

Bell County Master Gardener  
Tip of the Week  
By Mary Lew Quesinberry  
“Using Roadside Plants in the Garden”

Three common plants you will notice on Bell County roadsides from March to May are the Texas Bluebonnet (*Lupinus texensis*), Four Nerve Daisy (*Hymenoxys scaposa*), and Blackfoot Daisy (*Melampodium leucanthum*). You will find these plants growing in the poorest of conditions, usually in caliche and gravel. They are wonderful additions to the urban garden.

The Texas Bluebonnet is an annual that can be started by seed. It requires full sun and a gravelly, well-drained soil. Adding decomposed granite to the area where you sow the seed will add to the success of a beautiful stand of this State Flower of Texas. Sow the seed in May when Mother Nature sows hers. This will give the seed enough time to weather and germinate. These winter-hardy annuals will start germinating in the fall and begin flowering in March. After the Bluebonnet flowers fade, let the seedpods dry on the plant and wait until after the release of seed to remove the plants.

Four Nerve Daisy is available in the perennial section of many nurseries. It prefers full sun but will tolerate some shade. It is drought tolerant and used to growing in poor conditions. It is evergreen and blooms most of the year.

Blackfoot Daisy, also a perennial, is evergreen and drought loving. It must have excellent drainage to survive. Many nurseries also carry this plant in the perennial area. This plant forms a low growing mound with a spread to about 2-3 feet. It will bloom most of the year.

As with most Texas native plants, these roadside plants must have good drainage. Using a ratio of 1 part decomposed granite to 3 parts soil is a good soil mix for our native plants. When planting, elevate the plants slightly to ensure good drainage.

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

In the photo: These common roadside plants, Texas Bluebonnet, Four Nerve Daisy, Blackfoot Daisy are good additions to the urban garden.

