

Focus on a Native – Frogfruit



Texas Frogfruit - *Phylanodiflora* is an excellent ground cover that remains evergreen in warm years and in areas protected from frost. It spreads vigorously, making it a great option for covering bare ground, rambling over boulders, or cascading from hanging baskets. This hardy plant can tolerate both drought and flooding, making it a resilient choice for a variety of landscapes.

As a member of the verbena family (Verbenaceae), which includes about 75 genera and 3,000 species of herbs, shrubs, and trees, Texas Frogfruit shares many of the desirable traits of its relatives. Its small, charming flowers resemble miniature verbena blooms, featuring fuchsia-colored centers that add ornamental appeal to any garden. The plant's trailing foliage provides excellent ground coverage, suppressing weeds while adding texture and color to the landscape. In cold winters, its green leaves may take on a reddish or purplish hue, and during especially harsh winters, it may go dormant.



Texas Frogfruit is highly beneficial for pollinators, acting as a nectar source for butterflies and bees. It serves as a host plant for the Phaon Crescentspot, White Peacock, and Common Buckeye butterflies, making it an excellent addition to butterfly gardens. Its ability to attract beneficial insects also contributes to a healthy ecosystem. This plant thrives in full sun to part shade, making it a versatile choice for different garden conditions. It is particularly well-suited for use in containers and hanging baskets, where its trailing growth habit allows it to spill gracefully over edges. In container gardening, it functions well as a "spiller" in the popular "thriller-filler-spiller" combination, adding movement and interest to mixed plantings. It can also be used in native woodland gardens, where it blends naturally with other low-growing plants.

Texas Frogfruit requires occasional maintenance to keep it looking its best. It should only be pruned after flowering to prevent the removal of the current season's blooms. Mowing while the plant is in bloom should be avoided, as it may take years for the plant to recover. With its adaptability, aesthetic appeal, and ecological benefits, Texas Frogfruit is an excellent choice for gardens that prioritize beauty, sustainability, and biodiversity.

