



4801 La Crosse Avenue
Austin, Texas 78739
512.232.0100
www.wildflower.org

AUDIO TOUR SCRIPT (English)

Welcome - Hello and welcome to the Guide By Cell Audio Tour of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Press 111 followed by the pound key, to hear a welcome from our founder, Lady Bird Johnson. Press 222, then pound, to hear a message from our Executive Director or 333 pound to hear how you can support the Wildflower Center. Follow the same procedure to listen to any of the prompts you will encounter as you explore our gardens. You can press any key to skip this message or press 0 then # to leave audio feedback about your Wildflower Center experience.

Feedback - Thank you for using the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Guide By Cell Audio Tour. Use this option to leave us feedback about the audio tour or your experience at the Wildflower Center. Press the pound key before and after you record your feedback message.

111 - A Message from Lady Bird Johnson

Hello, this is Lady Bird Johnson. Welcome to my world. Come in and have a look. The Wildflower Center is a little piece of Texas in which I hope you will see the story of why I think it's desirable and useful to understand, preserve, and spread the things that grow here naturally, that were first here before man came. My one wish would be that they would enjoy and learn as I have about nature. I want us to know our world. If I lived anywhere from North Georgia on up through the Appalachians, I would be just as crazy about the mountain laurel as I am about the bluebonnets. I want us to know, value, and spread, where possible and useful, the things that are indigenous to us. The economic usefulness of native plants is because they're used to surviving on the rainfall that happens in your part of the world. You want to preserve what is beautiful about it, what you like about it, what makes your heart sing.

222 - Message from the Executive Director

Welcome to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. Here you will experience the Texas Hill Country and the wildflowers and plants that Lady Bird Johnson loved so much.

More than 600 different native flowers and plants can be found here. They come in all sizes and the colors of the rainbow, but their good looks mask their true talents—they are crafty survivors in a sometimes harsh and inhospitable land.

These plants have adapted over centuries to the particular soils and climate of Texas. And they have evolved without any help from man—without fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides or water, other than rainfall. When they're used in gardens, and other landscaping, they typically require less maintenance. As a result, less air pollution is generated from mowers and weed-eaters, and fewer pesticides and other chemicals are released into our rivers and aquifers. In gardens, and in the landscape, the biodiversity represented by native plants and flowers is essential to a healthy environment. These plants provide a home and food for native birds and wildlife, they conserve our water resources, and benefit the soil. And just as importantly, wildflowers and native landscapes are a vital part of our national heritage and our regional identity.

The mission of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center is to increase the sustainable use and conservation of native wildflowers, plants and landscapes.



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Lady Bird Johnson often said that she liked the land to speak with its own voice, in its own regional accent. Our sense of place is defined by the native flowers and trees that surround us. So look around you. Wildflowers are beautiful. No matter where you live, you can find colorful, native plants to enhance your home.

333 - Support Us

If you enjoyed your visit to the Wildflower Center, we'd like to ask for your help. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center is a self-supporting unit of the University of Texas at Austin, which means that we count on our members and volunteers, as well as our individual, corporate, and foundation donors for the resources to run all kinds of things. Like our research and education programs, conducting events and tours, maintaining the garden, and even operating this audio tour. Won't you contribute to the vital work of the Center? Become a member, or make a donation today; shop in our gift store, or become a volunteer. For more information about how you can make a contribution, stop into our gift shop, or visit the support section of our website at wildflower.org.

Garden Prompts

1 – Entrance trail

Welcome to the first stop of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's Guide by Cell audio tour. The idea behind the entrance trail is that you can decompress as you walk towards the gardens and leave your road worries behind. The species that you'll see as you walk along the entrance trail are mostly Ashe Junipers, Cedar Elms, Live Oaks: typical Hill Country species. During your time at the Wildflower Center, keep your eye out for the black labels that explain more about the different plant species. The largest trees along the front entry walk are Live Oaks (*Quercus fusiformis*). If you look up into the canopy, you'll notice grey, fuzzy looking balls. Those are known as ball moss. They're not actually moss; they're an epiphytic plant not detrimental to the tree. They're just looking for a place to live. As you walk towards the gardens, you'll notice that the soils we have here in the Texas Hill Country are very rocky and thin. This provides us with a unique flora that has adapted over many years to be able to live in these lean soils.

2 – Entrance Garden

You're standing at the main entrance of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center where lovely plantings, arching aqueducts, and wide oak trees welcome birds, butterflies and human admirers. An evergreen mountain laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*) in the Rockefeller Entrance Garden greets you on the main path to the Wildflower Center. The entry cistern directly in front of you evokes the old days, when thrifty and thirsty Texans collected every drop of rainwater. The cistern holds 12,000 gallons, and is just one component of the Wildflower Center's 60,000 gallon rainwater harvesting operation. Today, as development and climatic changes challenge the limits of our natural resources, the Wildflower Center blazes a trail with rainwater collection and green building techniques.

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In the Entrance Garden, you'll see American century plant (*Agave Americana*) and Sotol (*Dasylirion wheeleri*). Notice that these two plants, as well as several other Central Texas natives, protect themselves with spines, thorns and prickles. Proceed down the walkway – your next prompt will be on your left.

3-The Meadows

Welcome to the Meadows. On your left is the South Meadow; to your right is the North Meadow. In the South Meadow, we have planted several different species of wildflowers to provide color and interest throughout the growing season. In the late summer, it becomes a haven for many different species of pollinators including Queen butterflies. You'll also see in the South Meadow one of the best specimens of Live Oak trees we have here at the Wildflower Center. The aqueduct, which carries water from the auditorium roof to the front cistern, is covered with Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*).

4-Wetland Pond and Auditorium Garden

Welcome to the wetland pond and auditorium garden. Our wetland pond is home to native Texas aquatic plants and animals. Visitors young and old enjoy the peaceful nature of our wetland pond. Take a moment to see if you can spot one of the many critters that call our pond home...(pause). Turn around and take a moment to appreciate the architecture of our auditorium. It was designed to reflect the architecture of the early Spanish missionaries that settled parts of Texas. On the arches of the auditorium, is our native Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*). In the summer, it's covered with large, tubular red flowers, which attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

5-Courtyard Garden

Welcome to the courtyard. This is the heart of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. In the middle of the courtyard is our spring. It simulates the natural springs found throughout the Texas Hill Country. From the courtyard, step into the Visitors Gallery to explore the exhibits. Or, visit our café for a snack. Our Little House provides children's activities. Proceed past the public restrooms and take a look in our gift store.

6-Café Garden

Welcome to the Café Garden. In this garden we have several native species on display in a semi-formal design. The prominent grasses include Big Muhly and Gulf Muhly. In the center of this garden we often have a rotating art exhibit. When we do, each show runs for several months. Visitors are encouraged to see how the gardens change over the seasons and how this affects the context of the art. If you'd like more information on the art exhibits, please check out our website. To the west of this garden, you'll find one of our many memorial benches. This is a great place to sit and enjoy the gardens. Just beyond the bench is our café meadow.

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This garden is styled to be a hybrid between a wildflower meadow and a garden bed.

7-Little House Garden

Welcome to the Little House garden. This garden surrounds our Little House, which is an indoor facility for children's activities. This garden is surrounded by a raised berm, which has several native grass species as well as flowering plants, including Big Red Sage, Gregg's Dalea, and Teresa Salvia. This salvia was actually discovered outside of Fredericksburg, Texas and is a cultivar of the Red Salvia. Behind the berm is a lawn of buffalo grass. To the left of this garden and around the corner is the entrance to the Little House Courtyard. This area was designed for children ages 2 to 6, and it encourages outdoor exploration with adult supervision. We have a wikiup, which is a framed hut used by nomadic Native Americans; the shaded arbor; tree stump stools; and large terra cotta pots in which children can dig for plastic insects and lizards.

8-Seed Silo Garden

Welcome to the Seed Silo Garden. The pink of the evening primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*) and the bright-orange of Texas Lantana (*Lantana urticoides*) give this garden at the base of the Seed Silo colorful, seasonal appeal. This garden pulls towards the formal end of the spectrum to complement the clearly defined border and strong lines of the wall and silo. In order to tie in with surrounding prairie and meadow gardens, some of the same species are included such as purple coneflower, (*Echinacea purpurea*), and prairie goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*). The sharp colors throughout the year will be maximized through time-sharing where more than one species, active at different times of the year, may be planted in the same spot. For example, the early spring bloomer, foxglove (*Penstemon cobaea*), is planted in the same spot as Texas lantana, which blooms later in the summer. Special attention has been made to contrast forms and textures of flowers and foliage. The Texas redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), at the back of the garden is a perfect example of using a native species as a topiary. This particular specimen is being groomed as an "espalier" where all the branches are pruned to be flat against the wall.

9-Woodland Garden

Formerly called the Meditation Garden, the Woodland Garden is a perfect place to ponder the garden's subtleties. Enjoy the quiet here, the stream's gentle flow, and the many textures, colors, and shapes of native trees, grasses, and wildflowers. The stream, stream plantings, and woody plants were designed, built, and planted by David Mahler and the crew of Environmental Survey in 1999 and 2000. This serves as a Woody Plant Classroom where 120 species of Hill Country woody plants and many of their associated forbs are arranged and modeled after actual plant communities. This garden is currently being cleared of its understory "jungle" to make room for larger plantings of understory woodland forbs such as Turk's cap, Texas aster, inland sea oats, and cedar sage.

This garden is also a great example of a shade garden. Homeowners can find inspiration here when dealing with low-light situations in their own landscapes. If you make your way to the

back of the garden, at the head of the stream you'll come to a chalky limestone area. The soil was donated by the Bamberger Ranch, which supports Madrones and other associated vegetation typically found in this special geologic layer of the Glen Rose Limestone. The wildflowers here are specialists that thrive or tolerate tight, heavy, chalky, and often shallow clays in more open areas. The message here is that native soils aren't necessarily bad. What wants to grow here? Some well-loved plants such as mountain pink (*Centaureum beyrichii*) will not likely thrive in typical rich garden soils. Some prefer or require "poor" chalky soil such as we have here.

10-Hill Country Stream

Sit on one of the benches next to the Erma Lowe Hill Country Stream and listen to the musical trickle of the water as it flows over the rocks. Living things seem to gravitate towards water. Proof lies in the palm-shaped pinnules of the maiden hair ferns (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*) and the curious fingers of countless children. Neither can be deterred from dangling pieces of themselves into the current. This stream was modeled after a typical stream found in the Hill Country of Texas. A large pump re-circulates the water. Areas of shade and sun, and fast and slow moving water, create a diversity of niches for plants and wildlife.

The water-gardener can take home ideas of what native plants will do well in various depths of water and under sun or shady conditions. All living things here are native to the Hill Country. This is one of the best sites to observe wildlife (neon skimmers and other dragonflies, the occasional painted bunting, cardinals, butterflies, ribbon snakes, fish, and leopard frogs). Follow the stream to the pool at the end, and across the pathway you'll find a dry creek bed. Water collects here in wet weather, but most of the time it's dry. The original plantings were not adapted to this type of environment. This demonstrates that you should design a garden based on its unique conditions rather than trying to make it something else.. The current plantings tolerate seasonal floods and droughts. The dry creek bed is our version of a "rain garden" because the ground slopes down and the water tends to pool and collect.

11-Display Gardens

As you come from the Woodland Garden through the limestone wall, you'll find yourself in the Display Gardens. The Display Gardens are comprised of 23 beds that demonstrate just a few of the infinite varieties, uses, and adaptations of plants native to Texas. Here you will also see gardens that are typical of different regions as well as a garden dedicated to the botanists who chronicled Texas plants. Other gardens demonstrate techniques for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds, using water and rock features, and protecting plants from voracious deer. All the plants in the chalk prairie bed were rescued from a site that was about to be developed. There's a layer of chalk that runs right along Interstate 35 in the northern part of Austin and these plants came from that area. The beds are constantly being re-evaluated, re-designed and enhanced.

Along both sides of the gardens, you'll find a shady arbor that runs the length of the garden.

Sturdy vines, including Texas Wisteria, Coral Honeysuckle, and Mustang Grape, have woven themselves throughout the arbor, providing a respite from our hot Texas sun. To the right, just beyond the arbor, stands the Nursery where plants are cultivated for use in the gardens as well as for our biannual plant sales. On the left, you'll find the Member's Garden and three separate homeowner inspiration gardens. At the other end of the Display Gardens, you'll find the Butterfly Garden and our McDermott Learning Center.

12-Member's Garden

The Member's Garden was designed by a local designer, Glee Ingram, and it was installed to honor the thousands of members who help support the Wildflower Center and its programs. This garden is semi-formal; we have the formal aspects of the hardscape, such as the bench down at one end, but the plantings in the beds surrounding the walk tend to be loose and a little more informal. Behind the bench is a mountain laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*); it's a large shrub that blooms in the spring, and blooms abundantly with large, grape-like clusters of flowers that smell just like bubble-gum. The big cactus next to the wall is a spineless Texas prickly pear, and it is a cactus that is found throughout the western parts of the state. Its blooms are yellow, and sometimes orange, and it puts out a red fruit called a tuna.

13-Home Owner Inspiration Gardens: Formal Garden

These are Homeowner Inspiration Gardens where we demonstrate the use of Texas native plants in a variety of styles,. Here we have a garden featuring a formal design. Native plants are commonly used in naturalistic designs, but gardens designed with native plants don't need to look wild. Garden style relies on layout, hardscape, and methods of maintenance, as well as plant selection. This design is based in symmetry, clean lines, sculptural plants, and geometric forms.

14-Home Owner Inspiration Gardens: Traditional Garden

These are Homeowner Inspiration Gardens where we demonstrate the use of Texas native plants in a variety of styles. You're looking at the Traditional Garden. This design combines elements of naturalistic styles, using free form plants and formal styles incorporating a geometric layout and symmetrical organization. Such gardens are popular in residential landscapes, providing a balance between control and informality.

15-Home Owner Inspiration Gardens: Naturalistic Garden

These are Homeowner Inspiration Gardens where we demonstrate the use of Texas native plants in a variety of styles. Here's the Naturalistic Garden. The roughly 80 species used in this garden are almost entirely native to Travis County, Texas, and are arranged into sections based on plant communities such as woodlands, prairies, short grass habitat of a rocky hillside, and aquatic species featured in the stock tank pond. Diverse plants provide necessary food, shelter and water that attract wildlife, creating an ever-changing garden for year-round interest.

16-Ann and O.J. Weber Butterfly Garden

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This is the Ann and O.J. Weber Butterfly Garden, which demonstrates the inter-relationships between plants and insects and the critical role of pollinators in sustaining biodiversity. Unlike enclosed butterfly house displays at some botanical gardens, this garden is an outdoor butterfly habitat. It's designed to attract and sustain insects by using a diverse range of plants that are native to the Texas Hill Country. Some 300 different species of plants, arranged in specific plant habitat communities, create a healthy eco-system for butterflies and other invertebrates throughout their life cycles. This garden is designed to demonstrate a biological system that homeowners can create right in their own back yards. Just by changing the combination of plants in a garden, homeowners can participate in protecting, restoring, and managing natural habitat. Urban backyards can provide an important corridor between patches of habitat in the urban areas for butterflies, other invertebrates, and many vertebrates.

One of the most interesting things in the butterfly garden is the insectary, a small structure located next to the garden, which allows us to raise butterflies in a protected and enclosed environment that will be free from birds, wasps, and other predators, thus boosting their numbers. Once the insects have pupated, we release them into the garden. While you're there, check out what species we have on display at the moment.

17-Dry Creek Bed

The Dry Creek Bed is characteristic of the many seasonal streams we have throughout Central Texas. This type of garden is also often called a 'rain garden'. When we have a rain event, water runoff will flow and soak into this low depression alongside the Administration building. Not all plant species will tolerate the seasonal floods and droughts that occur in this garden. The native plantings of Bushy Bluestem (*Andropogon glomeratus*), Bush palmetto (*Sabal minor*) and Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) we have planted thrive in this environment. By surveying your site before you plant, you can optimize and use its natural conditions to your advantage.

Rain gardens are beneficial in that they absorb and filter storm water runoff from impervious structures such as roofs and paved areas. This helps prevent flash flooding, erosion of soils, and contaminants from polluting our aquifer.

18-West Texas Mountain Collection

The mountains of West Texas offer a wide variety of unique and spectacular drought tolerate plants. Along both sides of the path and against the Library wall we have featured a small sampling of what would occur in that arid environment. Many species you may find familiar like the Black foot Daisy (*Melampodium leucanthum*) as its range extends into the Texas Hill Country. Others don't begin to appear in the wild until you go further west. The iconic combination of Harvard agave (*Agave havardiana*) and Mexican Feather grass (*Nassella tenuissima*) is prevalent throughout the desert highlands. Due to recent warming trends these plants are making there way into private and public landscapes as people are looking for more drought tolerant garden selections.



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Before heading to the next prompt make sure you stop and notice the flowers of Chocolate daisy (*Berlandiera lyrata*). It smells delicious and blooms consistently throughout our warm months!

19-Nursery

You're standing in front of our growing operation here at the Wildflower Center. This is where life begins for many of the species available at our Plant and Seed Sale Festivals and for display in our gardens. We have a Spring Sale in April and a Fall Sale in October where you can find nearly 300 species of perennials, annuals, grasses, shrubs and trees. In January we also host a tree and shrub sale in conjunction with our Tree Talk and Winter Walk event. If you live in our area, please join us for one or all of these great events and get your native garden growing! Check our website www.wildflower.org for dates, plant lists and other details.

20-South Texas Mission Garden

As you stand facing the front of the Auditorium, what most likely catches your attention first is the architecture. As part of our rainwater harvesting system, the roof, shaped like an open-winged butterfly, is designed to maximize water collection. This water feeds via the Roman-styled aqueduct, to the cistern at the front entrance.

The stylized sandstone arches are inspired by the Spanish missions of South Texas and are complemented by the vegetation you see here that is native to the southern parts of the state. The buildings and walls radiate heat and offer protection from wind for these South Texas species, some of which are north of their normal adapted range.

To the left of the auditorium doors you'll find a clump of thorn-crested agaves (*Agave lophantha*), a drought tolerant and well armed, evergreen succulent. Behind the agave stands a Mexican olive (*Cordia bossieri*) that will eventually become a small tree. It blooms throughout the summer with 2 inch wide white, crepe paper textured flowers. In this same bed during the summer you can see the small, bright red peppers of the Chile pequin (*Capsicum annuum*), a favorite with our mockingbirds. These peppers are tasty, great for cooking, and very hot!

On the east side of this small courtyard is a spineless prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia ellisiana*). No, we haven't removed the spines, they just grow that way. Often you'll find white cottony looking clumps on the surface of the prickly pear. This is a covering protecting tiny insects called "cochineal". Cochineal insects are important commercially as a source of magenta dye. In the past they provided the red for the British "Red Coats" and are used today as a natural food coloring.