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NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF:

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Fall and Winter Color with Fruiting Plants

Soon after cold weather arrives and many of our native trees and shrubs lose their leaves, we begin to notice the color provided by plants having attractive fruit. Yaupon, parsley hawthorn, and deciduous holly are three of the most outstanding native plants we have for brightly colored fruit. These plants also play a significant role in providing wildlife food during the winter months. Deciduous yaupon, *Ilex decidua*, sometimes called possum-haw holly, grows abundantly over much of Texas. The bright red to orange fruit on bare gray stems is very showy. Select a plant with at least a few fruit, since only the female plants will bear. Male pollen is usually near to insure a crop of berry-like fruit. Like many other members of the holly family, possum-haws tolerate a wide variety of soil, drainage, and moisture conditions. They really deserve much wider use in the landscape.

Yaupon, *Ilex vomitoria*, is one of our most popular native evergreens. It, too, is found over much of the state and is relatively easily grown. The shiny, berry-like fruit is a traditional favorite for Christmas decorations in Texas, as is the American holly that is grown in the eastern third of the state. Yaupon and American holly can usually be found in nurseries in several sizes.

Imported hollies such as the Burford and Chinese species, as well as pyracantha, are planted for their fall show of color. Like many plants not native to our state, they have some insect and disease problems, but most people consider them worth the trouble.

Some of the showiest of all fruiting plants in the landscape are persimmons. Both native and Japanese types thrive in much of Texas. The bright orange fruit hanging on bare limbs is quite a spectacle. Contrary to public belief, the fruit of many persimmon varieties is very sweet and palatable when fully ripe. The native species provides food for a wide variety of wildlife.

By incorporating some of the attractive, fall-fruiting plants in the home landscape, one can have plentiful amounts of color during most of the winter. In addition, the many birds that seek the plants for food and shelter will add beauty and interest to the landscape.

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