

# East Texas: It's Where We Live...



The new “Illustrated Flora of East Texas, Vol. 1” (Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Austin College, see [www.brit.org](http://www.brit.org)) has redefined, floristically speaking, where we live. All of Bastrop, not to mention Lee, Fayette and Caldwell, are part of “east Texas.”

This may come as a surprise to some readers but for most of the area naturalists this is a no-brainer, since the signs—like Loblolly Pines!—are obvious if we simply see what’s in front of our eyes. This truth was brought home to me over the past week, not by the week that I spent exploring and photographing wildflowers (and butterflies, of course) in the Big Thicket, but by a nature hike around the Stengl “Lost Pines” Biology Station on Saturday.

On Saturday I played host to Joe Marcus, Collections Manager for the National Plant Network, and Julie Krosley, Senior Horticulturalist, from the Lady Bird

Johnson Wildflower Center. For those who might not have heard, the LBJ Wildflower Center is now part of UT System, as an Organized Research Unit of the College of Natural Science at UT Austin, making our humble little biology station their “kissing cousin.”

Joe and Julie came out, a bit early as it turned out (but not too early), to see the Flowering Dogwoods, *Cornus florida*, a fairly obvious sign of our east Texas affiliation. During the course of our meanderings I was able to show them some other less obvious, but still important, signs of our “east Texas” roots, like the Carolina Puccoon (*Lithospermum carolinense*), the Soft Green-Eyes (*Berlandiera pumila*), the Sundews (*Drosera brevifolia*), and the many, many recently-rain-soaked-and-as-bright-green-as-can-be Resurrection Ferns (*Pleopeltis polypodioides*).



A new species, another east Texas affiliate, a Carolina Anemone, *Anemone caroliniana*, blooms at the Biology Station.

But the kicker and highlight for the day was our discovery of yet another east Texas “orphan,” a Carolina Anemone, *Anemone caroliniana*, blooming in the south meadow. The typical Anemone around here, Wind Flower or Ten-Petal Anemone, *Anemone heterophylla*, differs in having a very long (up to 3 inches) fruiting head that is obvious and begins to elongate even before the “petals” (actually all sepals) begin to fall.

You could have knocked me over with a spoon! What a wonderful spring ephemeral to find (when there are witnesses present, no less!) when showing the place to knowledgeable folks that came to “see a bit of East Texas.” And we did, eventually, find some early blooming Flowering Dogwoods for Joe to photograph. A good end to a perfect day.

In the future, when someone asks, just say “East Texas, yeah, we live there.”