

Native Plants

xeriscaping



Genus/species: *Ratibida columnifera*

rah-TIB-eh-duh kahl-um-NIF-er-uh

Known as: Mexican Hat/Red-spike Mexican Hat
Upright Prairie Coneflower
Prairie Coneflower
Long-headed Coneflower
Thimbleflower



Bloom color/time: Red and yellow/May to Oct.

Concerns? Grows aggressively; may push out weaker species

Some ecosystem relationships:



These fantastically cheery blooms look like a festive crowd has gathered, wearing tiny broad-brimmed sombreros, happily celebrating the sun and swaying in the breeze.¹

The Lakota made a tea from Mexican Hat to cure abdominal pain and headaches. To the Cheyenne it is *shi'shin o wuts' tse i yo*, meaning "rattlesnake medicine."² Indigenous Americans had a number of uses, ranging from weaning a child from breastfeeding, as an aid for general pain, to treat poison ivy, and a "cold fusion" for sheep that were "out of their minds."³

1. wildflower.com

2. *Wildflowers of Texas*, Geyata Ajilvsgi, Shearer Publishing, 2003.

3. npsot.org, Delmar Cain, Boerne Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas.

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Genus/species: *Centaurea americana*

sen-TAR-ee-uh a-mer-ih-KAH-nuh

Known as: American Basketflower

American Star-thistle

Cardo de Valle (Thistle of the Valley)

Shaving Brush/Powderpuff/Straw-hat



Bloom color/time: Lavender, pink, white / May to Aug.

Concerns? None

Some ecosystem relationships:



Though it looks thistle-like, the American Basketflower blossom is a soft explosion of thin lavender filaments with a sweet, honey fragrance. Its common name comes from the basket weave pattern that cradles the flower at its base.¹

In Greek mythology, Hercules saved the centaur Chiron from suffering the pain of a poisonous wound by placing leaves of this plant over the lesion. Chiron then taught mankind about the healing power of this plant and used it to heal festering arrow wounds after battle.²

A 19th-century book about pioneers tells of wagon-wheel paths lined with American Basketflower as the seed was spread by passing wheels and horses' hooves.³

1. *wildflower.org*

2. *Legends and Lore of Texas Wildflowers*, Elizabeth Silverthorne, Texas A&M Press, 1966

3. *Texas Wild Flowers*, Eliza Griffon Johnston, Schiffer LTD, 2008

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Genus/species: *Erythrina herbacea*

er-ith-RYE-nah her-bah-KEE-ah

Known as: Coralbean
Cherokee Bean
Red Cardinal
Mamou



Bloom color/time: Red/March to Nov.

Concerns? Seeds are highly toxic if ingested
Thorny; and leafstalks have little prickles

Some ecosystem relationships:



Coralbean thrives on neglect, yet boasts scarlet blooms resembling glowing flames with split black pods beneath where shiny red beans emerge. In the 1950's it seemed like almost every homestead in south Louisiana had Coralbean in their backyard. They called it "mamou." Legend says that early Cajun exiles learned its secrets from local Indians.¹

Mamou reputedly had a number of medicinal uses.¹ Often used to treat upper respiratory infections, it was the active ingredient in a cough tonic known as "Dixie Dew Mamou" created and sold in the 1940's by the infamous former state senator of Louisiana, Dudley J. LeBlanc.²

1. *Mamou: Acadian Folklore, Natural History, And Botany of the Mamou Plant*, William Dean Resse, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2004.

2. history.net

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Genus/species: *Eryngium yuccifolium*

er-RIN-jee-um yuk-ki-FOH-lee-um

Known as: Rattlesnake Master
Button Eryngo
Button Snakeroot
Beargrass/Bear's Grass



Bloom color/time: White / May to Aug.

Concerns? Handling plant may cause skin irritation or allergic reaction.

Spiny leaves make walking nearby difficult.

Aggressive self-seeder (1,000 to 4,000/year).

Some ecosystem relationships:



Closely related to the carrot family, Rattlesnake Master leaves give off a strong carrot scent when cut. Its name originated with indigenous people who used the thick, knobby-to-straight rootstock in a poultice to heal snakebites.¹

Going back at least 8,000 years, indigenous people used the fibers for weaving. Some of the oldest known shoes in the world — found in a cave in Missouri — were made of Rattlesnake Master fibers.

The Rattlesnake Master stem-borer moth, *Papaipema eryngii*, is dependent on the plant to complete its life-cycle.²

1. *Mountain Folk Remedies* by Foxfire, Anchor Books, 2011

2. Cincinnati Nature Center: www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8rm7V2mkyg

Life cycle:



Annual



Perennial



Deer
Resistant



Rabbit
Resistant

Preferred light conditions:



Full Sun



Partial
Shade



Shade



Full Sun
to Partial
Shade



Full Sun to
Shade



Partial Shade
to Shade

Preferred moisture conditions:



Wet



Moist



Dry



Dry to
Moist



Moist
to Wet

Special properties:



Pollen-rich



Nectar-rich



Xeriscaping



Phytoremediation



Bees



Beneficial
Wasps



Butterflies



Satyr's



Skippers



Moths



Dragonflies



Beneficial
Insects



Ladybugs



Fireflies



Katydid's



Grasshoppers



Spiders



Song Birds



Finches



Hummingbirds



Ducks



Doves



Quail



Prairie
Chickens



Wild Turkeys



Reptiles



Amphibians



Bats



Small
Mammals



Squirrels



Rabbits



Raccoons



Armadillos



Foxes



Pigs



Goats



Cattle



Deer



Horses