

Catch the Bluebonnets in Texas This Spring

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By Susan Dunn

Catch the Bluebonnets in Texas This Spring by Susan Dunn, MA, The EQ Coach

If you haven't seen the wildflowers in Texas in the spring, you haven't lived! The highway medians and hillsides are full of color - bright red, yellow and blue, pink and cream - but you better look out because cars are always pulling off the side of the highway to ogle and take photographs. It's a tradition to get in your car in the spring and go look at the wildflowers. Nearly everyone in Texas has a photo of their kids in the bluebonnets.

Typically, in my photo album there's a photo of me in the bluebonnets taken by my grandmother, a photo of my sons in the bluebonnets, taken by me, and a photo of my granddaughter in the bluebonnets taken by my daughter-in-law.

Isn't it time you had a photo of your family in the bluebonnets? Why not make plans this year to have a drive in Central Texas and start a new family tradition? Bluebonnets, the state flower, grow all over the Texas Hill Country, from San Antonio up to Dallas and for two weekends in April people come from all around for what has become one of central Texas' major events.

"Don't be surprised," says an article in the Austin Statesman "to see 30 to 40 cars pulled off the road at some spots, with children squatting in neck-high fields of lupinus, better known as bluebonnets, smiling for the family camera."

In fact it's such an event, there are hotlines you can call that track sightings of wildflowers and tell you the best places: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (<http://www.wildflower.org>) - 512-832-4037, and Texas Department of Transportation - 1-800-452-9292 - which provides tourism information and also the option to hear reports on wildflower sightings throughout the state.

When you come, plan your trip to include WILDSEED FARMS (www.wildseedfarms.com), the largest working wildflower seed farm in the US.

I discovered the farm on my way to visit LYNDON B. JOHNSON STATE PARK, which is between Fredericksburg and Johnson City. I was driving along the highway, and all of a sudden cars were swerving, stopping, pulling over, and heading back. There on my left were the beautiful gardens full of

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brilliant color, and I joined in, pulling over and heading back.

Equidistant from Junction, San Antonio and Austin, Texas, and seven miles east of Fredericksburg, WildSeed Farm is open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Here's a map:
http://www.wildseedfarms.com/farm_map.html .

The farm has 200 acres of wildflowers at different stages of growth. Texas bluebonnets, red corn poppies and phlox in the spring, and cosmos, sunflowers and zinnias in the summer.

While at Wildseed Farms, you can stroll along the walking trails, observe a working farm, and then visit the market retail center and buy some seeds! There's plenty of room for the kids to run around, and when else can they see a working wildflower seed farm?

Later you can relax in the BrewBonnet Biergarten which offers beer, wine or soft drinks, ice cream, German tacos (you're on your own there!) and various snacks. In the Garten Haus, you can buy house plants, and in the Blumen Haus, fresh cut flowers are available.

One of the special events at Wildseed, "Pedernales Valley Wildflower Festival" will be held April 5–18th this year featuring the new Butterfly House with native butterflies. For more information call 1–800–848–0078 or visit them on the web. Do be aware that I'm sorry to say their photographs do not do justice to what you will see in person if you hit the Texas highways in April.

This part of Texas is filled with quaint shops and historical places, excellent food, and a welcome attitude toward tourists. There are innumerable attractions to visit, but I'll mention one if you're especially interested in flowers.

Be sure and visit the ANTIQUE ROSE EMPORIUM in San Antonio, 7561 Evers Road, 210–651–4565, open daily. Tour the grounds and the beautiful displays garden and pick up some hardy antique roses for your own garden.

Come on rose pruning day (known to some people as Valentine's Day) for a Rose Pruning & Training Seminar, February 14th, 2004. Owner and head gardener will show you how to prune, and how to train roses. Seminar begins at 10 a.m. and is FREE of charge. Go here for more information:
<http://www.antiqueroseemporium.com> .

While in the area, in San Antonio you'll find the ALAMO, SEAWORLD, FIESTA TEXAS, MISSION TRAILS and the RIVERWALK.

Over in Austin, the state capital, you'll find more wildflowers - 42 more acres – at the LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER RANCH, <http://www.wildflower.org> , and the beautiful UMLAUF SCULPTURE GARDEN & MUSEUM, <http://www.umlaufsculpture.org> , outdoors and user–friendly. Umlauf was an art instructor at the University of Texas for 40 years and donated his home, studio and more than 250 pieces of artwork to the city of Austin which maintain the lovely garden where his works are displayed. He worked in many mediums and styles, and you'll find his works displayed in the Smithsonian Institution and New York's Metropolitan Museum.

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You'll probably recognize the face of his most famous UT student, Farah Fawcett, who was often his model. An exceptionally peaceful and beautiful sculpture garden!

Also in Austin is BARTON SPRINGS (<http://www.tec.org/bartonsprings/5Ws.html>) a 1,000 foot long natural limestone pool fed by several underground springs, situated in ZILKER PARK (<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/zilker>), which also has the Zilker Eagle, a large playscape, and 400 acres of sports fields and woodlands.

Then for more scenery, take the HILL COUNTRY FLYER, a steam locomotive SP 786 manned by volunteers. There are 1-hour trips through Austin, a 33-mile ride from Cedar Park (north of Austin) to Burnet through the Hill Country and special event rides, such as murder-mystery excursions. Call 512-477-8468 for more information.

Also for the kids, there are zoos in both San Antonio and Austin.

If you choose the Dallas area, give Kelly Dunn a call. An excellent photographer, she's booking

bluebonnet photography dates already. Visit her on the web at <http://www.justimagineinc.com> .

And last, but not least, to make this a memorable excursion for the kids, the BAT EGRESS. This is something you won't see all the time. Every evening from mid-March until early November, 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats emerge from their roosts under the Congress Avenue Bridge in downtown Austin and head out over the town looking for dinner. Go here for directions: <http://www.batcon.org/discover/congress.html> . There's plenty of parking, restaurants nearby, a souvenir stand (yes, t-shirts!) but no public restrooms or concessions.

Generally the bats emerge at dusk, but "may fly late if conditions are not favorable." In early August you can see the new born pups on their first forages with their mums. You can also view them via a River Cruise.

And yes, there's a hotline. For updates and approximate emergence time, call the Austin American-Statesman/Bat Conservation hotline - 512-416-5700 (category 3636) for the latest flight times.

Here is a photograph of the people waiting (<http://www.batcon.org/discover/cab14-sm.jpg>), and here go the bats (<http://www.batcon.org/discover/cab08-sm.jpg>).

Trust me, you have never seen anything like it, and it is guaranteed to render all age groups speechless. It's very silent. Also it's VERY creepy. (And remember, you can look, but you better not touch.)

Y'all come, y'hear?

(c)Susan Dunn, The EQ Coach, <http://www.susandunn.cc> . Coaching around Emotional Intelligence for relationships, career, resilience, and personal and professional development.

Mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc for free ezine. Mailto:EQ4U-subscribe@yahoogroups.com for free daily tips on EQ.

Texas Holdem Players: Play Texas Hold em Online at the best internet sites for Texas Hold em at <http://www.texas-holdem-online-poker.com>

By Chris Ferguson

Are you looking to play Texas Holdem online? The following poker websites will allow you to play Texas Holdem on the internet.

Click on each of the links below to play Texas Hold Em online.

Party Poker – <http://www.partypoker.com/index.htm?wm=2032830>

Let me take a minute to introduce you to PartyPoker.com ...the number # 1 Texas Hold em poker site on the internet for people who like Texas Holdem!!!

Since launching in 2001, we have been the fastest growing Texas Holdem player site in the world. Thousands of players play Texas Hold em daily on our site—especially those who like to play Texas Holdem with other internet players who also like to play Texas Hold em. We offer a variety of poker games and tournaments for your pleasure for people who enjoy Texas Holdem. We also offer FREE internet Texas Holdem play at our play money tables. You can learn how to play Texas Hold em for free and see how our games/tournament work at no cost. Play access and getting started is easy. If you enjoy playing Texas Holdem games, we have something for you. Texas Holdem fun and excitement is what we are all about! To play Texas Hold Em at Party Poker, please click the following link:

<http://www.partypoker.com/index.htm?wm=2032830>

Empire Poker – <http://www.empirepoker.com/index.htm?wm=1701693>

Do you love Texas Hold em ? We bet you'll love playing Texas Holdem at Empire Poker.

Thousands of players interested in playing Texas Holdem play cards daily at Empire, and there are many good reasons why they play Texas Hold em there!

We offer a variety of Texas Hold em games and tournaments for people interested in playing poker online. We also offer FREE Texas Holdem play at our play money tables, for as long as you like. Play Texas Holdem on our free software live with other players at no cost while you learn the rules.

In addition, we make every effort to ensure a fair and safe environment for all Texas Holdem players who play poker. To play Texas Hold Em at Empire Poker, please click on the following link:

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<http://www.empirepoker.com/index.htm?wm=1701693>

Poker Room – <http://www3.pokerroom.com/?ref=4097>

Poker Room --- the #1 Website on the Internet for people who love Texas Holdem!

At Poker Room, we are committed to giving you, the Texas Hold em player, the ultimate gaming experience. That's why we provide a full free "play money" Online Demo version of our internet Texas Holdem software. It is identical to the Real Money version, so that you can get the true feel of our software before playing Texas Hold em for Real Money on the internet. You will receive \$1,000 in free play poker money to play Texas Holdem with. However, if you spend it all, your Demo Account will be replenished automatically so you can play more Texas HoldEm. No obligations, no limits – just loads of fun for the Texas Holdem fan. We offer players who love to play Texas Holdem on the internet the chance to play the most popular games and our software is easily downloaded and free of charge. The graphics are smooth and the Texas Holdem gaming is sharp, fast and hassle-free. To play Texas Holdem at Poker Room, please click on the following link:

<http://www3.pokerroom.com/?ref=4097>

Any of the above poker rooms are excellent options for those looking to play Texas Holdem...click thru to each of the links to play Texas Holdem with other poker players.

Chris "Jesus" Ferguson got his PhD in Computer Science from UCLA, specializing in artificial intelligence. His analytical mind serves him well at the poker table, and at UCLA as a guest lecturer in Game Theory.

Texas Holdem Players: Play Texas Hold em Online at the best internet sites for Texas Hold em at

<http://www.texas-holdem-online-poker.com>

Now You Can Play Texas Hold 'em At An Online Casino

Spring Break, What Is The Best Location?

How To Play Texas Holdem Poker

Family-Friendly Spring Break Tips

101 Recipes For The Deep Fryer

Organic Secrets

Starting a Successful Retail Business

Over 185 Delicious Italian Dishes

How To Overcome Dandruff

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