

Spring in Texas:

A Field of My Dreams

by

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Winter in Texas often means dismal gray and damp, cold weather interspersed with brief warming trends, that promise spring and then withdraw into more damp cold. Spring is a welcome change, with clear skies, balmy temperatures and lush wildflowers sprouting along highways and medians. Most of all in Texas, Spring signifies fields of bluebonnets. *Lupinus Texensis*, the Texas bluebonnet sprouts out in small patches, in large swathes and at times and in some settings there are acres and acres carpeted by the lovely indigo bluebonnet blooms. Looking for Bluebonnets is a spring time tradition in Texas and I have done my share of looking for these exquisite symbols of spring.



(This sighting thanks to Cathy Couch Alba)

There are carpets of flowers that grace the wide open spaces in the countryside, Texas bluebonnets, Indian Paintbrush and Coreopsis, Indian Blanket, Evening Primroses and on and on. Wildflower sightings begin early in April and there is a feast of color along the highways and sidewalks until mid May. Where and which flowers bloom is predicated by a lot of different factors, the timing and amount of rainfall in the fall and winter, the temperatures in the winter and spring and of course the amount and location of rainfall in the spring. This year we were all wondering if the wildflowers would be anything to brag on account of the ongoing drought in Hill Country. I recall thinking that I had never seen a lot of Indian Paintbrush and wouldn't it be just wonderful if I could locate a field with a lot of these lovely pink and red blooms. I had to remind myself that there was no point in building up anticipation and then getting dashed down.



A trip to Fredericksberg to the Wildseeds Farm and to Willow City Loop in the last weekend in March 2014 began the quest for bluebonnets. I got rather discouraged, the ravages of a dry fall and winter and a colder than normal winter seemed to have taken their toll. There were not many flowers or even rosettes to be seen. I resigned myself to fewer wildflowers this spring and was beginning to give up hope of seeing lot of wildflowers, and decided this would not be the year of my seeing a field of Indian paintbrush.



I watched the Wildflower sightings websites with mounting excitement and eagerness.

The most frequently consulted is The University of Texas Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

<http://www.wildflower.org/whatsinbloom/>

The Texas Parks and Wildlife website is another good resource. <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>

Other popular sites are www.bluebonnetlove.com, www.texasbluebonnets.com and many more.

Apparently the area to the south east of San Antonio was the best for wildflowers in 2014. The rains had been timely and huge fields of bluebonnets were being seen along State Highway 87 towards La Vernia and Stockdale in the first week of April 2014. Then more reports of bluebonnets along Hwy 97 towards Cuero and Victoria. As I drove south-southeast of San Antonio, it was like driving into wildflower paradise. There were huge fields of Texas bluebonnets juxtaposed with huge fields of mixed wildflowers and sweet patches of bluebonnets mixed in with other wildflowers.



And as I headed back on Highway 87 towards San Antonio after viewing Nature's bounty and feeling totally satisfied I came upon this field at St Mark's Lutheran Church on Highway 87. A friend had told me about it and I was sort of on the lookout for it. I was not really prepared for the sheer brilliance of a carpet of Indian paintbrush laid out alongside a simple country church. The sight was pure magic. It was completely heart stopping and brought to my knees. This was the field of my dreams and here it was manifest in real life.



(This sighting was thanks to Cathy Hood)