

# NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS

## Lindheimer Chapter

### PLANT OF THE MONTH NOVEMBER, 2011

#### PRAIRIE FLAMELEAF SUMAC, *RHUS LANCEOLATA*



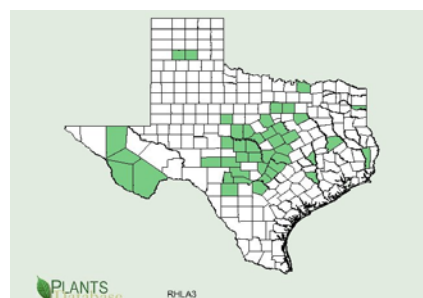
Prairie Flameleaf Sumac – Fall Color



Flower



Fruit



USDA Range Map: Texas

Prairie Flameleaf Sumac is named for (and known for) its brilliant red and orange fall foliage. A large shrub or small tree, growing 20 to 30 feet tall, it is a great ornamental that has some of the best fall color in Central Texas. Besides its great fall color, it also has large plumes of white flowers in summer, followed by clusters of red fruit in the fall. The fruit are an important food source for many species of birds and small mammals. If you can collect the fruit before the animals get to it, it makes a high Vitamin C drink that has a lemony flavor.

Prairie Flameleaf Sumac is found in Central and West Texas in rocky limestone hillsides and grasslands. In our area it is frequently seen along roadsides. As is obvious from the locations where it is found, this is a tough plant that can withstand heat, drought and cold. Although it can sucker and form thickets, it is not as aggressive as several East Texas Sumac cousins (Shining Sumac, *R. copallina*, also called Flameleaf Sumac, and Smooth Sumac, *R. glabra*). It is available in nurseries that specialize in native plants. Protect it from deer when first planted and give it supplemental water for the first year or two, until it is well established. After that it is drought tolerant.