

**Downy Forestiera** – Reprinted from Friends of Hagerman NWR Weekly Blog, June 29, 2017 (by David and Sharon Parrish)

A native, perennial Texas shrub with so many names – *Forestiera pubescens*, Texas Forsythia, Spring Herald, Spring Goldenglow, Texas Elbow Bush, Devil’s Elbow, Tanglewood, Cruzilla and Chaparral! Many of these names relate to how they grow and when they appear. This plant is found on prairies, in brush and along streams. It grows in North Central Texas to the Edwards Plateau and into the Trans-Pecos.



There are male and female plants, the male has two to five stamens surrounded by hairy bracts, while the female has yellow-green flowers with one two-lobed stigma. These are generally the first flowers to appear in the landscape blooming from late January to March.



Downy Forestiera attracts bees and butterflies. When the female develops fruits, which are blue-black in color and fleshy, birds and small animals rely on these drupes as a food source. This shrub is also the host of the larval Hairstreak butterflies and is a nectar source for bees. There are two planted in the Butterfly Garden at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge.



The Downy Forestiera is a rapidly growing plant and can reach fifteen feet tall and wide. The shrub tolerates many soil types and responds well in sun or partial shade. Once established, the plant can adapt to heat or drought. This plant can be pruned into a dense shrub or small tree with drooping branches of deciduous leaves.



#### References:

Texas Parks and Wildlife GIS Lab

Friends of Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, Butterfly Garden Plant Pages

Delene Tull and George Oxford Miller, 1991, Field Guide to Wildflowers, Trees and Shrubs of Texas

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center website

Teo Spengler, Gardening Know How: Elbow Bush Care – Information On Growing An Elbow Bush

Texas AgriLife, Texas Elbow-bush, Downy Forestiera, Spring Herald, Texas Forsythia, Spring Goldenglow,  
Tanglewood, Devil's Elbow, Chaparral

Texas SmartScape™, Elbow Bush

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