
Mid-Coast Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist to Host Native Plant Sale at the Rockport-Fulton HummerBird Celebration

ROCKPORT-FULTON, Texas — September 2, 2026 — You do not need a green thumb, a big yard, or a science degree to help hummingbirds, butterflies, and your water bill. You need the right plants — *the ones that already know how to live here in Texas*.

The Mid-Coast Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist invites the community to its annual Native Plant Sale during the 38th Rockport-Fulton HummerBird Celebration at the Fulton Convention Center, 402 N. Fulton Beach Road, Fulton. About 2,000 Texas-native trees, shrubs, vines, and perennials will be offered:

Friday, September 18 and Saturday, September 19: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 20: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Why go native if you have never done it before?

Most people plant what the big-box store has on sale. Those plants often look fine for a season, then struggle in Coastal Bend heat, salt air, clay or beach sand, and drought. Native plants evolved here. That single fact changes everything:

- **Less water after they settle in.** Once roots are down, most natives live on rainfall plus an occasional soak. That is real money on a summer water bill.
- **They handle our weather.** Drought, sudden cold snaps, and the salty Gulf humidity are not emergencies to a plant that grew up with them.
- **Wildlife actually uses them.** Hummingbirds, monarchs, native bees, and songbirds recognize native nectar, pollen, seeds, and host plants. A feeder is a snack. A native yard is a kitchen.
- **Many are deer-resistant.** Not deer-proof — but far less of a buffet than typical nursery imports.
- **You get free help at the sale.** Master Naturalists will be on the floor to match plants to sun, shade, soil, and what you want to attract. Bring a photo of your yard.
- **It's Fun: for you, your children, and grandchildren:** You will find that your entire family will enjoy playing in your garden. One of our master naturalists encourages her grandsons to go outside and catch *Great Southern White* butterflies (not Monarchs) on her nectar plants, then observe them up close in a mesh butterfly cage for fun.

Fall is the smart time — and watering-in is easier right now

While spring planting feels natural. Fall planting works better here. Soil is still warm, air is cooler, and roughly 80 percent of a plant's root growth happens in late summer and fall. A shrub or perennial in the ground now spends winter building roots. By next July it is far more drought-tough than the same plant put in during April.

Recent rains have eased the worst of the dry spell, so getting new plants watered in is not the ordeal it was a few months ago. That window will not stay open forever. Plant now while the soil is still working with you.

The 3-2-1 method: three weeks to get them started

New natives are not zero-water on day one. They need a short, simple establishment schedule. Volunteers will teach the chapter's 3-2-1 hand-watering method:

Week 1: Water 3 time – soak the root ball, not the whole bed

Week 2: Water 2 times.

Week 3: Water once. Then taper to rainfall and the rare deep soak.

Hand-water the root ball. Mulch. That is the whole trick. After those three weeks, natives ask far less of you than a typical landscape.

What you will find — and what the sale supports

This year, we have created a full list of typical native and adaptive plants on our website, along with the regions where they thrive. It is in PDF format with photos and categorized for your review. More than half the plants come from commercial nurseries that specialize in Texas natives. Hundreds more were grown by the Agriculture and Ecology Research Center of Formosa Plastics Corporation and by Mid-Coast Chapter members. Expect hummingbird and butterfly plants, deer-tougher shrubs, and trees suited to the Coastal Bend and beyond.

This sale is the chapter's only major fundraiser. Proceeds support education, habitat work, and volunteer service across eight counties: Aransas, Calhoun, Goliad, Jackson, Matagorda, Refugio, San Patricio, and Victoria.

Conservation in action — stop by the booth

In 26 years, Mid-Coast Master Naturalists have logged more than 266,000 volunteer hours — about \$7 million in documented service. That work includes pollinator gardens, rookery plantings, beach and bay cleanups, support for sea turtles and birds, monarch habitat, and classroom programs such as S.E.E.D., watershed education and more. The people selling you a Turk's cap on Saturday are the same people restoring habitat the rest of the year.

Bring the family. The outreach booth will have kids' crafts and conversation about local projects. No purchase required to ask questions or learn how to get involved.

If you do only one thing this fall

Swap one thirsty ornamental for one native that feeds a hummingbird. Come pick it with someone who can tell you where to put it and how to water it for three weeks. Then let the plant do what it has been doing on this coast for thousands of years.

Learn more: www.midcoast-tmn.org



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Hummingbird feeding on Texas Native Turk's Cap. A good shade and understory perennial.
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