

A Dictionary of Common Wildflowers of Texas and the Southern Great Plains



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Castilleja coccinea Indian Paintbrush Scientific Name: Castilleja, for Domingo Castillejo (fl. 1781), a Spanish botanist + coccinea, Latin for scarlet. Reference is to the color of the flowers. Common Name: Indian Paintbrush, from the appearance of the flowers that resemble a brush dipped in paint. American Indians obtained dye from this plant. This typical entry from A Dictionary of Common Wildflowers of Texas and the Southern Great Plains illustrates the synthesis the book provides between scientific and common names of the plants. Intended as a companion to field guides of common flowers in the region, this dictionary offers an opportunity to reference both names. The scientific or binomial name (the genus and species) is translated from its Latin form and its original language--Latin, Greek, European, Oriental, American Indian, even a personal name--is identified. The common names for flowers in this region are usually of English or Mexican Spanish origin, although many come from several American Indian languages. The common names of some plants, like Indian Paintbrush, are familiar to most residents of Texas and the Southern Plains. Others such as Tall Joe Pie-Weed, Clammyweed, or Sensitive Pea may come as a surprise. Dr. Holloway explains the reason for the common name in many cases. Sensitive Pea, for instance, is named sensitive because the leaves curl when touched and pea because it produces a pod. Thoroughly researched and current with contemporary botanical terms, this is a book that professionals will keep in their personal libraries as a reference tool and native plant enthusiasts will keep in their cars for identifying flora along the road.

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