

# Lifecycle of a TEXAS ROADSIDE



**W**ildflowers along Texas roadsides have enchanted travelers for generations. These colorful gifts of nature return year after year, filling our senses as we travel to destinations throughout the Lone Star State. Every year, TxDOT does its part to ensure the continuation of this delightful tradition.



## SHOW

Texas has more than **5,000 species** of wildflowers and native grasses. With several ecoregions across the state, you can find a wildflower blooming somewhere in Texas throughout the year.



## SLOW

We slow the spread of invasives so that wildflowers and other plants can thrive. As part of carefully planned vegetation management, we use herbicides sparingly and only in specific areas to maintain ideal growing conditions for desirable plants along our roadways.

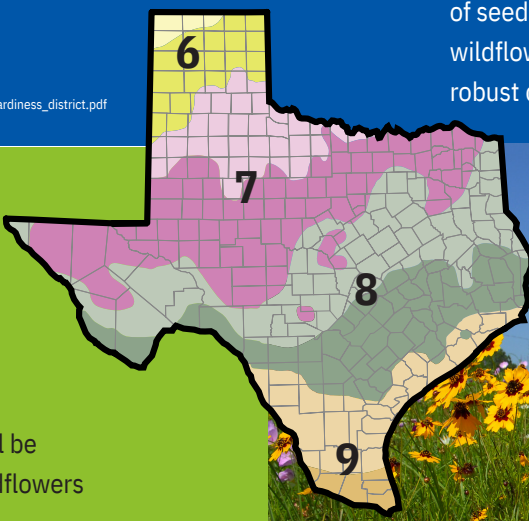
Source: USDA Plant Hardiness Zone map.  
[https://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot/info/library/pubs/cit/hardiness\\_district.pdf](https://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot/info/library/pubs/cit/hardiness_district.pdf)

## SHOW

**When is the best time to see wildflowers in bloom?**

Depending on where you are in Texas, there will be wildflowers throughout the year. By region, wildflowers are typically found during these months:

- Region 6 SPRING: March–May • FALL: Sept.–Nov.
- Region 7 SPRING: Feb.–April • FALL: Sept.–Nov.
- Region 8 SPRING: Jan.–April • FALL: Oct.–Dec.
- Region 9 SPRING: Jan.–April • FALL: Oct.–Dec.



## GROW

In spring and summer we let native plants and grasses grow tall, providing a natural habitat for pollinators and wildlife. This growth also helps conserve water and control erosion.



## MOW

Texas oversees **1.2 million acres** of right of way. We mow just twice each year — once in summer to scatter mature seeds, and again in fall to provide optimum sun and soil conditions for seeds to sprout.

## SOW

TxDOT sows up to **30,000 pounds** of seed each year to supplement natural wildflower regeneration, ensuring a continual, robust display of blooms in the spring.

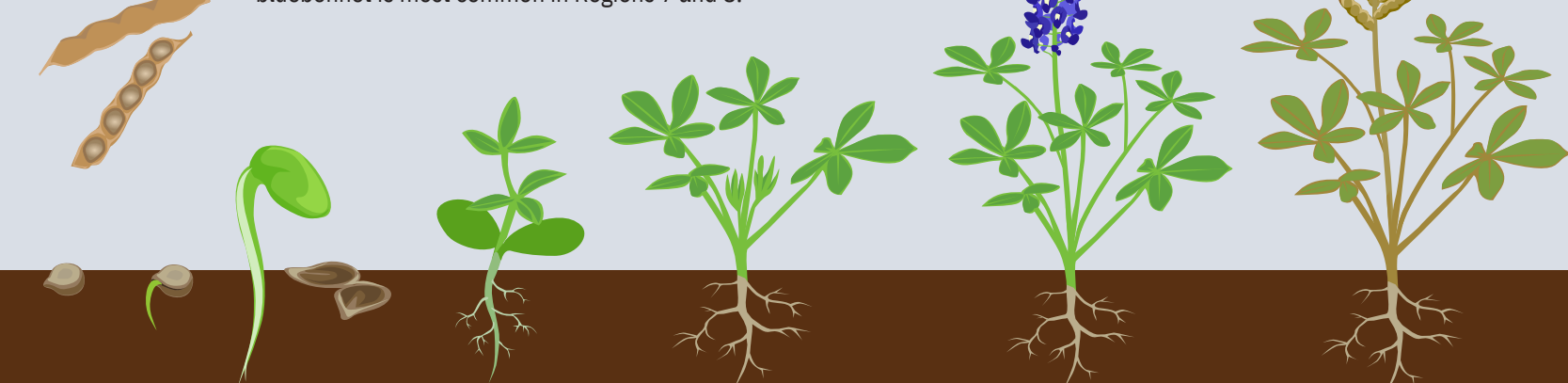


## GROW

**Where do all those butterflies come from?**

Monarch butterflies migrate each year between Canada and Mexico and their migration path goes right through Texas. TxDOT is committed to providing natural habitats for these winged travelers all along their journey, and has even created special gardens — pollinator waystations — for them at the safety rest areas along Interstate 35.

The lifecycle of our State Flower — the Texas Bluebonnet — typically spans from early March to late April. The bluebonnet is most common in Regions 7 and 8.



## MOW



**Why does mowing matter?**

- It helps disperse seeds for next year's crop.
- It clears debris from the ground so that seeds can make better contact with the soil to germinate, bloom and produce new seed for the next wildflower season.
- Not mowing during certain periods allows grasses and other plants to grow tall, reducing costs and providing habitat for **900 animal species** and **2,000 wildflower species**.

## SOW

**Where do all those butterflies come from?**



In 1932, TxDOT hired Jac Gubbels, its first landscape architect, to maintain, preserve and encourage wildflowers and other native plants along rights of way. Working with garden clubs and Boy Scouts — and with landowners' permission — the department began gathering wildflower seeds and transplanting trees. Gubbels' research showed that landscape design could make highways safer by eliminating monotony and using trees to highlight approaching changes.

**Texas Garden Clubs, Inc.**



Women played an important but often underappreciated role in the development of state and national highway systems. Many women's clubs advocated for tree planting and other landscaping efforts, as well as for the elimination or reduction of billboards to improve the aesthetic quality of the driving experience.

Source: Decca Lamar West

### Lady Bird Johnson

Lady Bird Johnson endowed an award presented to Texas Highway Department maintenance workers for their efforts in roadside beautification. The former First Lady's love of Texas wildflowers led to the rededication of the National Wildflower Research Center as the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in 1998.



## SLOW

**How do herbicides help beautify our roadways?**



TxDOT's highly trained vegetation specialists follow best practices in herbicide application to slow invasive growth and ensure the best possible conditions for wildflowers and other native plants to thrive.



TxDOT.gov (Keyword: Wildflowers)

Perpetuating Pollinators  
<https://youtu.be/NbDbvshHpyU>

Mowing to Encourage Yearly Return of Grasses and Wildflowers -  
<https://youtu.be/Vy17wnhLhDQ>

Where Do All the Native Grass and Wildflower Seeds Come From? -  
<https://youtu.be/EpzEG2xIV18>

From Monarch Highways to Historic Sidewalks  
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ee09d1546200420ebd2147fe5a2b16ea>

