



Outdoor learning environments (OLEs) encourage diversity of children's play experience and contribute to healthy development. Plants offers a variety of experiences and discoveries by stimulating their senses, providing loose parts for creative play, and encouraging children to crawl, jump, and tunnel as they connect to the natural cycles around them.

This flyer is intended to help parents, educators, and designers select plants that can be used to enhance learning experiences in early childhood programs, schoolyard classrooms, and backyards. The plants highlighted are approved for childcare licensure and balance qualities that engage children with plant selection and care practicalities.



Child Friendly Native Plants of the Rio Grande Valley

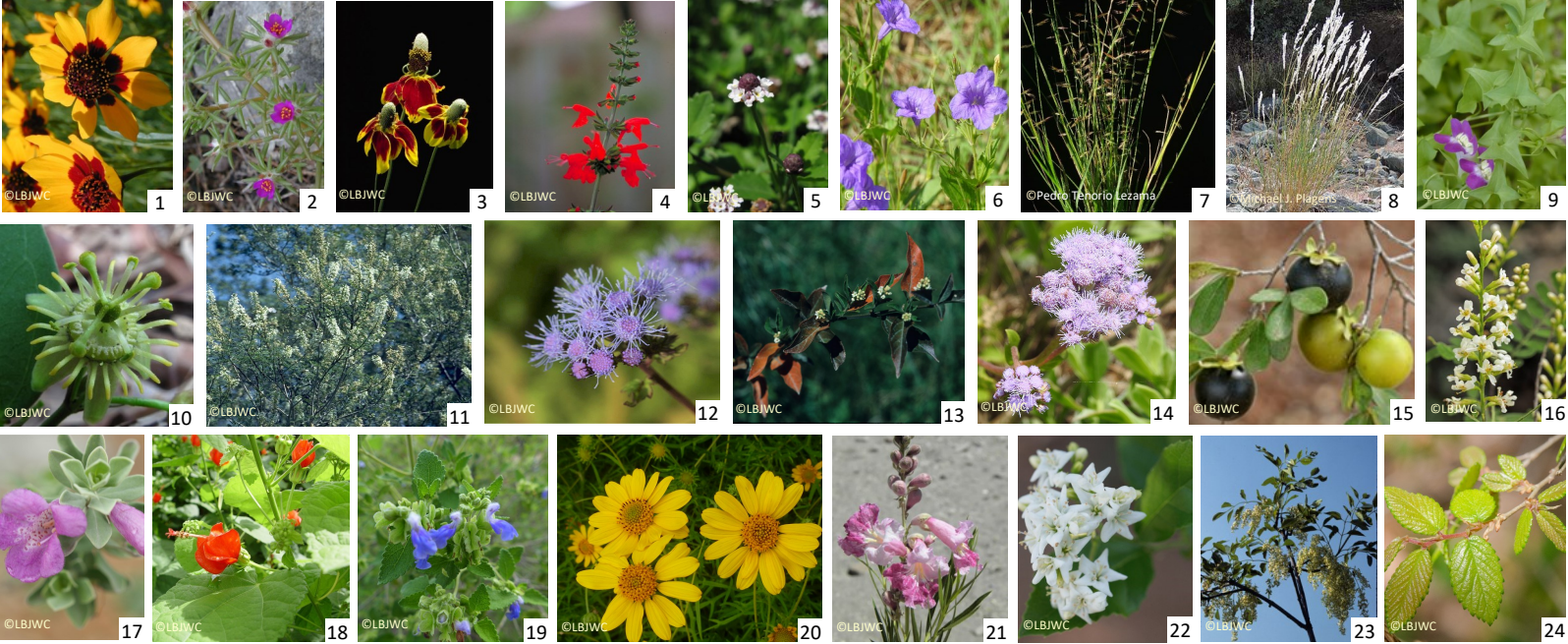
- * **Sensory:** Create a rich sensory experience by incorporating varied textures, scents, colors, and sounds
- * **Interaction & Movement:** Establishes secret places to hide and exciting pathways to investigate, while drawing children into the space with the movement of waving grasses and the flight of butterflies
- * **Building Materials:** Provides countless materials and loose parts to incorporate into creative play and create structures for exploration or relaxation
- * **Easy Care:** Low maintenance needs or low water requirements
- * **Durability:** Tolerates environmental conditions, losing parts, or physically capable of regenerating under rough treatment



OLE! Texas is an initiative of the Texas Department of State Health Services in partnership with other state agencies, universities, and organizations across Texas. For more information and a full partner listing, visit dshs.texas.gov/ole.

Texas Parks and Wildlife - Teaching children outdoors: tpwd.texas.gov/education/resources/parents-and-teachers/taking-children-outdoors
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center - Dig Deeper: wildflower.org/project/outdoor-learning-environments

This list is intended to provide general information only. OLE! Texas partners disclaim any liability or responsibility for any allergy, sensitivity, illness, or injurious effect that any person or animal may suffer as a result of the information herein. For information or concerns about the toxicity of plants, contact the local Poison Control Center in your area. www.aapcc.org



| RGV Child Friendly Native Plants | | # | Sensory | Interaction & Movement | Building Materials | Easy Care | Durability |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----|---------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Common Name | Scientific Name | | | | | | |
| ANNUALS | | | | | | | |
| Plains Coreopsis, Golden Tickseed | <i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i> | 1 | T,V,E,M | P,B,S | x | x | H,D,P,DR |
| Chisme | <i>Portulaca pilosa</i> | 2 | T,V,E | P,B | | x | H,D,Cn |
| Mexican Hat | <i>Ratibida columnifera</i> | 3 | T,V,E,M | P,B | x | x | H,D,DR,Cn |
| Tropical/ Scarlet Sage | <i>Salvia coccinea</i> | 4 | T,V,H | P,H,B | | x | H,D,P,DR |
| PERENNIALS | | | | | | | |
| Texas Frogfruit | <i>Phyla spp.</i> | 5 | T,V | P,B | | x | H,D |
| Wild/Mexican Petunia | <i>Ruellia spp.</i> | 6 | T,V,M | B | | x | H,D,Cn |
| GRASSES | | | | | | | |
| Slender Grama | <i>Bouteloua repens</i> | 7 | T | | x | x | H,D,CN |
| Arizona Cottontop | <i>Digitaria californica</i> | 8 | T,V | | x | x | H,D |
| VINES | | | | | | | |
| Snapdragon Vine | <i>Maurandella antirrhiniflora</i> | 9 | V | B | | | C,Cn |
| Corky-stem passionflower | <i>Passiflora suberosa</i> | 10 | V | P,B | | | H,D |
| SHRUBS | | | | | | | |
| Whitebrush / Bee-brush | <i>Aloysia gratissima</i> | 11 | T,V,S,M | P,B | x | x | C,H,D,P |
| Crucita | <i>Chromolaena odorata</i> | 12 | T,V,S,E | P,B,S | | x | H,D,P,Cn |
| Fiddlewood | <i>Citharexylum berlandieri</i> | 13 | T,V,S | P,B,S | x | x | H,D,P |
| Betony-leaf Mistflower | <i>Conoclinium betonicifolium</i> | 14 | T,V | P,B | | x | H,D,P |
| Texas Persimmon | <i>Diospyros texana</i> | 15 | T,V,E | P,B,S | x | x | H,D,P,S |
| Texas Kidneywood | <i>Eysenhardtia texana</i> | 16 | T,V,S,M | P,B | x | x | C,H,D,S |
| Cenizo | <i>Leucophyllum frutescens</i> | 17 | T,V | P,B | x | x | C,H,D,P,DR |
| Turks Cap | <i>Malvaviscus arboreus</i> | 18 | T,V,E | P,H,B | x | x | H,D,P,DR |
| Shrubby Blue Sage | <i>Salvia ballotiflora</i> | 19 | T,V,S,E | P,B,S | x | x | H,D,P,DR |
| Skeleton-leaf Daisy | <i>Viguiera stenoloba</i> | 20 | T,V | P,B,S | x | x | H,D,P |
| TREES | | | | | | | |
| Desert Willow | <i>Chilopsis linearis</i> | 21 | T,V,S,E | P,H,B,S | x | x | H,D,P,DR |
| Anacua | <i>Ehretia anacua</i> | 22 | T,V,S,E | P,B,S | x | x | H,D,P,S |
| Mexican Ash | <i>Fraxinus berlandieriana</i> | 23 | T,V | B,S | x | x | C,H,D,S |
| Cedar Elm | <i>Ulmus crassifolia</i> | 24 | T,V | P,B,S | x | x | C,H,D,S |

Sensory: T - Touch, V - Visual, S - Smell, H - Hearing, E - Edible

Movement (M) from Wildlife: P - Pollinators, H - Hummingbirds, B - Butterflies, S - Songbirds

Durable: Tolerance for C - Cold, H - Heat, D - Drought, P - Picking, HT - High traffic, S - Shade; DR - Deer resistant; Cn - Container