

Coral Honeysuckle – Reprinted from Friends of Hagerman NWR Weekly Blog, August 3, 2017 (by Nancy Cushion)

Visitors to the Butterfly Garden at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge can relax in the shady small pergola at the back of the garden. The shade is provided by a native vine, *Lonicera sempervirens*, or Coral Honeysuckle. Other common names for *L. sempervirens* are woodbine, trumpet honeysuckle, red honeysuckle, and evergreen honeysuckle.



Coral honeysuckle is a smooth, twining evergreen vine bearing dark, shiny green leaves which are white on the lower surface. The upper pair of leaves are fused together, just below the flower cluster. The tubular or trumpet shaped corolla occurs in whorls of four to six blossoms. They are usually red outside and orange inside, or rarely, all orange or yellow. Red to green twining stems fade to gray with a shreddy texture when mature. Clusters of red berries mature in September to October. Ornamentally, coral honeysuckle is well suited to climb on a fence or trellis, it is evergreen through most of Texas, and often blooms in January and sporadically throughout the growing season March to June to attract pollinators.



Coral honeysuckle is a native of East Texas and much of the eastern U.S.; the plant apparently tolerates a wide variety of soils, and once established, it requires very little, if any, watering. It is wide ranging from Connecticut to Florida, west through the south and midwest to Nebraska. For those wanting to incorporate this attractive native into their home landscape, this vine is widely available at local nurseries.



Coral honeysuckle is a larval host for the Snowberry Clearwing Moth (shown above) and Spring Azure butterfly (shown below) and is also a nectar source for butterflies and hummingbirds.



References
Native Plant Society of Texas

Texas Native Plant Database

Butterflies and Moths of North America (BAMONA) Butterflies and moths.org

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Photo credits: Hagerman NWR, BAMONA