

Bell County Master Gardeners  
Tip of the Week  
By Jann Dworsky  
“Coreopsis-a little piece of sunshine”

Coreopsis is a native wildflower standing 1-2 feet tall with daisy-like flower heads. The flowers are yellow with a reddish-purple center and nod gracefully in the breeze. One plant may have as many as 25 blossoms at a time, all nodding gracefully in the wind.

Coreopsis is coming up at my house because of the two inches of winter rain that fell slowly. Every year I have a few coreopsis, but it has been 5 years since I have seen this many young plants. That rain did wonders for the wildflowers along our highways this year. We are all reaping the feast for the eyes provided! In 2007, I had a sea of blossoms and learning to recognize the young plants has been important for having such a bountiful blooming season.

Coreopsis has a distinctive look as a young plant, which can be recognized easily. When the plant is only 4-5 inches across it will lie almost flat on the ground. Its leaves are arrow shaped with the biggest leaf at the end of the stem. They may have 5-10 of these pointed leaves and they look like a clock with many hands pointing to the time. None of my other “weeds” look like this.

Being careful when I am weeding has become a good habit for me and I have been rewarded with hundreds of beautiful coreopsis. Sometimes they don't come up in the area I want them, and I do pull up a few. Mostly I just have to let them grow wherever they want, because they are too beautiful to lose.

Coreopsis is also known by several names, coreopsis tinctoria, plains coreopsis, golden tickseed, goldenwave, calliopsis, and is part of the Aster family. This beautiful wildflower escaped from cultivation on the East coast, but came to Texas as soon as it could. It has also been cultivated widely. An excellent close up photograph can be seen at [wildflower.org](http://wildflower.org). Photographs of meadows full of coreopsis are available when you type “Texas wildflowers coreopsis” into your Yahoo line.

When the coreopsis finish blooming and then start to form a green seed head, trim these heads off and in a few weeks the plants are in full bloom again. The bloom display will last twice as long, or about 6 weeks if you let them seed out the second time; you will then have many coreopsis in future years. Most of the seeds scatter and fall everywhere and don't need any care. Some I collect and scatter where I would like more coreopsis. A wonderful website [wildflowerhaven.com](http://wildflowerhaven.com) gives reports of fields of wildflowers such as bluebonnets, coreopsis, firewheel, and many others. This site provides wildflower routes with maps and road numbers to follow. You can pick just one county or a multiple county route for yourself. As the wildflowers begin to bloom locations are posted on the website. Seeing wildflowers has never been easier. So take a road trip this year and feast your eyes on beauty.



Have any questions about gardening in Central Texas? Contact [ask.bcmga@gmail.com](mailto:ask.bcmga@gmail.com)