



MAYPOPS, or passion flowers, grow along the roadsides in our county.

PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

## Summer Flowers

Plants managing to live along the seashore must find protection from the constant bombardment of the wind and salt spray. Some plants find this protection by growing just behind the dunes or in sheltered dune "pockets." During the summer months some of these are in bloom and add some vivid color to the gray and green settings of the dunes.

Many summer flowers have yellow or reddish-orange flowers. The maypop or passion flower is one exception; its 2-3 inch diameter flower is purple with five petals and elongated fringes at the center. The small melon-shaped fruits are about 1-2 inches long. When crushed, the fruits make a loud "pop!" Maypops are found along roads, fences and behind dunes.

The phlox is an annual herb growing up to about 12 inches tall. The flowers can be white, pink or red and have five petals. Look for phlox along road shoulders and in dunes back from the oceans. Originally these were a native of Texas and probably escaped from cultivation before finding our area ideal for their growth.

The prickly pear cactus, or Indian fig, is a perennial succulent we find growing low in the dune areas. Flat, jointed "pads" have tiny leaves for a brief time in the spring and yellow flowers about 2-3 inches in early summer. Fruit is purplish-red and pear shaped. Pads and fruit are covered with many tiny spines for protection. Fruit is edible if peeled or if the spines are removed by rubbing with a cloth or, as the Indians did, with a handful of grass.



Bill Faver

The Gaillardia or blanket flower is probably our most colorful flower in bloom on the beaches. This, too, was a cultivated plant and escaped to grow abundantly in the wild. Flowers are about 1 inch in size and are red or reddish orange, orange-brown, or maroon tipped with orange. Gaillardia

are members of the aster family and sometimes appear as solid yellow or orange. Wild plants grow to about 12 inches tall, but some cultivated varieties grow much taller. The plants are easily grown from seed and multiples rapidly to "blanket" an area.

Most of these flowers need hot, sunny days and cool nights to do their best and they seem to thrive in the hot sun on our sandy dune soils. They not only beautify our environment; they help hold the dune sands in place, furnish foods for insects and birds, and help remind us of the rich variety of life we find along the edge of the sea.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Enjoys Weekly Golf Column

To the editor:

I want you to know how much I enjoy Will Cockrell's weekly column, "Willgolf." I save all his articles; that is, if my wife doesn't toss the paper out before I have taken my clipping.

You should incorporate all his articles into a book. I believe it would sell. Perhaps the Beacon could offer a supplement on golf teachings sometime.

As a former golf coach (New Jersey), I can well appreciate what a job he must be doing with the kids. I enjoyed coaching so much because year after year you can see your students mature and turn out so well

in the world.

Just had to say thanks and keep up the good work.

Gene Bacquet  
Shallotte



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