

Liven Up your Garden: Plant Early Spring Bloomers

By Sarah Galvan, SAWS Gardenstyle San Antonio

One of the keys to successful gardening is seasonal interest. It's important to utilize plants that keep your garden visually appealing all year. To capture the beauty of an early Texas spring, you may want to include some of these plants in your yard.



Ornamental trees and shrubs are some of the first to flower. Early nectar sources are important for pollinating insects and hummingbirds. Do our native critters a favor and plant these drought tolerant beauties.

Ornamental trees and shrubs:

Mexican plum (*Prunus mexicana*) – This deciduous, small tree has dainty white flowers, nice golden fall color and songbirds love the fruits.

Texas redbud (*Cercis canadensis var. texensis*) – Small pink flowers can be pale or vibrant, heart-shaped leaves turn pale yellow in fall, one of my all-time favorites! Redbud makes a great understory tree and is deer-resistant.

Agarita (*Mahonia trifoliolata*) – Tiny golden flowers are incredibly fragrant while evergreen, blue-gray leaves keep interest all year long. Edible fruits attract songbirds and can be made into jelly for human consumption. Deer-resistant.

Scarlet (*Aesculus pavia*) or **yellow buckeye** (*A. pavia var. flavescens*) – This early bloomer has lovely red or yellow flowers and palmate leaves. Oddly, the leaves drop during the hottest months of summer, this is totally normal for this plant so don't panic. These are some of the first trees to leaf-out in spring, plant in partial shade. Wintering hummingbirds love the nectar. Deer-resistant.

Perennials:

Golden groundsel (*Packera obovata*) – Sunny yellow flowers atop 1-1/2 foot-tall stems attract butterflies and other pollinators. Deer-resistant, plant in partial shade.

Texas groundsel (*Senecio ampullaceus*) – You can easily recognize this plant in open fields as few other plants are blooming at this time. Similar flowers to golden groundsel, but Texas groundsel is a larger, more robust plant. Plant in full sun.

Engelmann daisy (*Engelmannia peristenia*) – Look for this bright yellow-flowered perennial along roadsides and in fields. This plant can do well just about anywhere in San Antonio as long as it has sun. Engelmann daisy seeds are eaten by many species of birds and deer may nibble this plant.