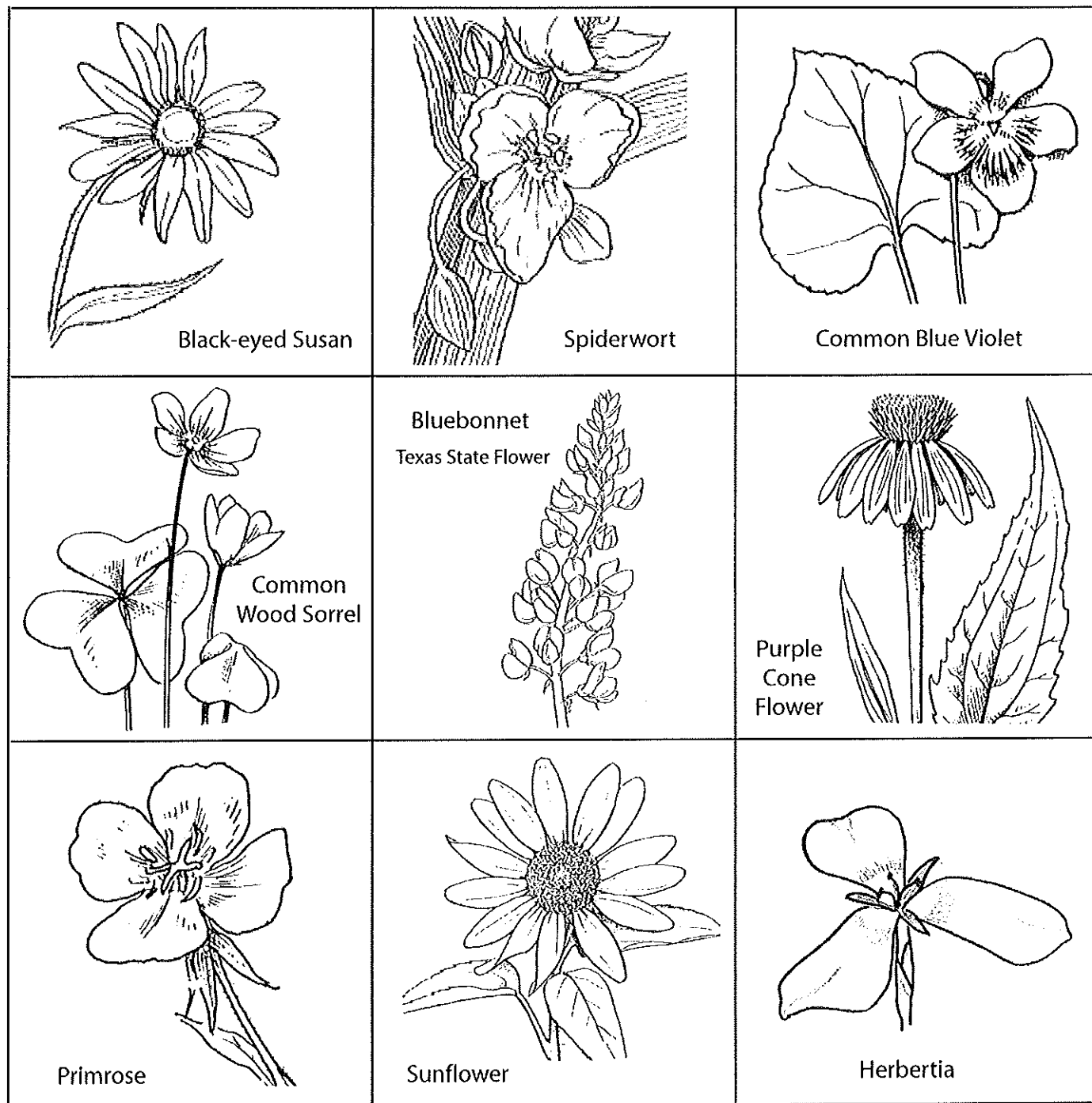


Nature Kids

Wildflower Bingo

When we look at flowers, we often notice only their main color. Hunt for these flowers in Russ Pitman Park, in your yard, or along the roadside. When you find one, take a good, close look at it. Then use your crayons, markers, or colored pencils to put ALL the colors you can see on the flower in your picture. Can you fill up the whole bingo chart with colored pictures?



Pictures adapted from Roger Tory Peterson's *Wildflower Coloring Book*.

For more information on wildflowers, check out the Texas Parks and Wildlife kids' page for wildflowers:
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/kids/wild_things/wildflowers/

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Teacher's Corner

Wild about Wildflowers

Wildflowers - Generally, we think of wildflowers as those hardy little ground-hugging plants that put their energy into producing large, showy blossoms to attract insect pollinators. Of these kinds of plants, there are 370 species or so brightening our prairies, fields, and hills each spring.

A spectacular wildflower season in Texas depends on many factors. A wet spring is essential if the wildflowers are to sprout and grow. A dry summer is best because it keeps the flowers from going to seed too early, and a wet fall makes sure the seeds will grow at the proper time. A cold harsh winter is ideal because it prevents other plants from germinating and crowding out the wildflowers.

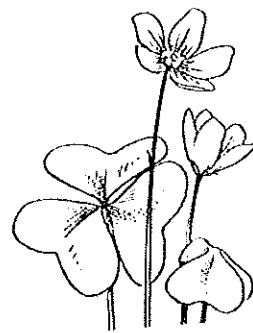


Bluebonnet

Texas' variable weather conditions make it difficult to predict peak wildflower blooming periods. However, March, April and May are traditionally recognized as prime blooming months. There is almost always something blooming somewhere in Texas, so keep your eyes open for colorful floral displays! For up-to-date information you can call the wildflower hotline: (512) 832-4059, extension 4. The hotline is in operation from mid-March to the end of May and will tell you what is blooming throughout Texas.

The Hill Country of central Texas is the most famous wildflower area, and that is where we find bluebonnets (our state flower) in profusion. But here in the Houston area, we have our own rainbow of blooms to look at and enjoy.

Russ Pitman Park is a great place to find a "rainbow" on the ground. As you stroll through the park, look for herbertia (or pleat-leaf iris) carpeting the front lawn of the Henshaw house with purple; check out the fleabane poking its small, daisy-like flowers up above the grass; or peek into pink wood sorrel flowers to find the pale green and white stripes. Look for rain lilies, blushing pink after a spring shower; or search out the white spider lilies and purple or pink spiderworts, with their long, spiky petals, scattered in the southeast yard between the big Loblolly pine and the playground. The flower garden by the south parking lot is home to Mexican hat, sunflowers, purple coneflowers and more.



Woodsorrel



Purple Coneflower

Stop by the Discovery Rooms to check out our wildflower displays and activities, borrow a guidebook, or just enjoy the color, shapes, and aromas that fill the park this spring.

In Russ Pitman Park, we stop mowing the lawns in March, to let the flowers grow, bloom and set seed. Please remember to leave the flowers growing (don't pick them!), so that we can all enjoy them this year, and they will set seed for another round of blooms next year.

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