

The True Origin Story about the El Paso Poppies

- **The 1931 Campaign:** The poppies are not native wild growth; they stem from a 1931 public beautification campaign. [1, 2]
- **The Proposal:** Local businessman W.G. Roe suggested planting poppy seeds on the mountain slopes to boost tourism and create a landmark attraction like Texas bluebonnets. [1, 2]
- **Community Effort:** The *El Paso Herald-Post* raised funds through public donations, gathering enough money to buy roughly 200 pounds of seeds for more than 50 acres. [1, 2, 3]
- **The Planting:** Groups like the Boy Scouts and the Ladies of Fort Bliss scattered the seeds across the mesas and foothills. [1, 2]

Myths and Legends

Over the decades, many myths replaced the historical record. Popular local legends claimed the seeds were dropped by: [1, 2]

- U.S. Army National Guard training maneuvers.
- A wealthy widow mourning her late husband.
- A mysterious aerial seed drop from a helicopter or crop-duster airplane. [1, 2]

The Season and Castner Range

- **Blooming Timeline:** The flowers typically emerge between late January and early April, stretching into mid-May if sufficient spring rains fall. [1]
- **Castner Range:** Many of the best poppy fields grow around the Castner Range National Monument, a former military training site. [1, 2]
- **Poppies Fest:** The [El Paso Museum of Archaeology](#) hosts an annual celebration every March to highlight the area's natural beauty and history. [1, 2]
- **Important Rule:** The Mexican gold poppy (*Eschscholzia californica ssp. mexicana*) is toxic if eaten and vital for local pollinators, so visitors should never pick the flowers. [1, 2]