



# Native Plant Diversity

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Much of the Blanco River basin is forested with ash juniper (*Juniperus ashei*), mesquite (*Prosopis sp.*) and oak (*Quercus sp.*) trees. Water-tolerant hard-woods and conifers, such as bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), pecan (*Carya illinoensis*), and elm (*Ulmus sp.*) are found in riparian stream corridors.

Herbaceous vegetation also accounts for a large amount of land cover in the basin, predominantly grasses, punctuated with shrubs and “scrub” plants<sup>1</sup>.

## Threatened and Endangered Species

Several threatened or endangered plant species are known to reside in the Blanco River basin, typically in areas classified as grassland or shrub. Additional varieties of threatened and endangered plants are found in sloping, rocky substrates and predominantly limestone bedrock outcrops.

The Basin Bellflower and Big Red Sage are only found near the headwaters in the western portion of the basin, along the river and its tributaries.

Canyon mock-orange, found throughout the basin, requires nearby mixed evergreen-deciduous canyon woodlands to thrive, while rare granite spiderwort is found only in early successional grasslands.

The Hill Country wild mercury is located in bluestem-grama grasslands near mature Live Oak stands and is limited to moderately deep clays and clay loams. The wild mercury also is found in grassland areas with partial shade from oak-juniper woodlands in gravel based soils in steep slopes and is known to grow in the basin (Figure 26)<sup>2</sup>.

Managing such habitats within the basin must include maintenance of available transition zones (from grassland to low canopy cover/scrub) and the prevention of erosion and scouring from steep slopes.

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<sup>1</sup> Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD). No Date. Interior Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum athalassos*). <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/species/thlizard/> (Accessed December 02, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Texas Parks and Wildlife. No Date. Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species of Texas. <http://gis.tpwd.state.tx.us/TpwEndangeredSpecies/DesktopDefault.aspx> (Accessed December 02, 2010).



*Figure 26 Potential or Known Presence of Rare Hill Country Wild Mercury*