

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R5137 MMS-D

H.C.R. 71
By: Bonnen (Jackson)
Administration
4/29/2005
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The State of Texas has customarily recognized a variety of official symbols as tangible representations of the state's culture and natural history. Like the bluebonnet and the pecan tree, Texas purple sage (*Leucophyllum frutescens*) is indigenous to the Lone Star State and a treasured part of the Texas landscape; also known as cenizo, Texas silverleaf, barometer bush, and Texas ranger, the plant grows naturally on the Edwards Plateau and the South Texas Plains. This hardy evergreen was first described by Jean Louis Berlandier, a botanist who collected specimens of Texas flora in the late 1820s and early 1830s; bearing silvery gray to green foliage, the shrub bursts into color year-round soon after a rain, with blossoms varying from purple to lavender, pink, blue, and white.

Native Americans brewed a pleasant herbal tea from Texas purple sage and used it to treat chills and fever; the shrub also provides forage for cattle, protection for birds, and a nesting place for songbirds, including the state bird of Texas, the mockingbird; in addition, the plant serves a multitude of design functions, working well as an ornamental shrub or as a hedge, screen, windbreak, or foundation planting. Texas purple sage has been described as a plant that "can face droughts, freezes, high winds, salt spray, hungry deer, and blazing heat and keep right on performing beautifully," and such fortitude is a quality highly admired in the Lone Star State.

In view of this plant's important role in the ecology of Texas and its usefulness to the people of this land from ancient to modern times, it is altogether fitting that the Texas purple sage be appropriately recognized.

RESOLVED

That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate Texas purple sage (*Leucophyllum frutescens*) as the official State Native Shrub of Texas.