

Four Underutilized Natives

Contributed by Don Dubois

Argemone albiflora (White Prickly-Poppy)

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This eye catching plant is usually 2-3' tall with tulip-sized white flowers with yellow centers. You may see it growing in vacant lots or open fields. This plant does not generally attract butterflies but is visited by other insects, especially bees. Some bees use it as a shelter as well as a source of pollen. An article stressing its importance to Texas native bees appeared in [*American Butterflies Magazine*](#).

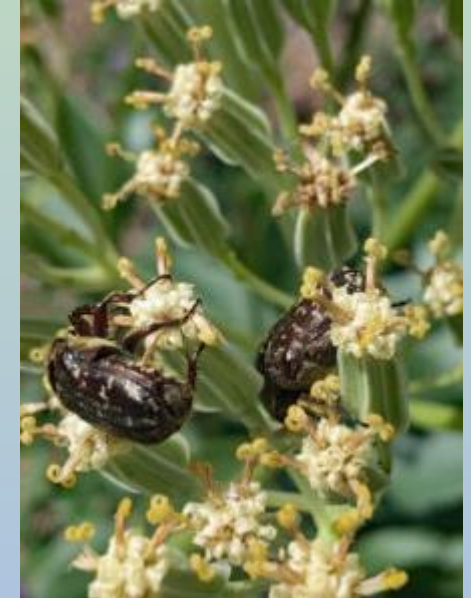
Photos taken in my garden show it being visited by honeybees, flower beetles, and katydid nymph. This plant is generally not eaten in pastures; possibly it is distasteful or toxic to herbivores. Its prickly leaves and stems discourage careless handling.



Arnoglossum plantagineum (Prairie Indian Plantain)

Contributed by Don Dubois

This plant is native to Harris and Montgomery Counties. It can be seen growing along unmown roadsides in rural Montgomery County. It has a thick, branched flower stalk growing to about 30' height over a broad-leaved grayish green basal rosette. Its small flowers are pollinated by flower beetles, bees, and flies and are generally ignored by butterflies. This is an April blooming plant. In a garden setting it can be an interesting specimen.



Hymenopappus artemisiaefolius (Woolly-white)

Contributed by Don Dubois

This plant with a botanical name as long as it is tall can be seen along many of the area roadsides, usually growing in sandy soil. Its common names are Woolly-white and Old Plainsman. It is common in both Harris and Montgomery County. With a height of about 2-3', it stands out from lower growing vegetation. It is an attractive plant with a grayish green basal rosette of deeply notched leaves, supporting a branched flower stalk with clusters of small pinkish-white flowers.

In a garden setting it is a well behaved biennial, popping up randomly but never thickly. It adds another layer of diversity that attracts some of our smaller insects. It is pollinated by a variety of small insects, including the beetles, bees, flies, and wasps that are important contributors to a healthy ecosystem.



Onosmodium bejariense (Soft-hair Marbleseed)

Contributed by Don Dubois

This native is a descendant of a plant found in an “about to be developed” lot in a black-land prairie remnant near Montgomery. The developer allowed for removal and it has been in my garden for several years. It is native to Montgomery and Harris Counties. Soft-hair Marbleseed is listed as a perennial on the Lady Bird Johnson website but seems to move around in the garden so I suspect it is a short lived perennial that reseeds sparingly. It is a bumblebee favorite and not generally visited by butterflies. Its unique growth habit adds an interesting look to the garden, with arching pale flowers atop a 1-2’ base of silvery green leaves.

