

## Characteristics of the Cross Timbers Region

Once a rural area thriving on agricultural practices such as cotton, peach, corn farming, and cattle ranching, the Cross Timbers Region is an area that was thickly wooded with Post and Blackjack Oaks and a mixture of prairies. This area covers portions of Kansas, Oklahoma and north central Texas. It also served as a north-south travel corridor for Native Americans so that they could remain hidden on their journey. For settlers, the Cross Timbers Region was a landmark that signaled the beginnings of Indian Territories and the western frontier.

Ecologically, the Cross Timbers Region serves as habitat for large populations of mammals and birds. Much of this can be attributed to the area's combination of ecological characteristics provided by heavily forested areas and prairies. One of the largest and most common of all wildlife living in the Cross Timbers Region is the white tail deer. Deer sustain large populations due to the abundant food sources associated with oak forests and prairie habitats. The area continues to provide wildlife with an adequate water supply through creeks and streams. The availability of water has been enhanced by the development of constructed lakes, ponds, and stock tanks for watering cattle, and agricultural uses.



The Town of Flower Mound is located in the southeastern finger of the Cross Timbers Region. This area is typically dominated by Post (*Quercus stellata*) and Blackjack Oaks (*Quercus marilandica*). These two species of trees are drought-tolerant, low in stature, wind sculptured, slow growing, and poorly suited for urbanized areas. Originally, these trees were found in areas affiliated with tall grass prairies, however, over time much of the prairie areas have been sodded with Bermuda grass and seeded with Bahalia grass for grazing purposes.



Other tree species affiliated with the Cross Timbers Region include Sassafras, Red oak, American holly, Red maple, Cedar elm, Bois d'arc, Locust, Chittimwood, Mesquite, Black hickory and Eastern red-cedar. Many of these trees thrive in areas that are not traditionally viewed as prime areas for urbanization, often growing on rugged terrain with sandy coarse textured soil or steep rocky terrain.

NOTE: Much of this information is from- Richard V. Francaviglia. *The Cast Iron Forest: A natural and cultural history of the North American Cross Timbers*. University of Texas Press, Austin, 2000.