

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS

Lindheimer Chapter

PLANT OF THE MONTH MARCH, 2010

TEXAS BETONY, *STACHYS COCCINEA*



Texas Betony is a spring blooming perennial that continues to have some flowers throughout the summer and into fall. It grows about 1' – 3' tall, with an equal spread. The coral red flowers are a magnet for hummingbirds. **WARNING** from David Will: Because this plant is so low to the ground, cats can easily sneak up on an unwary hummingbird, which can be a serious problem with this plant. Therefore plant in landscapes with dogs, areas where cats are not abundant or in pots raised off the ground, to give the hummers more visibility and time to escape.

Texas Betony is a native of the mountains of the Trans Pecos and New Mexico and Arizona, where it is found in moist crevices of steep slopes and canyons. In the Hill Country it makes a good ground cover for shady places. It needs well drained soil, and is fairly drought tolerant when planted in the shade.

Other plants in the genus *Stachys* are known as hedge-nettles, and this plant is sometimes referred to as Scarlet Hedge-nettle. Unlike true nettles, it does not have stinging hairs. However, it does have hairy, aromatic leaves so the deer tend to leave it alone, although a hungry deer may nibble on the tender blossoms. It is available from native plant nurseries, and can be easily grown from seed.