



The Sabal

www.nativeplantproject.org

Re-creating the Garden of Eatin’

Edible Fruits for Man and Beast—

by Christina Mild

Eating fruit from bush, tree or vine is a delight. Spring is an excellent time to add fruit-bearing plants to the landscape. Demonstration gardens and publications concerning such species are warranted, as many would utilize such knowledge: *Scouts and brownie troops learning survival skills, teachers planning schoolyard plantings, grandparents planning to share with grandchildren, young parents planning child-safe landscaping, winter Texans selecting*

fruiting plants to survive through a long summer absence. Perhaps even yourself.

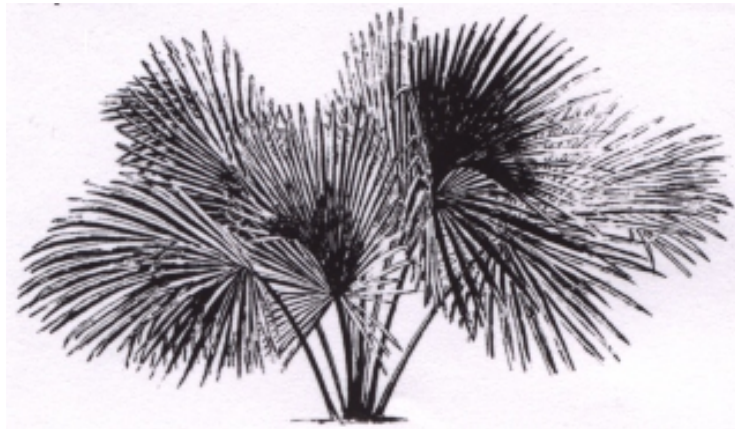
Notes of caution: It is important to consume small quantities of unfamiliar fruits to avoid stomach upset. Please note that several poisonous fruits are also native to the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas.

<p>Thornless fruit-bearers</p>	<p>Growing notes:</p>	<p>Fruiting attributes:</p>
<p><u>Anacua</u>, Sugarberry <i>Ehretia anacua</i></p>	<p>Long-lived, large tree provides dense shade. Initially is slow growing. Dark green foliage. Medium water requirements.</p>	<p>Fruit is sweet when orange, but becomes soapy tasting when over-ripe. Produces ¼” fruit after rain. Aromatic bloom clusters.</p>
<p><u>Chapote</u>, Texas Persimmon <i>Diospyros texana</i></p>	<p>Small evergreen tree with beautifully smooth, peeling bark. Requires good drainage.</p>	<p>1’ fruit. Ripe when almost black. Very tasty. Females bear fruit once per year. Good for jam.</p>
<p><u>Fiddlewood</u>, Negrito <i>Citharexylum berlandieri</i></p>	<p>Evergreen. Fast-growing and adaptable. Tall shrub or tree. Foliage develops attractive orange coloration during stress.</p>	<p>Some plants non-fruiting. Water for frequent fruiting. Attractive clusters of ¼” orange fruits ripen to black. Date-like flavor.</p>
<p><u>Stinky Passionflower Vine</u> <i>Passiflora foetida</i></p>	<p>Groundcover or climbing vine prefers full sun. Devoured by Gulf Fritillary caterpillars. Aromatic, disagreeably to some.</p>	<p>Delicately beautiful flowers followed by 1” yellowish fruits. Many seeds; flesh is juicy, tart and sweet. Continuous fruiting with ample irrigation.</p>
<p><u>Sugar Hackberry</u>, Palo Blanco <i>Celtis laevigata</i></p>	<p>Tall, attractive tree. Prone to root-rot. Reseeds easily and abundantly.</p>	<p>¼" fruit with thin hard covering. Date-like flavor. Ripe when dark brown. Fall fruiting.</p>
<p><u>Texas Torchwood</u> <i>Amyris texana</i></p>	<p>Aromatic 3-leaflet evergreen foliage. Slow to establish. Forms tall shrub in full sun. Tolerates shade.</p>	<p>Flowers after rain. Clusters of ripe fruits are blue-black, citrus flavor. Attracts hummingbird-like hawkmoths in early evening.</p>

<p>Wild <u>Tomato</u> <i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i> var. <i>cerasiforme</i></p>	<p>Full sun preferred. Will re-seed. Short-stature herbaceous mound or groundcover.</p>	<p>¾” yellow fruit throughout warm season. Small but tasty. Adored by wildlife.</p>
<p>Edible but not tasty: Anacahuita (Wild Olive), Barbados Cherry (Xochtatl), Turk’s Cap (Manzanita), David’s Milkberry (Perlilla). Very hot but edible: Chile pequin. Edible but pungent: Mountain Torchwood.</p> <p>Next month: <i>Thorny fruit-bearing natives.</i></p> <p>The author would be pleased to receive additional data the LRGV’s native edibles. She can be contacted by email at: < mild.christina@gmail.com> Mailing address: 2901 Clifford St., Harlingen, TX 78550-8542. Mild (M.S. Biol. Sci.) volunteers in native plant restoration and preservation projects and locally-relevant natural history education. [www.riodeltawild.com]. <i>Technical Assistance</i> provided by Mike Heep [www.heepsnursery.com]</p>		







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Native Plant Rescue! The Valley Nature Center will rescue native plants about to be destroyed by construction companies, developers, or no longer wanted by home owners. Call 956-969-2475.

Nature Happenings Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas

For a comprehensive calendar of Nature Happenings go to RGV Nature Coalition at www.rgvnaturecoalition.org Scroll down to and click on Nature Events Calendar on right side

Sabal Palm Grove Sanctuary— Native plant presentation and tour by Joseph Krause – every weekday at 10 a.m. Pre-registration required – call (956) 541-8034. Or go to www.tx.audubon.org/centers/sabal

Laguna Atascosa NWR— Nature BIKE RIDES on Saturdays from 8 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. and Nature WALKS on Sundays from 8 a.m. - 10 a.m. Call for details: (956) 748-3607.

Santa Ana NWR— Tram Tours of the park until the end of April. Fees: \$3 for adults and \$1 for 12 years-old and under. Guided Nature WALKS are available. Call for details: (956) 784-7500.

Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and World Birding Center — Bird Walks Saturday 9:30 a.m. Native Plant Landscaping. 714 Raul Longoria Rd., Edinburg, TX (956) 381-9922.

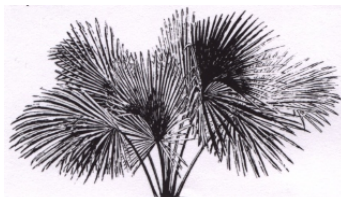
Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park & World Birding Center — Butterfly, Bird and Dragonfly Walks . 2800 Bentsen Palm Drive, Mission, TX Call Josh Rose (956) 584-9156 for schedule.

Quinta Mazatlan - McAllen Wing of the World Birding Center— Friday Morning Stroll Through History: a guided stroll at the historic adobe home built in the 1930's. \$2.00 adults. \$1.00 for seniors and children . 600 Sunset Ave., McAllen, TX Call Colleen Hook (956) 688-3370

Valley Nature Center, Weslaco, Texas - VNC Dragonfly Days Family Nature Day Saturday, May 12 from 10 - 2 p.m. Do you know the difference between a dragonfly and a damselfly? Learn more about these fascinating creatures. It is a day full of fun and information. 301 S. Border Avenue, Weslaco TX. May 17 - 20 Dragonfly Days continue with field trips and scheduled events. Call (956) 969-2475

Alamo Bird Nerd Series - VALLEY BIRDS & WILDLIFE by Keith Hackland. Every second and fourth Tuesday 3 - 4:30 p.m. at Alamo Inn, 801 Main St, Alamo in the Chachalaca Room (enter from front of building) COST: \$2 per person, call (956) 782-9912

NABA Butterfly Walk - Walk through the Butterfly Gardens every Tuesday and Saturday 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. with. Naturalist Javier De Leon. 3400 S. Butterfly Park Drive off Old Military Road, one mile east of Bentsen State Park. (956) 583-9009



The Sabal is the Newsletter of the Native Plant Project and conveys information on the native habitat, and environment of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Texas. Co-editors: Gene Lester and Eleanor Mosimann. You are invited to submit articles for *The Sabal*. They can be brief or long. Articles may be edited for length and clarity. Black and white line drawings -- and colored photos or drawings -- with or without accompanying text are encouraged. We will acknowledge all submissions. Please send them, preferable in electronic form - either Word or WordPerfect - to: Native Plant Project, P.O. Box 2742, San Juan, TX 78589 or contact **Gene Lester @ 956-425-4005, or g-el1951@sbcglobal.net**

See *The Sabal* and our 5 handbooks on our website:
www.nativeplantproject.org

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Native Plant Project Annual Membership Application Form

 Regular \$15 per year Contributing \$35 per year Lifelong \$250 one time fee per individual. Members are advised of meetings, field trips, and other activities through *The Sabal*. Dues are paid on a calendar year basis. Send checks to Native Plant Project, P.O. Box 2742, San Juan, Texas 78589.

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Comments/ suggestions/ speaker recommendations should be sent to: Native Plant Project, P.O. Box 2742, San Juan, TX 78589 or contact G. Lester (956)-425-4005; g-el1951@sbcglobal.net

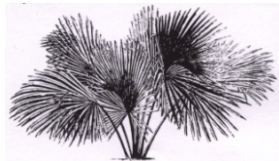
Native Plant Project Meetings – April 24, 2007. **Board meeting** at 6:30 p.m.; **General meeting** at 7:30 p.m. Rick Choate will present “Container Grown Native Plants”. Rick has been growing healthy trees and shrubs in containers for more than fifteen years. His program will examine the container environment, soil composition and structure, watering, and container selection homeowners can use to solve space problems and add interest to established gardens.

Board and General Meetings 2007:

January 23	April 24	September 25
February 27	May 22	October 23
March 27		November 27

SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING - March 27, 2007 The new NPP Awards Plaque is now on display at the Valley Nature Center. President Hagne distributed a pamphlet produced by Valley Proud Environmental Council, entitled “A Guide for Selecting and Planting Native Cacti, Groundcovers, Shrubs, Trees, Vines, and Wildflowers in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and Mexico”, Second Edition, 2007. The pamphlet acknowledges information from the four NPP handbooks.

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