

# Alibates Gardens Self-guided Walking Tour



# 1 Medicinal, Edible, and Useful Plants

There are over 20,000 species of edible plants in the world, yet fewer than 20 species now provide 90% of our food. A wide range of native plants can be grown to produce all of our food needs, while also providing a diversity of habitats for our native flora and fauna. Medicinal plants, such as sand sage can be used to treat medical conditions like colds and flu. The greatest medicinal use of sunflowers used throughout the world is for pulmonary afflictions.

- **Medicinal Plants**

- Common Sunflower
- Bee Balm
- Texas Sage
- Paperflower
- Winecup



- **Edible Plants**

- Chocolate Flower
- Yucca
- Navajo Tea
- Dock
- Mesquite

- **Useful Plants**

- Switchgrass
- Yucca
- Devils Claw
- Mesquite
- Lemon Sumac

## 2 Short Grass Prairie

The Texas Panhandle has approximately 16 million acres of native short grass and mixed grass prairie. More than half of the native prairies in Texas have been lost to urban development or converted to cropland during the last 100 years. These native prairies provide important habitat to a variety of resident and migratory wildlife, including prairie dogs, coyotes, and turkey vultures. Some species, like the Horned Lizard and Lesser Prairie-Chicken are considered threatened.

### Plants of the Prairie

Little Blue Stem  
Big Blue Stem  
Side Oats Grama  
Indian Blanket  
Indian Grass  
Buffalo Grass



# 3

## Wild Plums



Wild plum blossoms appear very early in the spring and fill the air with a delightful fragrance. The Native Americans dried small plums on hot rocks and stored them for future use. Residents of the Texas Plains like to make plum butter, jellies, and jams from this wild food delicacy. These bright red fruits mature in June.

Charles Goodnight, a famous Panhandle Rancher, instructed his cowboys to take plum seeds on cattle drives. These cowboys dispersed plum seeds from Texas to New Mexico. Sometimes our plums in the garden are referred to as "Cowboy Plums."



# 4 Xeriscaping

Xeriscaping is landscaping with water conservation in mind. This method of landscaping helps conserve water, uses no pesticides, improves property value, and provides habitat for wildlife, birds, insects, and reptiles.

The word *xeriscaping* comes from the Greek "xeros," meaning dry, and landscaping--thus Xeriscaping. Xeriscaping plants such as Cholla Cactus, Winterfat, Gayfeather, and Winecup are perfect plants for gardening in the Texas Panhandle.



## 5 Native American Cultivated Plants

According to Native American legend, corn, beans, and squash were three inseparable sisters who only grew together. Traditional interplanting of these crops in the same mounds is called "The Three Sisters Garden." Native Americans kept this sophisticated, sustainable practice for centuries and often still use this method of agriculture today. Native American Gardening is a living process, a part of the natural cycle. Each garden is a tiny ecosystem that will succeed if you watch and take your cues from the natural world.



# 6 Butterfly Garden



## Butterfly Garden Plants

- Chickasaw Plum
- Milkweed
- Engelmann Daisy
- Morning Glory
- Butterfly Weed
- Silverleaf Nightshade
- Lemon Sumac
- Larkspur

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National Park Service  
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Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument  
Texas

## 7 Tips on Photographing Plants:

1. Rise and shine and arrive early
2. Don't take pictures of flowers in direct sunlight
3. Use lower ISO settings on your digital camera
4. Get a 1:1 Macro Lens
5. Use a tripod
6. Blur your backgrounds
7. Look for flowers where light falls to the side of the flower. The shadows are more even and the colors have more life.



### Contact Us:

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