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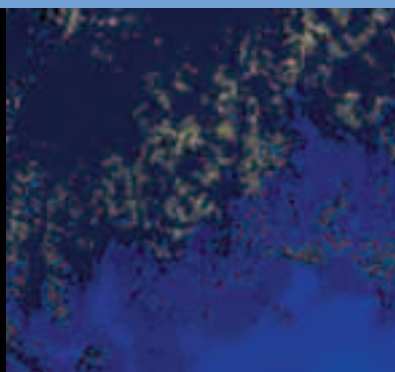
BARATARIA-TERREBONNE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

Attracting Wildlife with native plants



Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

RESIDENTS' GUIDE

The Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary is located between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers in southeastern Louisiana. Having been recognized as an estuary of national significance, a National Estuary Program was established here in 1991 to help build consensus to preserve and protect our unique environment and culture.

Estuaries are areas where freshwater from lakes, rivers, bayous, and streams meet with the saltwater of the sea. This mixing of habitat types and water chemistries make estuaries some of the most ecologically productive places on Earth.

The Residents' Guide series was developed to promote ecologically friendly land use practices by landowners and residents of our estuary. No matter how large or small the property, everyone can contribute to the ecological integrity of the region by using native plants to create habitats that are attractive to wildlife.

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Cover Photo: Tiffany Hawkins

why attract wildlife

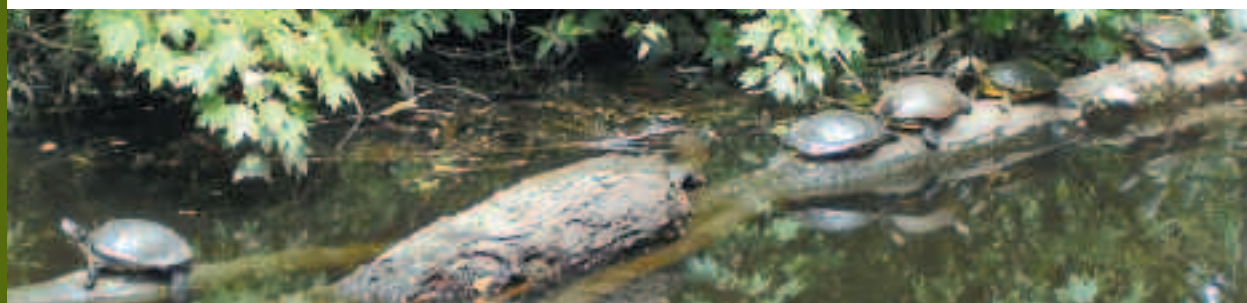
Carolina Wren: David Cagnolatti

The Urban Forest

Louisiana's wild habitats, once vast and teeming with wildlife, are being lost to subsidence, erosion, and urban and industrial development. Our remaining wild areas are shrinking and becoming more divided and isolated. But humans can have a positive impact on the environment as well. The plants we put in our cities and towns and the animals that are attracted to them make up habitats known as urban forests. These areas are vitally important because they reconnect the remaining patchwork of divided wild habitats. Regardless of your interest in plants or wildlife, your own backyard is a part of the urban forest. By carefully considering what plants to use, you can greatly increase the wildlife habitat value there.

Our Cultural Heritage

All of the suggested plants in this book are native to southern Louisiana, with most occurring in the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary. The native plants and animals around us define our "sense of place," forming the basis of our cultural identity. By using native plants instead of exotic ones to create habitats that are welcoming to local wildlife, we are sustaining our ecological integrity, our cultural heritage, and our sense of place.



wildlife needs...

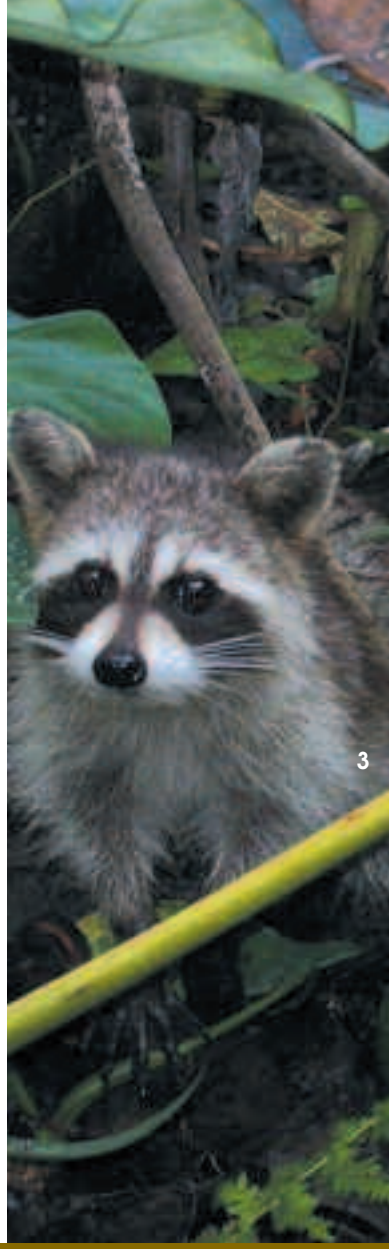
Mimicking Nature

Ideally, the urban forest should be similar to a wild ecosystem in its diversity. Natural ecosystems have evolved over thousands of years through complex interactions among living things and their surroundings. The result is that wild areas usually contain an extremely wide variety of plant and animal life. This diversity is the key to valuable wildlife habitat whether in a natural ecosystem or the urban forest. Keep this in mind when purchasing plants. A few plants of different types will be more attractive to wildlife than many plants of the same type. What you might lose in symmetry or tidiness you will gain in wildlife habitat value.

The Essentials

Just like humans, animals require certain basic needs for survival. Your backyard, stocked with native plants and a source of water, can provide each of these requirements. Put simply, wildlife will be most attracted to a garden that provides the following three essential elements:

1 food 2 habitat 3 water



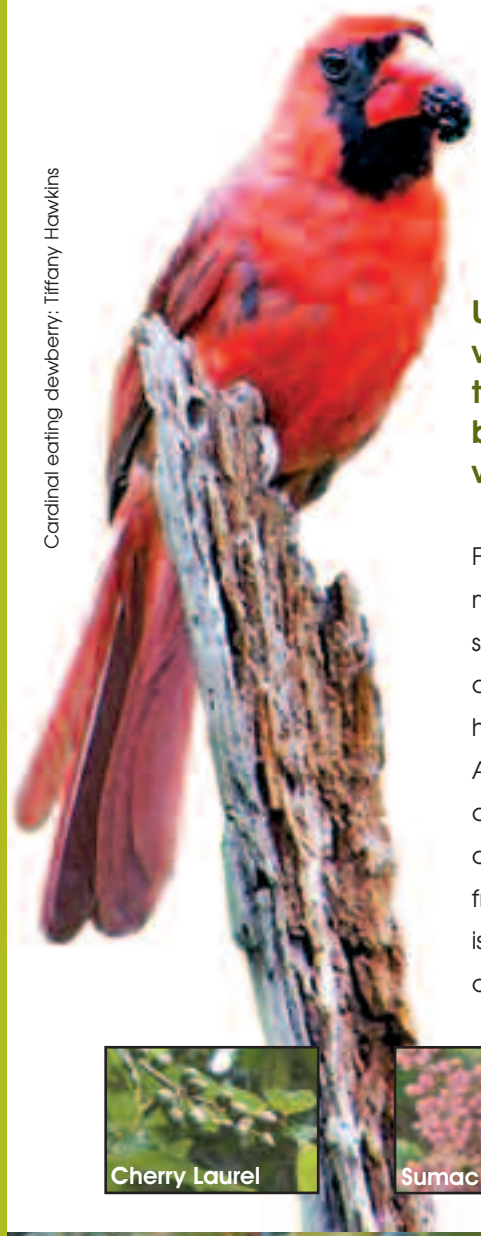
Raccoon Photo: Dennis Demcheck

Native versus Exotic

Native plants and animals of our estuary co-evolved here over countless generations. They are interdependent; plants need animals to help fertilize them and animals need plants for food and shelter. Exotic plants, which originate from other parts of the world, did not co-evolve with local wildlife, so those interdependent relationships never formed. Compared to native plants, exotics are generally less attractive to local wildlife and less likely to survive seasonal extremes in rainfall and temperature. In addition, exotics have the potential to become invasive pests, spreading rapidly and destroying the habitat value of entire ecosystems.

Keep in Mind

- The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service is an excellent source of information about native plants. They can help you identify species that will grow best on your particular site. www.lsuagcenter.com
- Become familiar with the growth habits of the plants you choose. Choose plants appropriate to your soil conditions, sunlight and drainage, and place them in areas that can accommodate their future size and shape.
- Although native plants are well adapted here and require little or no maintenance, some minimal watering, weeding and mulching will produce extremely vigorous specimens.
- Use your garden's own leaf litter as mulch to enrich the soil and help retain moisture. This not only provides habitat for beneficial insects and other wildlife, but also reduces the effort of bagging and the amount of yard waste going to landfills.
- Native plants have natural defenses against pests, so the use of pesticides can be reduced or eliminated. If you want to attract wildlife, don't poison their food.



Cardinal eating dewberry: Tiffany Hawkins

1food

Usually we think of fruits, nuts, or vegetables as food– but flowers, leaves, twigs, sap, pollen, nectar, and even bark can provide nourishment for visiting wildlife.

Food produced by plants is sometimes referred to as mast. Hard mast includes acorns, nuts, and hard-shelled seeds, while soft mast can be fruits, berries, or flowers. Some animals might also consume herbage or browse, such as leaves, twigs, or buds. Again, variety is the key. Try to provide both hard and soft mast but also consider the seasons. There is a wide range of time when a plant's flowering and fruiting can occur. Choosing a variety of plant types is a good way to ensure that you will have food production throughout the seasons.

Cherry Laurel

Sumac

Holly

Magnolia Seed

Muscadine, a native grape

food-producing native plants to attract wildlife throughout the seasons


Bald Cypress

There are many native plants to choose from. These are locally available and known to grow well in southern Louisiana.

fruits & flowers *soft mast*

	Native Plant	Food Production
Large Trees	Hackberry	Fall
	Catalpa	Fall
	Red Mulberry	Fall
	Black Cherry	Summer
	Eastern Red Cedar	Winter
	Persimmon	Fall
Medium/Small	Roughleaf Dogwood	Summer
	Cherry Laurel	Winter
	Parsely Hawthorn	Fall
	Hollies	Fall
	Red Bay	F & W
	Native Plums	Summer
	Sumacs	F & W
	Wax Myrtle	Fall
	Mayhaw	Spring
Shrubs	Sparkleberry	Winter
	Spice Bush	Fall
	Common Serviceberry	Summer
	American Beautyberry	Fall
	Arrowwood	Summer
	Elderberry	S & F
	Huckleberry	Spring
	Wahoo	Fall
Vines	Dewberry	Spring
	Coral Honeysuckle	Summer
	Native Grapes	S & F
	Trumpet Vine	Fall
	Virginia Creeper	Summer

seeds & nuts *hard mast*

	Native Plant	Food Production
Trees	Bald Cypress	F & W
	Oaks	F & W
	Red Maple	Spring
	Green Ash	S & F
	Pumpkin Ash	Sp & S
	Elms	Sp & S
	American Hornbeam	Summer
	Pecans	Fall
	Hickories	Fall
	Black Walnut	Fall
	Pines	S & F
	Red Buckeye	F& W
Legumes	Sweet Acacia	F & W
	Honey Locust	F & W
	Partridge Pea	Summer
	Rattlebox	Fall
	Coral Bean (Mamou Plant)	S & F
	Indigo Bush	Summer
	Baptisia (False Indigo)	S & F
Groundcover	Switchgrass	S & F
	Gamagrass	Fall
	Walter's Millet	S & F
	Native Panicum	Summer


Sweet Acacia

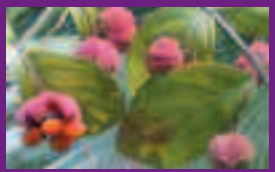

Oak Acorn


Pine Cone


Huckleberry


Parsley Hawthorne


American Beautyberry


Wahoo


Wax Myrtle

habitat

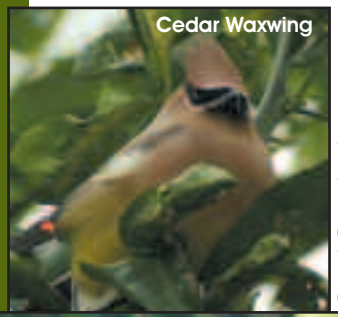

Michael Massimi
Eastern Gray Squirrel

Winter can be difficult for wildlife as deciduous trees drop their leaves and cover becomes scarce. Evergreen plants provide year round cover from weather and predators.

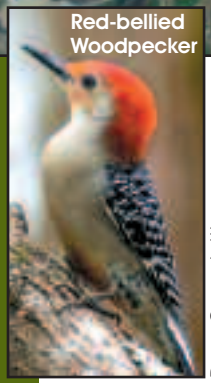
Evergreen Trees
Live Oak
Southern Magnolia
Sweetbay Magnolia
Eastern Red Cedar
Red Bay
Spruce Pine
Slash Pine
Loblolly Pine
Shortleaf Pine
Longleaf Pine
American Holly
Cherry Laurel

Evergreen Shrubs
Wax Myrtle
Dahoon Holly
Yaupon Holly
Inkberry
Florida Anise
Dwarf Palmetto

Evergreen Vines
Yellow Jessamine
Coral Honeysuckle
Crossvine


Cedar Waxwing
Dennis Demcheck


Blue Jay
Celeste Regal


Red-bellied Woodpecker
Dave Cagnolatti

Healthy habitats have both open space and cover.

Plants can be placed around or through open spaces to create habitat boundaries that are attractive to many species of birds and wildlife.

Different wildlife species often prefer specific vertical levels of the urban forest for foraging and nesting. The ideal wildlife garden has a tall canopy or overstory, understory trees and shrubs, vines, groundcover, and open space. Select plants that will provide each of these niches.

In addition to living plants, brush piles, dead trees, stumps, and snags make great habitat. Decaying wood attracts insects that are food for wildlife, and cavity-dwelling animals such as woodpeckers and small mammals make homes there.

As developmental sprawl gobbles up valuable natural habitat, the need to provide additional habitat is critical to a healthy sustainable urban forest. Encourage your neighbors to join you in creating and promoting a wildlife-friendly urban forest.

Overstory
Midstory
Understory
Groundcover

Bluet Damselfly

Dennis Demcheck

water3

Water is a critical element of your back yard habitat.

Any effort to attract wildlife to your yard will be greatly enhanced by providing a clean water source. Even with limited space, a pedestal birdbath or shallow water dish can provide wildlife with the necessary water for drinking and bathing. Wetland plants such as bulltongue or pickerelweed can be placed in poorly drained sites, ditches, or swales. Larger yard spaces can accommodate ponds or water gardens. Ideally, a pump should be used to keep pond water moving. Moving water will create a sound attractive to wildlife. Mosquitoes will be kept in check by amphibians, reptiles, small fish, and predaceous insects such as dragonflies, damselflies, and mayflies. Native submerged plants such as fanwort or coontail will help keep the water oxygenated and minimize algae growth.

Never release exotic aquarium plants or animals to the wild. They may become invasive and harmful to the estuary.

Suggested Native Pond Plants

Wetland	Floating	Submerged
Bulltongue	American Lotus	Coontail
Marsh Mallow	Fragrant Water Lily	Fanwort
Pickerelweed	Spatterdock	Small Pond Weed
Swamp Lily	Water Shield	Southern Naiad

Pickerelweed

◄ Fragrant Water Lily is a native alternative to the invasive water hyacinth.

natural pest control

Green Anole
Tiffany Hawkins

Avoid using chemical herbicides and pesticides.

They can be effective at removing pests, but doing so decreases your garden's attractiveness to wildlife by destroying key components of the foodweb. It may be preferable to tolerate some leaf damage rather than spraying chemicals. Living forms of pest control will eventually take up residence if you allow nature to take its course.

Beneficial Insects Some people perceive all insects to be pests, but many species are beneficial. They prey upon garden pests, provide food for other animals, and help pollinate plants. A diverse array of flowering trees, shrubs, and other plants will help attract beneficial insects.

Needham's Skimmer
Dennis Demcheck

Herps (Reptiles and Amphibians) Herps are voracious predators of garden pests. Frogs, toads, and lizards are common and will eat mosquitoes, roaches, snails and slugs. To attract herps, provide a ground-level water source and some hard shelter such as brush piles or broken overturned flowerpots.

Gulf Coast Toad
Tiffany Hawkins

Bats Louisiana is home to at least 10 species of bat, many of which will roost in suburban areas. Bats aren't as menacing as popular culture would have you believe, except to insects. A single bat can consume up to 1200 mosquito-sized insects in one day! Some of our bat species roost in large trees with Spanish moss, but most make homes in tiny cavities in trees or buildings.

G.L. Twiest,
American Society of
Mammalogists, LA DWF

Big Brown Bat

Beneficial Insects
Ladybugs
Lacewings
Ground Beetles
Damselflies
Dragonflies
Mayfly Larvae

Herps
Green Anole
Five-lined Skink
Ground Skink
Gulf Coast Toad
Green Tree Frog
Cricket Frog

Bats
Southeastern Bat
Eastern Pipistrelle
Hoary Bat
Big Brown Bat
Northern Yellow Bat
Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat
Eastern Red Bat
Evening Bat
Seminole Bat
Brazilian Free-tailed Bat

You can increase the chances of attracting bats by building a roost for them. Visit **invasive.btnep.org** for bat house resources.

Five-lined Skink
Dennis Demcheck

Barataria-Terrebonne first land they see

Painted Bunting

Charlie Hohorst

Indigo Bunting

David Cagnolatti

Louisiana sits atop one of the most important migratory pathways in the world.

Whether traveling across the open gulf or overland, many artic and tropical migrants rely on our rich estuary for water and food. Millions each year arrive at our coast exhausted and hungry.

Land loss, Louisiana's gravest environmental crisis, has dramatically impacted migratory birds. Coastline recession due to the disappearance of barrier islands, forested ridges, and wetlands makes migration to the coast more perilous, as birds have to fly longer distances with less abundant sources of food and fresh water.

By helping to maintain a healthy urban forest with appropriate food-producing native plants, you can provide critically needed habitat for migrating birds and other wildlife.

Coastal Indian Blanket: Celeste Regal

Scarlet Tanager: Bill Bergen

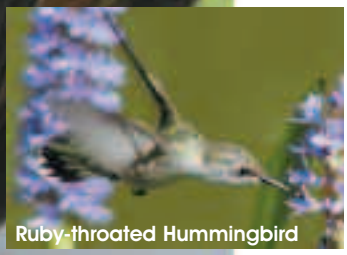
Some of the best bird watching in the world is in our estuary. Check **birds.btnep.org** for great birding links and resources.

habitat for hummingbirds

The right plants can attract hummingbirds to your garden.

At least fifteen species of hummingbirds migrate through the United States each year, and eight of those are found in the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary. Most species follow long established routes based on the flowering schedules of native plants.

Hummingbirds do eat small insects, but feed mainly on the nectar of flowers. Supplying an abundance of flowers that bloom throughout the growing seasons will provide a constant supply of nectar. Hummingbirds are most attracted to tubular red to orange flowers such as trumpet vine and coral honeysuckle, but will visit a variety of purple, blue, yellow and white flowers, especially when planted in combination with red to orange flowers. Ideally, trees and shrubs for perching, roosting, or nesting should be located near food sources.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird
John Hartgerink

Do not use chemical pesticides. They can poison or eliminate the insects that supplement hummingbirds' diets.

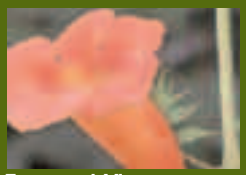
Native plants that attract Hummingbirds

Bee Balm	Coral Bean (Mamou)	Morning Glory
Cardinal Flower	Crossvine	Red Buckeye
Coral Honeysuckle	Maypop	Trumpet Vine

Buff-bellied Hummingbird: Dennis Demcheck

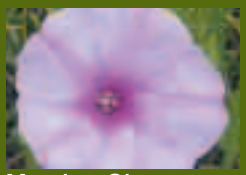
Hummingbirds of the Barataria-Terrebonne

Allen's	Buff-bellied
Anna's	Calliope
Black-chinned	Ruby-throated
Broad-tailed	Rufous



Trumpet Vine

Maypop



Morning Glory

Coral Honeysuckle

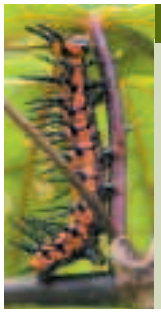
Hackberry Emperor: Dennis Demcheck

the butterfly garden

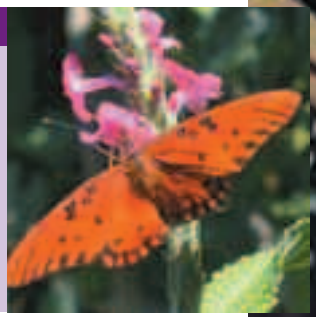
Host plants provide habitat and food for caterpillars, nectaring plants provide food for butterflies.

Butterflies feed on nectaring plants, and lay their eggs on host plants. After hatching from eggs, the larvae, or caterpillars, begin feeding on the flowers and leaves of the host plant. They grow quickly and eventually crawl away to find a sheltered location to spin a cocoon. The pupa, or chrysalis, develops inside the cocoon and eventually emerges as an adult butterfly, or imago, beginning the life cycle again.

Be sure your butterfly garden includes both host and nectaring native plants.



Host Plant	Butterfly
Black Cherry	Tiger Swallowtail, Red-spotted Purple Snout
Hackberry	Question Mark, Hackberry and Tawny Emperor
Maypop	Zebra Longwing, Gulf and Variegated Fritillary
Native Milkweeds	Monarch
Oaks	Juvenal's Dusky Wing, Horace's Dusky Wing
Paw Paw	Zebra Swallowtail
Spice Bush	Spice Bush Swallowtail
Willow	Viceroy, Mourning Cloak
Wax Myrtle	Red-banded Hairstreak



Gulf Fritillary Caterpillar
Tiffany Hawkins

Gulf Fritillary Imago
Dr. Charles Allen

Nectaring Plants

Fall
Ageratum
Cardinal Flower
Goldenrod
Ironweed
Maypop
Native Asters
Pickerelweed
Sneezeweed
Swamp Sunflower
White Boltonia

Spring
Bee Balm
Coreopsis
Gulf Coast Penstemon
Moss Verbena
Native Salvias
Native Verbenas
Obedient Plant
Phlox
Western Yarrow

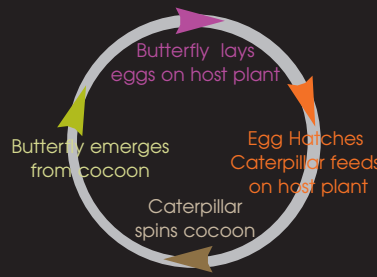
Summer
Black-eyed Susan
Blazing Star
Blue Mist Flower
Buttonbush
Horsemint
Indian Blanket
Joe-Pye Weed
Native Milkweeds
Prairie Coneflower
Purple Coneflower
Stoke's Aster
Wild Petunia

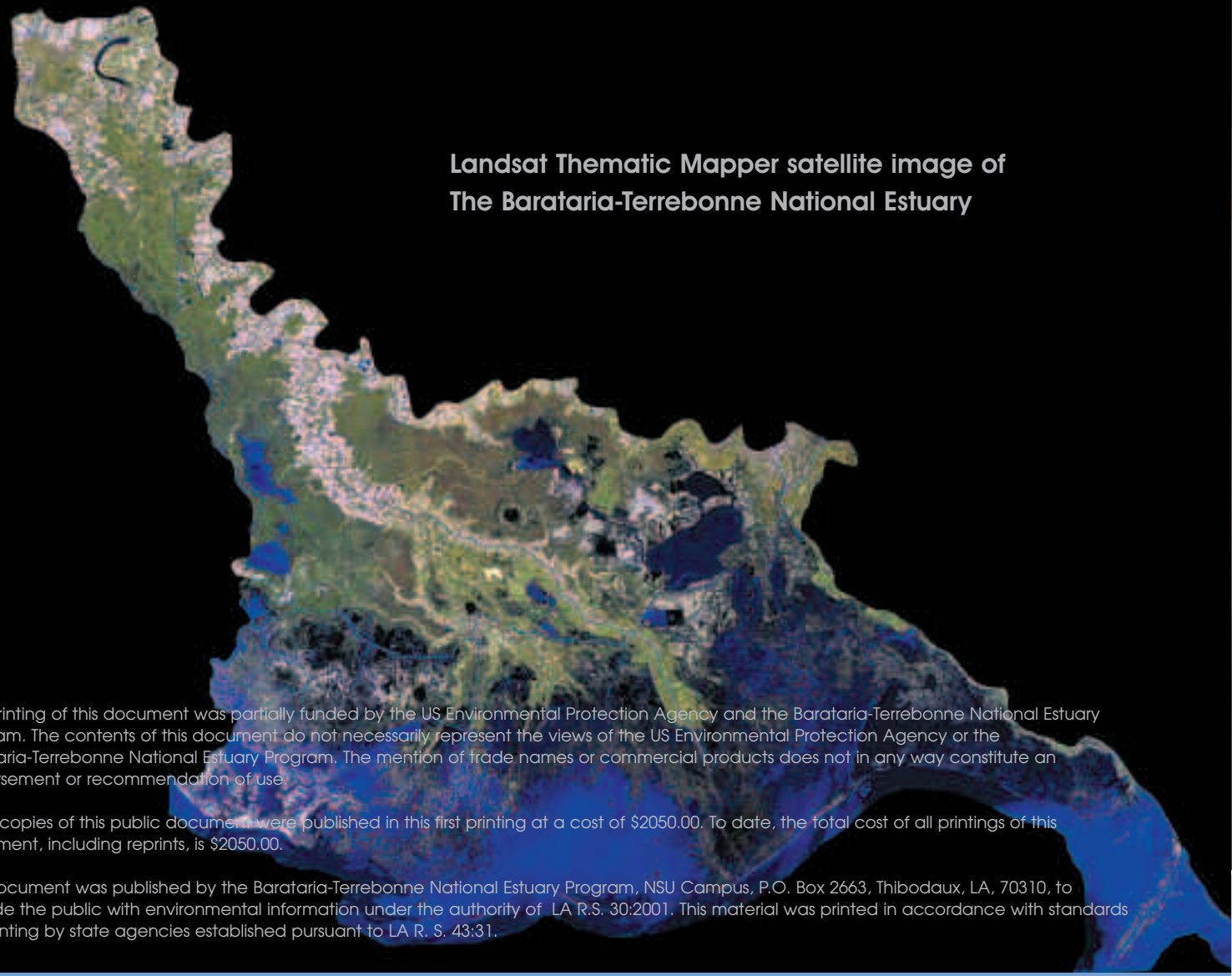
Purple Coneflower

Phlox

Buttonbush

Stoke's Aster





Landsat Thematic Mapper satellite image of
The Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary

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