

Texas Bluebonnet & Wildflower Report

2019 Spring Wildflower Season Outlook

Provided by WildflowerHaven.com



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About this eBook

The Texas Bluebonnet And Wildflower Report provides a brief summary of the conditions for the 2019 Wildflower Season with a focus on the Texas Bluebonnet. It represents the collective experience of several professional and semi-professional photographers. However, this eBook is just a guide and does not guarantee that the reader will find displays of Texas Wildflowers along any of the routes mentioned. It is hoped that the information shared here will encourage you, the reader, to safely and respectfully venture out to enjoy the wonder and beauty of our state flower and the many other wildflowers in Texas. For current reports on bluebonnet and other wildflower season updates visit our forums at WildflowerHaven.com and our Facebook page – [Texas Wildflower Report](https://www.facebook.com/TexasWildflowerReport). Also see the [Resources Page](#) at the end of the eBook for other wildflower report sources.

Responsible Viewing!

When you do venture out to enjoy our Texas Bluebonnets and other wildflowers in bloom, please travel safely and be respectful of the private property of others. We **do not** encourage nor do we condone trespassing on private property to get that annual “kids in the bluebonnets” photo or any photo. The Texas Department of Public Safety provides some important [guidelines](#) on how to safely and legally enjoy viewing and photographing our Texas Wildflowers. You are strongly encouraged to read those guidelines before venturing out to explore.

If you find this guide to be helpful in your search for Texas Wildflowers, please like our [Texas Wildflower Report](https://www.facebook.com/TexasWildflowerReport) Facebook page and share a copy of this guide with your friends. Also, we have a large selection of bluebonnet and wildflower images in our [Texas Wildflower Report Galleries](#). Prints or licenses to use are available for most of these images. WildflowerHaven.com is a for-profit organization, but we do attempt to provide these and many other sources of information without charge. **If you would like to help fund our efforts** consider purchasing a print or make a small donation via PayPal.

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<http://www.pbase.com/richo/bluebonnets>



<https://www.facebook.com/TexasWildflowerReport>



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2019 Texas Wildflower Season Summary

Overall Grade: Split Season with roadsides in bloom well before fields. Displays in some areas will be well above average. Might be a grade A season.

The 10 second Elevator Pitch: Based on rainfall analysis, temperature analysis and scouting reports, the 2019 season is likely to see roadsides in bloom much earlier than normal and much earlier than fields. Based on some reports of early blooms, the “bloom-line” could reach San Antonio by mid-March or earlier. Unless the rest of February and March end up being well below normal in rainfall and well above normal in temperature, we should see the best wildflower season since 2010. The 2019 Spring Wildflower Season in some ways may resemble the 2010 once-in-a-lifetime season. There are some negative factors at play, so don’t count on a season exactly like 2010.

Fall Rainfall: Rainfall in October was 8 inches or more above normal for a large portion of Texas from just east of the Big Bend region to Texarkana. In September that band was further south. So with the combination of September and October most of Texas received at least 5 to 6 inches above normal rainfall. Based on a recent study I did of the impact of wildflower factors for Mason County, I have determined that October rainfall is the most critical of all of the factors. There have been seasons like last year where we had normal or above normal rainfall in the fall months of September and November, but that the rainfall in October was below normal which resulted in much less coverage of bluebonnet rosettes. This year the rain fell right at the best time for germination of bluebonnet seeds and our other winter annuals. So, October with maybe a spot here and there was the best Texas has seen in rainfall since 2010 which was an awesome year for all wildflowers in Texas.

Winter Rainfall: As of February 9th, the past 60 day rainfall for Texas has been at or above normal rainfall. The best areas are east of US 281. Areas to the west of US 281 are running at or below normal rainfall. The past 30 day departure from normal rainfall shows most all of Texas at or below normal rainfall. This is a strong negative. However, based on three different scouting trip reports, there is plenty evidence of ground water present in the Hill Country counties, so right now that is not a huge concern. However, and this is a huge however – if the trend continues towards warmer and drier days for the rest of February and March that could deflate the potential for a really awesome season. The plants are out there, but they will need more rain and sunny days particularly the end of February through most of March.

Winter Temperatures: The December through January time frame saw slightly above normal average temperature for Texas and the Hill Country. This is a negative factor, but at only around 1.3 degrees it is not yet a strong negative factor. Hopefully, February and March will have average temperatures and get us back on track.

Wildflower Regions

The regions defined here loosely match the standard definitions of the NOAA climate divisions and general geographical locations in Texas that are popular wildflower viewing areas. As used here, this is not the “official” definition of the regions, but just a guide to the locations. Wildflowers do not know or honor political boundaries, so just because a county or town is not mentioned does not mean wildflowers do not grow and bloom there. Also, the locations here are ones that over the years tend to send in more positive reports of wildflowers in bloom. For the purpose of this report the regions include:

- **Big Bend:** Brewster, Presidio Counties
- **Brenham Area:** Austin, Fayette, Grimes, Waller, Washington Counties.
- **North Central:** Ennis (Ellis County) and Cedar Hill areas
- **Hill Country:** Blanco, Burnet, Gillespie, Llano, Mason, and San Saba Counties.
- **South Texas:** Atascosa, De Witt, Gonzales, Guadalupe Counties

2019 Texas Wildflower Season Summary By Region

Big Bend: 3 or average for some areas. Possible early bloom.

I have already seen photos of roadside Big Bend bluebonnets in bloom in the first half of January and more the first week of February. This is well over 14 to 40 days early for them. The October rainfall was above normal for most of the Big Bend Ranch State and at or slightly above normal along the favorite Lone Star Ranch RD (RR 170). Terlingua area received above normal rainfall in October as well. Rainfall for the 60 day period prior to 2/9/2019 was at normal.

Brenham Area: 3+ average season to above average with caveats. Possible split season with roadsides in bloom well before fields.

Brenham area received well above normal rainfall for October. The 60 day rainfall since 2/9/2019 was also at or above normal rainfall. There are some locations within the Brenham area that do not drain well, these might have been negatively impacted by excessive rainfall. I have already received reports of early blooms in the area, so that could signal a split season for them. Locations that have not been mowed or grazed will likely have high dead grass/vegetation which could result in fewer or no plants in those locations. Overall, I expect to see widespread coverage of bluebonnets and other wildflowers in the Brenham area, if the area continues to get normal rainfall and temperatures through mid-March.

Ennis - North Central: 3+ average season with caveats.

October rainfall was well above normal for all locations within the Ennis area. The 60 day prior period to 2/9/2019 was also at or above normal in rainfall. Like the Brenham area, Ennis has some locations that drain well with good sandy loam soil, other locations have denser clay soils and do not drain well. Ennis should see some really nice displays if other factors fall into place for February and March.

Hill Country: 4+ above average to well above average with caveats. Possible early bloom east of US 281.

The October rainfall for all counties in the Hill Country was well above normal. Mason County overall received more rainfall in October than it did in 2010. It was the best ever on record since 1997. If October rainfall was the only factor then Mason County and the rest of the Hill Country would be in store for the best ever season. The 60 day prior period to 2/9/2019 saw at normal rainfall for those locations west of US 281 and slightly above normal for those locations east of US 281. Winter temperatures for the Hill Country are running about 1.3 degrees above normal. This is a negative factor but no where near the 2.4 to 7 degrees above normal for many of the years since 2010. Recent scouting reports by myself, Johnny Boyd and Mike Jones found an abundance of bluebonnet rosettes along many different locations across Blanco, Gillespie, Llano and Mason Counties. Other reports submitted by visitors to Texas Wildflower Report indicate there are plenty of plants in Burnet County. I did not see any early blooms, but Johnny Boyd did find a few scatted ones in one location.

South Texas: 3+ average to above season. Probably early bloom along roadsides of I-35 and I-37. Possible split season with roadsides in bloom well before fields.

October rainfall was slightly to well above normal across the South Texas area. The 60 day prior rainfall has been at or slightly below normal. Reports of widespread coverage of plants near George West, Three Rivers and Freer are encouraging. Widespread early blooms in a field near Freer could indicate that the South Texas area will see much earlier blooms this year, especially along the I-35 and I-37 locations.

Note: Grades are 1 to 5 with 5 reserved for the best ever season.

Wildflower Regions

Big Bend (not shown on map) :
Brewster, Presidio

Brenham Area: Austin, Fayette,
Grimes, Waller, Washington
Counties.

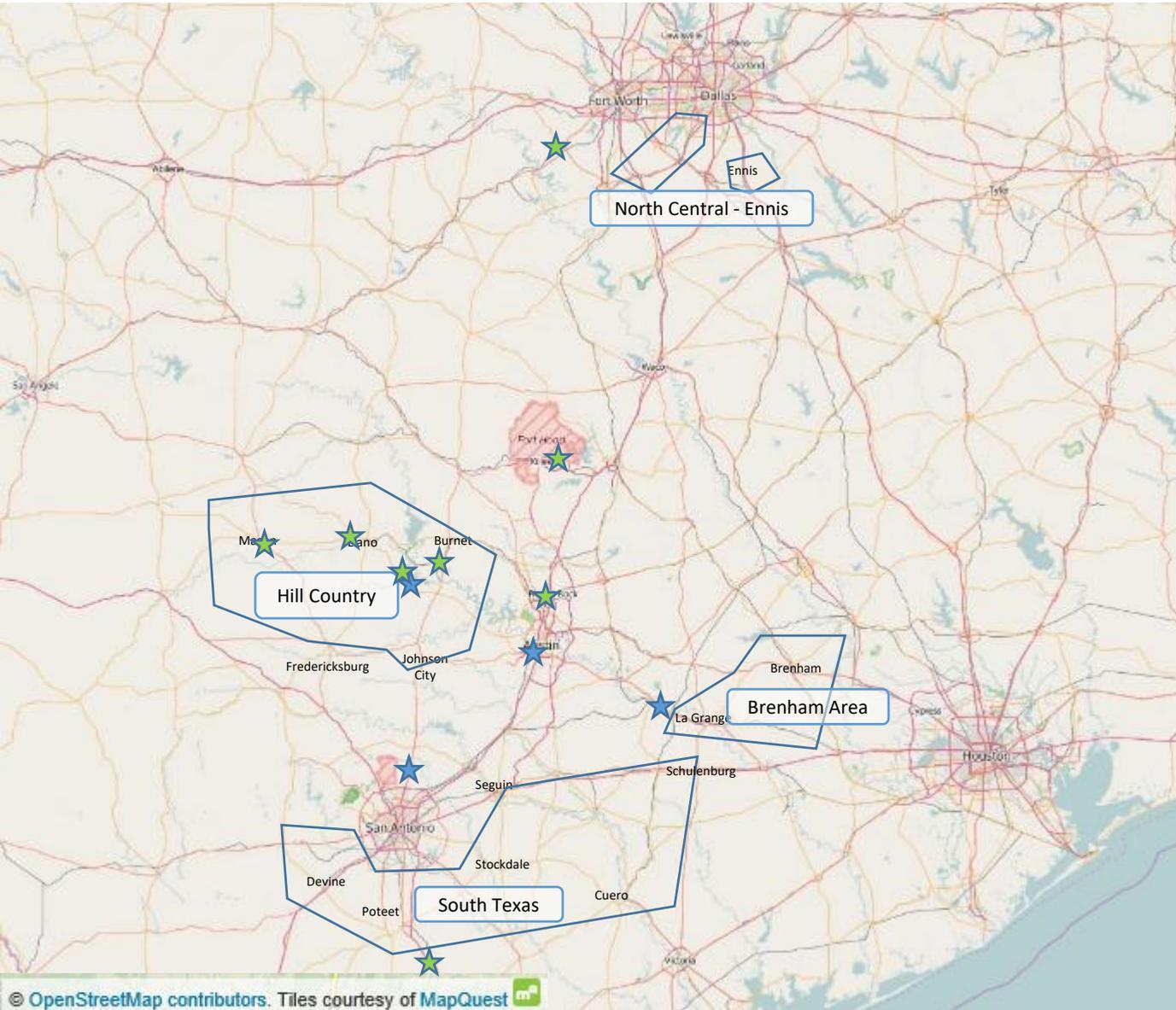
North Central – Ennis (Ellis County)
and Cedar Hill areas

Hill Country – Blanco, Burnet,
Gillespie, Llano, Mason, and San
Saba Counties.

South Texas – Atascosa, De Witt,
Gonzales, Guadalupe Counties

★ = Reports early bluebonnet
blooms.

★ = Reports of
bluebonnet/wildflower
rosette plants.

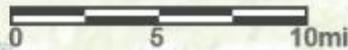




Hill Country Scouting Reports and Early Bloom Reports

★ = early blooms.
 ★ = good coverage of bluebonnet rosettes

Shown here is just a sample of the reports of bluebonnet rosettes spotted and early blooms. The scouting reports from myself, Johnny Boyd and Mike Jones showed an abundance of bluebonnet rosettes with coverage very thick at times. The areas scouted include Willow City Loop, Blanco County, Llano County and Mason County.



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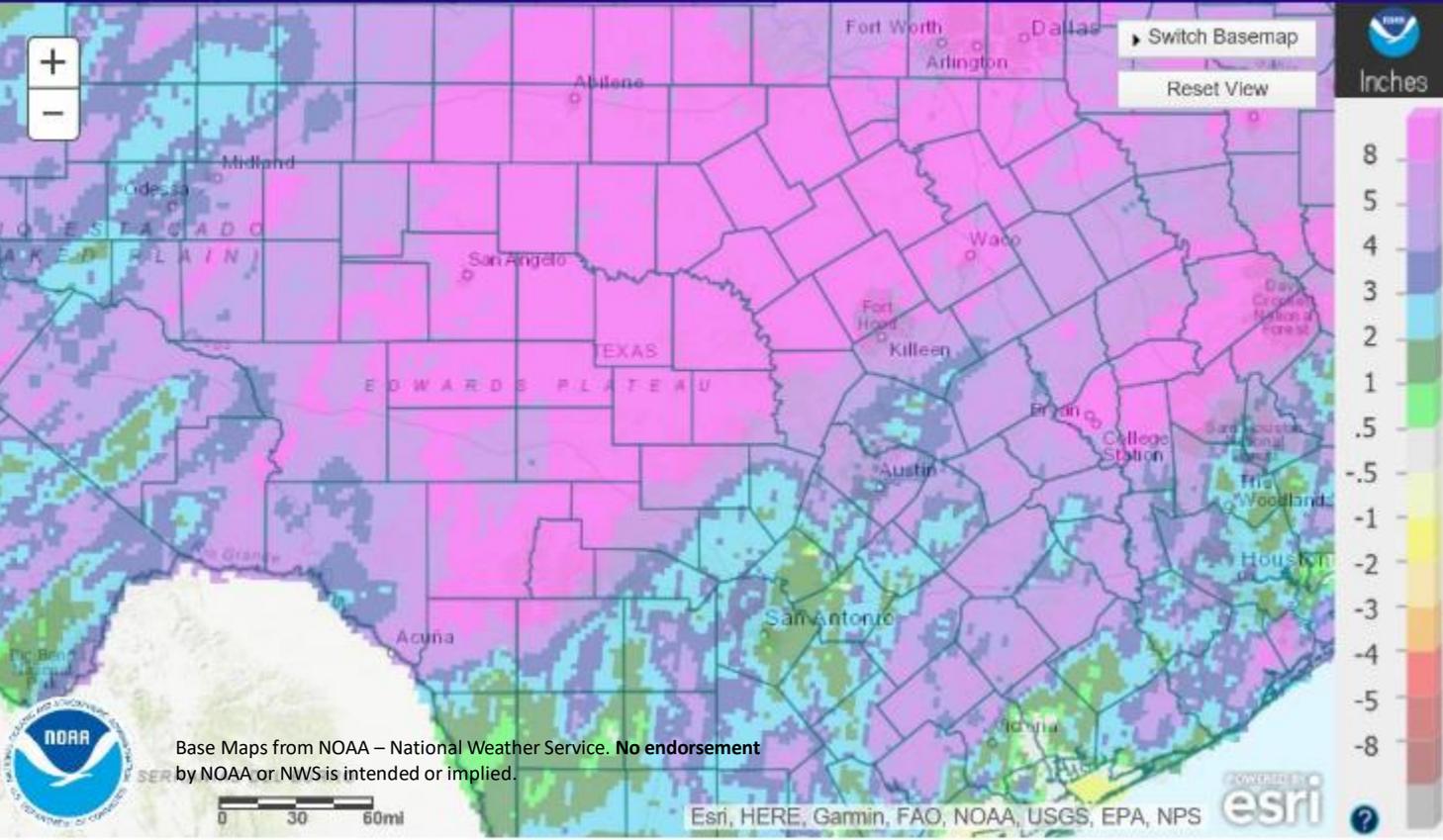
October 2019 Departure from Normal Rainfall

Texas: October, 2018 Monthly Departure from Normal Precipitation
Valid on: November 01, 2018 12:00 UTC

Print this map Permalink BOOKMARK

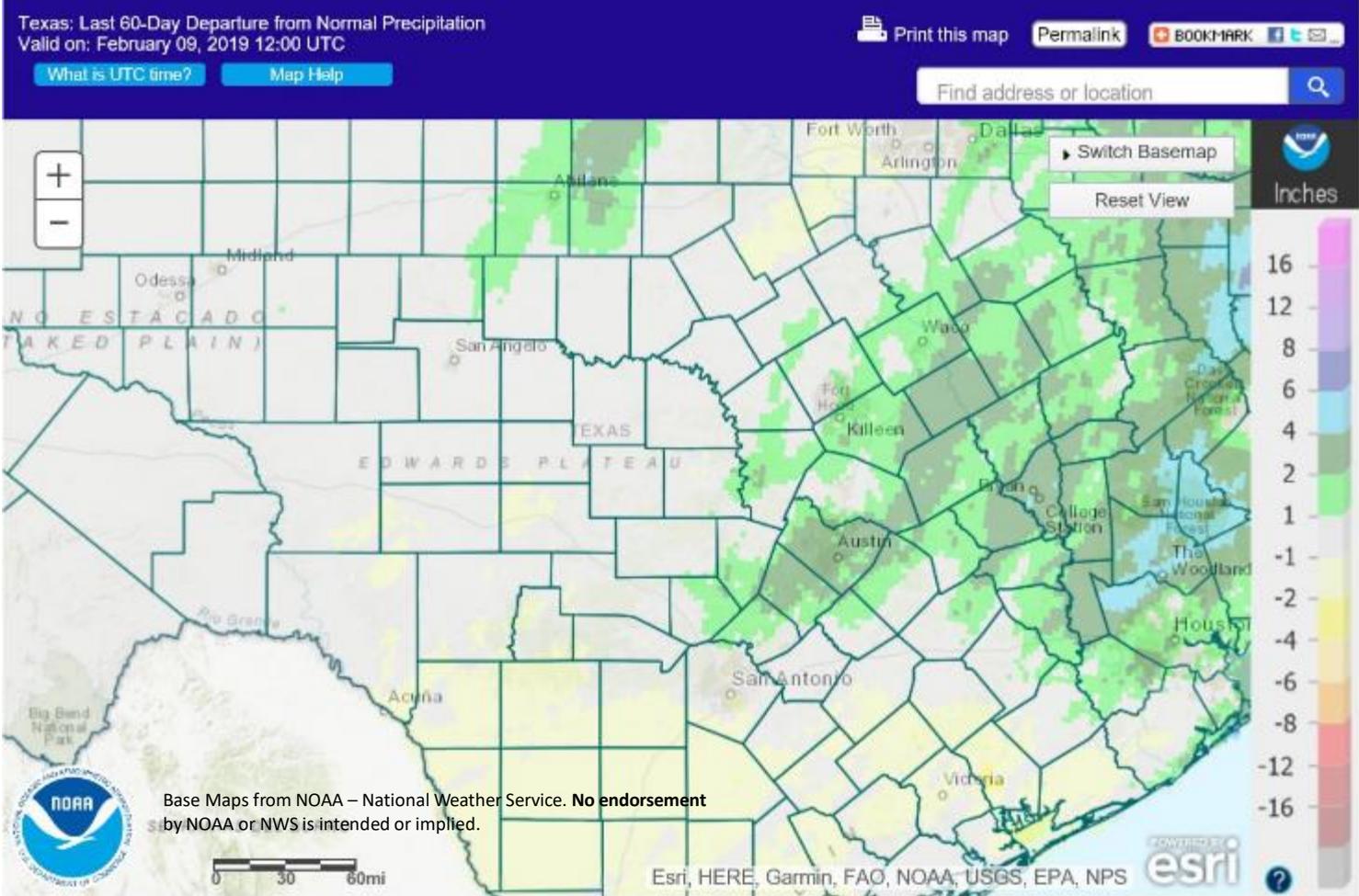
What is UTC time? Map Help

Find address or location



October rainfall across all major wildflower areas was well above normal. This is a very positive factor for our winter annuals that germinate in the fall and bloom in the spring. Recent scouting reports and reports from visitors to Texas Wildflower Report Facebook page indicate there is an abundance of bluebonnet plants across the state. This is especially true of locations in the Texas Hill Country.

60 Days prior to 2/9/2019 2019 Departure from Normal Rainfall



Rainfall for the past 60 days as of 2/9/2019 was at or above normal for most areas, except South Texas. Parts of South Texas were slightly below normal in rainfall. The more critical winter rainfall is the January through March months. This means we still need to see at least normal rainfall from here on out through March and into April. That said, we also need normal temperatures and normal days of sunshine. Warm wet and cloudy days can be just as harmful as warm and dry ones.

Rainfall is not the only factor!

It is important to understand that although rainfall is very important, rainfall is only one factor that leads to an above average wildflower show in the spring. Some other factors for a great spring wildflower show include:

- **Late winter and early spring rainfall** is very key to rosette root and plant growth. Usually the rosettes with deeper and better developed root systems are the ones that yield larger plants with more blooms.
- **Warming temps** in March are needed to encourage growth of plants and bloom stalks. Usually when the night-time temperatures are averaging 50 to 60 F, bluebonnet plants will increase plant growth and send out bloom stalks. Cooler temperatures in March will tend to delay the blooming period. Warm temperatures with good rainfall will tend to promote an early and longer season. Extreme heat in late March and April with less than average rainfall will promote a quick and shorten season.
- **Plenty of sunshine** during the typical flowering time is important especially for sun hungry bluebonnets. Long periods of overcast skies with warm/damp weather can encourage development of plant and root diseases. I have seen entire bluebonnet crops wiped out by root/stem diseases (damping off).
- **Less competing vegetation** - Dead vegetation from previous seasons not removed can result in excessive shading thus limiting rosette and seedling development. Often aggressive invasive species will use this tactic to push out native wildflowers. In recent years the giant common mustard ([Rapistrum rugosum](#)) has taken over entire pastures resulting in little or no native wildflower growth. I have seen the same for invasive grasses along roadsides.
- **Topography and soil:** Although bluebonnets will grow in most any soil, they tend to do much better in areas that drain well and in soils with less clay. They depend on a rhizobium bacteria that help to fix nitrogen from the air. Soils poor in this bacteria will not likely produce a good crop of bluebonnets.
- **Proper mowing/grazing** - Grass mowed/grazed in late August and again in late January (but not too low to remove seedling rosettes) will help in removing/reducing dead/competing vegetation. Roadside mowing during the prime blooming months of Mar-May can literally kill a good wildflower display. Also, pasture lands overgrazed by livestock will often be completely barren of any wildflowers. This is particularly true of pastures grazed by goats and sheep. Deer usually do not choose native wildflowers as a food source, but where there is overcrowding and fewer food sources they will munch on native plant seedlings.

References and Resources

[WildflowerHaven Texas Wildflower Season Updates](#)

[Texas Wildflower Reports 2019](#)

[World Wildflower Reports on Facebook](#)

[Texas Wildflower Report on Facebook](#)

[Other Wildflower Resources](#)

[Wildflower Identification Resources](#)

[Texas Bluebonnet \(and other wildflower\) Routes](#)

My thanks to Mike Jones and Johnny Boyd for their efforts in scouting much of the Texas Hill Country!

Your Feedback: The wildflower travel eBooks presented here are informal guides provided by Texas Wildflower Report and EquipU LLC. We hope these guides will help you plan your visit to view and photograph our beautiful state flower, The Texas Bluebonnet and our many other wildflowers. If you have any questions, suggestions or want to report an error please use the [Feedback Form](#). **Please travel safely and respectfully!**

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