also help you to maintain the shape of your trees and shrubs for aesthetic appeal.

# Water University's Top 100 Native and Adapted Plants for North Texas

## Native and Adapted Plant Characteristics

### Native and Adapted Plants are

- Drought Tolerant
- Heat Tolerant

### And they typically require

- Less Water
- Less Fertilizer
- Fewer Pesticides

## Shade Trees

Shantung Maple  
Eldarica Pine  
Red Oak  
Bur Oak  
Chinquapin Oak  
Live Oak  
Cedar Elm  
Lacebark Elm

## Ornamental Trees

Red Buckeye  
Redbud-Many Varieties  
Desert Willow  
Smoketree  
Possumhaw Holly  
Yaupon Holly  
Wichita Blue Juniper  
Deciduous Magnolia  
Wax Myrtle  
Cherry Laurel  
Eve's Necklace  
Texas Mountain Laurel  
Vitex

## Turfgrass

Bermuda  
St. Augustine  
Zoysia  
Buffalo

## Palms

Dwarf Palmetto  
Windmill Palm

## Yuccas/Cacti

Soft Leaf Yuccas  
Red Yucca  
Color Guard Yucca

## Perennials

Flame Acanthus  
Texas Gold Columbine  
Damianita  
Coreopsis  
Cone Flower  
Mist Flower  
Gaura  
Texas Star Hibiscus  
Anne Marie Lantana  
Texas Lantana  
New Gold Lantana  
Turk's Cap  
Blackfoot Daisy  
Rock Rose  
Jerusalem Sage  
Garden Phlox  
Rudbeckia  
Henry Duelberg Mealycup Sage  
Black and Blue Salvia  
Mexican Bush Sage  
Lyre Leaf Sage  
Hot Lips Salvia  
Skullcap  
Lamb's Ear  
Fall Aster  
Society Garlic  
Zexmenia

## Groundcovers

Horse Herb  
Snake Herb  
Purple Wintercreeper  
Frog Fruit  
Gray Santolina

## Ferns

Wavy Cloak Fern  
Holly Fern  
Southern Wood Fern

## Vines

Cross Vine  
Coral Honeysuckle  
Chinese Wisteria

## Ornamental Grasses

Berkeley Sedge  
Inland Sea Oats  
Maiden Grass  
Zebra Grass  
Gulf Muhly  
White Cloud Muhly  
Mexican Feather Grass  
Dwarf Hameln Grass  
Moudry Grass  
Little Bluestem  
Indiangrass

## Shrubs

Glossy Abelia  
Kaleidoscope Abelia  
Rose Creek Abelia  
Butterfly Bush  
Beauty Berry  
False Aralia  
Althea/Rose of Sharon  
Oakleaf Hydrangea  
St. John's Wort  
Dwarf Yaupon Holly  
Andorra Juniper  
Texas Sage  
Dwarf Wax Myrtle  
Rosemary  
Autumn sage  
Bridal Wreath Spirea  
Anthony Waterer Spirea  
Limemound Spirea  
Bush Germander  
Eastern Snowball Viburnum  
Rusty Blackhaw Viburnum



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