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## Spring Is Here

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Youngsters bolt for the wide expanses of grass at Dallas Arboretum.

### "The Star of Texas"

That's the theme this year for "Dallas Blooms." Look for special events, including a Southern Artisans Market, March 8-9 and for Texas treats such as trick roping, hay rides, and a square dance. The Hoffman Family Gift Shop features Texas-made products. Other favorite activities return, such as "Mommy & Me Mondays" and "Tiny Tots Tuesdays."

# Please Keep on the Grass

Spring comes in a blaze of color at Dallas Arboretum. By **Gary D. Ford**



**"We never have to"**

MARY BRINEGAR, PRESIDENT OF

Several areas of the arboretum are available for wedding ceremonies and receptions, although the bride must arrive dressed in her gown for photographs.

**I** love to visit Dallas Arboretum when it's all dressed up in its Sunday best. After places of worship empty, couples and families appear clasp quilts, coolers, and picnic baskets. Hardly do they enter when the kids spot a wide expanse of grass and streak for it—lace and ribbons and little ties flying.

"Come back here right now!" parents shout, casting furtive glances for frowning garden gendarmes ready to shoo youngsters off grass. None appear. None will. So the kids will romp across the grass, bordered by the fragile beauty of 400,000 bulbs.

"We've had this urge to erect 'Keep on the Grass' signs," comments David Forehand, vice president of Dallas Arboretum. "We prefer people to keep off the beds of bulbs and pansies but enjoy the grass."

They do that and much more in this peaceful garden in the heart of the city. It's screened from the hum of Garland Road on one side and spreads along the shore of White Rock Lake on the other.

Across the lake rises the Dallas skyline. Over there, you just know it's harried and hurried. Over here, city

life slows to an amble, and urban sounds hush to the shiver of breezes and peals of children's laughter.

### Spring: Time for Dallas Blooms

Many come now for the annual extravaganza, Dallas Blooms, March 8-April 13. (See "The Star of Texas" on page 3.) Along with the bulbs bloom 100,000 pansies, 6,000 azaleas, and other flowers under flurries of dogwoods.

Visitors enjoy lunch or tea on the terrace at the DeGolyer House and then go for a stroll. Many love A Woman's Garden, with its embroidery of flowers around flowing water, pools, and sculpture. In the 2.2-acre Lay Ornamental Garden, a water curtain splashes against native limestone walls.

The Jonsson Color Garden grows thick with azaleas. The trial gardens, including the Container Trials (see "Trial by Flower" on page 5), tests the mettle of plants against the region's climate. "If we can't kill it, no one can," Jimmy Turner, director of horticulture, assures home gardeners.

Meanwhile, kids explore a tiny Texas town. They



work on diversity.”

DALLAS ARBORETUM



Horticulturists keep tabs on plants in the trial gardens.  
BELOW: Floral displays take wing.



### “Trial by Flower”

That’s what Jimmy Turner, director of horticulture, calls the arboretum test gardens, where plants prove their mettle against the North Texas climate. These are a few of many successful container plants with comments from Jimmy.

- **Fuchsia Summer Melody Suncarlos, Summer Melody Sunfilipe:** Not a great summer plant (lived in containers February-June), but it beats the heat better than other types of fuchsias.
- **Zonal Geranium Crystal Palace:** Forget the flowers; the neon variegated foliage lasted all summer long.
- **Lobelia ‘Techno Heat’ series:** Not a plant I ever thought to see last more than a week in Texas. These lasted right up until August in full bloom.

climb into tree houses, dangle feet in fountains, and marvel at a little thatched cottage big enough to be a rich girl’s playhouse.

**A People’s Arboretum** Kids of all kinds enjoy the arboretum (it’s actually a city park), which opened in 1984. Private resources build and maintain it with a \$6.8 million annual budget. The city funds the arboretum at about \$350,000 a year. With that money, the arboretum provides tickets through city parks and recreation centers for those who could not otherwise afford gate admission.

“We never have to work on diversity,” comments Mary Brinegar, president of Dallas Arboretum. “It’s a beautiful blend of people who are all happy. Children don’t cry here. They cry when they’re going out the front gate. What a great good a garden does, not only nourishing the spirit but calming people down. If you have high blood pressure or you’re stressed to the max, just come out here. It’s horticultural therapy.”

She knows some visitors just need to be alone in a garden. Here, paths meander into quiet, semiprivate

niches and pause beside a bench or a fountain—perfect places for those who need what a garden can provide: beauty, silence, solace.

**A Garden’s Gait** When they arrive, visitors sense not just a change of place but also of pace. Adults slow to a stroll. Youngsters bolt for the grass.

Me? I’m with the kids. I slip off shoes and socks and break into a speedy amble onto the cool, green yawn of grass, until I find a good napping spot about halfway across.

It’s the Texan in us that beckons us to this green carpet. We know good grass means full streams, brimming ponds, replenished aquifers, contented cattle, and high cotton. If it’s green, so is our economy and environment. How good that Dallas Arboretum plants 400,000 bulbs to welcome spring. What a wise, Texas thing it does as well to invite visitors to come run wild on its grass. ●

**Dallas Arboretum:** [www.dallasarboretum.org](http://www.dallasarboretum.org) or (214) 515-6500.