

FP-054

TEXAS DISCOVERY GARDENS

This beautiful building of brick, Cordova cream limestone and San Saba marble debuted as the Hall of Horticulture at the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition. It is one of the 30 historic structures at Fair Park remaining from that fair. The building you see today is the result of extensive remodeling that took place in 1957, as well as additions made in the late 1980s.

Both inside the building, and in the seven-and-a-half acres of landscaped grounds behind it, you'll find 10 themed garden retreats. These include a native wildlife pond, a scent garden, a shade garden and an heirloom garden, among others. The building's south side -- which consists of large-paned glass walls that are two-stories high -- is full of exotic, tropical plants and trees. This section was originally called the "Winter Garden" and featured a fountain that sprayed colored water at night.

An exciting addition to the building is the Rosine Smith Sammons Butterfly House and Insectarium. Opened in 2009, this two-story section houses hundreds of free-flying butterflies, which you are welcome to photograph.

Texas Discovery Gardens also offers visitors a wealth of information on how to restore, conserve and preserve natural environments in urban areas. This is the home of the first public garden in the state of Texas to be certified 100 percent organic by the Texas Organic Research Center. The gardens offer workshops and guided tours that provide expert advice on using native and adapted plants to create backyard habitats for butterflies, birds and other native wildlife. You will also find inside a 600-seat auditorium, which you can rent for special occasions.

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