

The Sabal

September 2013

Volume 30, number 6

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Submissions of relevant
articles and/or photos
are welcomed.

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September 2013 Mtg., Native Plant Project:

Tues., Sept. 24th, 2013: at 7:30pm

"Learn your Trees: Stories and Art from the Native Trees of South Texas" by Carol Goolsby

A collection of tree anecdotes, nature art, and botany bits that can help one identify the native trees of South Texas.

Carol Goolsby has worked as an environmental educator for 20 years. She uses her passion for art, writing, and photography to help educate others about the importance of preserving the Valley's native plants. She is currently the Education Director at Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen.

at Valley Nature Center, 301 S. Border,
(in Gibson Park), Weslaco. 956-969-2475



Bloom clusters of *Esenbeckia berlandieri*, a rare native tree (PDST p376). Photo by C. Mild, taken at Ramsey Park, 5/30/13.

The Sabal is the newsletter of the Native Plant Project.

It conveys information on native plants, habitats and environment of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas.

Previous **Sabal** issues are posted on our website [www.NativePlantProject.org].

Electronic versions of our **Handbooks** on recommended natives for landscaping are also posted there.

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Native Herbaceous Plants in Everyday Places— by C. Mild

Wild plants tend to grow in specific places, where their unique growing requirements allow them to compete effectively with other species.

The guy who mows the turf-grass we inherited with this new house is always suggesting improvements to “the lawn.” He’s offered several times to lay down “turf” in narrow passageways between the house and nearby wooden fence. I patiently show him vestiges of turf grass still growing in spots along that area. “There isn’t enough sun here for that grass to do well,” I attempt to explain.

Where he sees failure, I see wondrous diversity, surviving despite man’s efforts to impose a monoculture. There are a few things I pull out as being too weedy, like sow thistle and burr clover. But I see (Asian) Ponyfoot as a marvelous groundcover, which is lovely in the most shady areas of “the lawn.”

The underpinning of this issue is a 3-page compilation by Dr. John Fucik, one of the NPP’s original founders. Fucik provided this as a handout to accompany a talk for the NPSOT chapter based in Corpus Christi. He highlights thirty native groundcovers and the butterflies associated with them. A quick look at Dr. Fucik’s compilation solidifies the notion that diverse butterfly populations will appear if native groundcovers are allowed to establish and prosper.

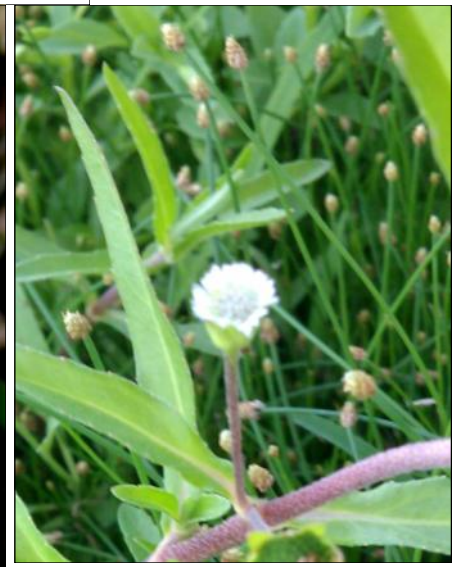
If a yard service manages your lawn, they may well apply wide-leaf herbicide with the fertilizer. They may even propose using fungicides, if spotty patches appear. (I’d like my fungal mycelia left alone, to be honest!)

I’m finding amazing diversity in even the smallest areas where I’ve beaten back the grass to plant shrubs and trees. You may be amazed at what you’ll discover around town, even in the tiniest of spots, perhaps in places where someone has tried in vain, at great expense even, to establish turf-grass.

I’ve magnified the photos of these tiny plants, which highlights their beauty; but recognition may be a challenge! (Who looks at them this closely?)



I gathered seeds of this native morning glory, **Tie Vine**, to establish it in my yard, but it pops up amongst many cultivated shrubs. PDST p195. *Ipomoea cordatotriloba* var. *torreyana*. Blooms are abundant summer & fall.



Above: Prostrate Water Hyssop, *Mecardonia procumbens* PDST p388. Right: Yerba de Tago *Eclipta prostrata* PDST p96 grows with **Dwarf Spike Rush**, *Eleocharis parvula* PDST p36. These appear in a usually-damp area near VBMC Fitness Center in Harlingen, near the Arroyo Colorado.

For more information on native herbaceous plants in the landscape, please see:

Handbooks published by NPP (available in print and on our website): “Cacti, Ground Covers and Vines,” “Butterfly Gardening,” and “Native Pond and Wetland Plants” of the LRGV, Texas.



Announcing the 2013 Native Plant Society of Texas Symposium,
 “South Texas – Beach to Brush Country,”
Thursday, October 17 – Sunday, October 20, Corpus Christi
 Holiday Inn – Emerald Beach 361-673-9074 group code “NPS”
 [<https://npsot.org/wp/symposium2013/>]
 Lonnie Childs, Symposium Co-Chair, <president@npsot.org>



Counter-clockwise from upper Right:
Pink Small-leaf Nama *Calibrachoa parviflora* PDST p390. Blooms in winter and spring.
Widow’s Tears *Commelina erecta* PDST p30.
Sand Mat *Chamaesyce* sp. PDST p208-213.
Common Yellow Purslane *Portulaca oleracea* PDST p358 (note open seed capsule), edible.
Straggler Daisy, Prostrate Lawn Weed, PDSTp90, *Calyptocarpus vialis*. May be a pest in cultivated beds, but this plant will spread in shady lawn areas where turf grass struggles to survive.



SOME NATIVE SOUTH TEXAS GROUND COVERS AND ASSOCIATED BUTTERFLIES

No.	Common Name	Latin Name	Flower Color	Butterfly Associates
ACANTHACEAE (Acanthus Family)				
1	Tube tongue	<i>Justicia pilosella</i> PDST p 50	Lavender	Dymas,tiny, Elada checkerspots; painted crescent; bordered, Endies, Rosita patches
2	Wild(Mexican) petunia	<i>Ruellia spp.</i> PDST p 52-53	Purple	Fatima, Malachite (Cv. "Katy" is more ground-coverish)
AIZOACEAE(Carpetweed Family)				
3	Cenicilla PDST p56	<i>Sesuvium portulacastrum</i>	Pink	Pygmy blue
4	Sea purslane PDST p55	<i>Sesuvium maritimum</i>	Pink to white	"
AMARANTHACEAE(Amaranth Family)				
5	Silverhead PDST p62	<i>Blutaparon vermiculare</i>	Whitish	Southern scalloped sooty wing, Mexican sooty wing
APIACEAE(Carrot Family)				
6	Dollarweed, sombrerillo	<i>Hydrocotyle bonariensis</i> PDSTp70	Greenish white	Anise, black swallowtails
ASTERACEAE(Sunflower Family, formerly Compositae)				
7	Lazy daisy PDST p 86	<i>Aphanostephus ramossisimus</i>	White with yellow center	Palegon hairstreak, lesser fritillaries; bordered patch; Elada, silvery checkerspots and Queen butterfly adults may nectar and larvae feed on members of Asteraceae
8	Prostrate fleabane	<i>Erigeron procumbens</i> PDSTp97	White with yellow center	 <p>Bordered Patch Butterfly photo from naba.org</p>
9	Straggler daisy	<i>Calyptocarpus vialis</i> PDST p 90	Yellow	
10	Tiny Tim	<i>Thymophylla tenuiloba</i> PDSTp131	Yellow	
11	Golden wave	<i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i> PDSTp 94	Yellow with brown center	
CONVOLVULACEAE(Morning glory Family)				
12	Asian ponyfoot	<i>Dichondra micrantha</i> PDST p191	Whitish but inconspicuous	Mexican fritillary; purplish black skipper; mimic
13	Beach morning glory	<i>Ipomoea imperati</i> PDST p196	White	Morning glory pellicia

EUPHORBIACEAE (Spurge Family)				
14	Heart leaf sand mat	<i>Chamaesyce cordifolia</i>	PDSTp209	White, tiny Goatweed, Barttram's hairstreak
FABACEAE (Bean, formerly Legume, Family)				
15	Bracted zornia	<i>Zornia bracteata</i>	PDST p273	Yellow Several spp. of sulphurs & whites
16	Bur clover NOT native	<i>Medicago polymorpha</i>	PDSTp266	Yellow Mostly sulphurs and whites (Bur clover is actually naturalized, well-adapted Eurasian introduction)
17	Partridge pea	<i>Chamaecrista fasciculata</i>	PDSTp233	Yellow Dogface sulphur. Closely related <i>Cassias</i> , host many sulphur spp.
18	Scarlet pea	<i>Indigofera miniata</i>	PDST p 264	Coral Painted lady; Cassius, Reakirt's blues; false, funereal dusky wings
19	Sensitive Plant	<i>Mimosa strigillosa</i>	PDST p 249	Dark pink Jamaican sulfur; Azia hairstreak; Zarucco dusky wing
20	Snoutbean	<i>Rhynchosia americana</i>	PDSTp268	Yellow Alfalfa butterfly, dogface
ONAGRACEAE (Primrose Family)				
21	Texas evening primrose (Amapola del campo)	<i>Oenothera speciosa</i>	PDST p341	Pink Likely nectar/pollen source for several spp. (A most colorful spring wildflower!)
OXALIDACEAE (Wood-sorrel Family)				
22	Yellow wood sorrel	<i>Oxalis stricta</i>	PDST p 344	Yellow Not established
POACEAE (Grass Family)				
23	Coastal saltgrass	<i>Distichlis spicata</i>	*grasses not included in PDST	N/A Salt marsh skipper
Broadly defined, many native grasses can cover the ground and could serve well in a native planting. In addition, many native grasses, sedges and reeds serve as food sources for a wide variety of adult and larva skipper butterflies.				
POLEMONIACEAE (Phlox Family)				
24	Rio Grande phlox	<i>Phlox drummondii</i>	PDST p 352	Purple Multiple spp.
PORTULACACEAE (Purslane Family)				
25	Chisme	<i>Portulaca pilosa</i>	PDST p 359	Red Mimic



Photo from naba.org. Salt marsh skipper:

RUBIACEAE (Madder Family)				
26	Tropical Mexican clover	<i>Richardia brasiliensis</i>	PDST p373	White Not known
SCROPHULARIACEAE (Figwort Family)				
27	Water hyssop	<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>	PDST p 384	White White peacock
28	Woolly stemodia	<i>Stemodia lanata</i>	PDST p 389	Violet Genoveva
VERBENACEAE (Verbena Family)				
29	Dakota vervain	<i>Glandularia bipinnatifida</i>	PDST p 413	Purple Buckeyes, e.g. red admiral, red spotted purple, viceroy, American painted lady & many brush footed B.F.s
30	Frog fruit	<i>Phyla nodiflora</i>	PDST p 418	White Phaon and Vesta crescents
<p>COMMENT: This plant list is not exclusive. Other S. Texas natives may well serve as groundcovers. While these 30 are particularly well suited to the Coastal Bend and Barrier Islands, some are adapted to very exacting environments, e.g., the <i>Sesuviums</i>. The butterflies listed are also not an exclusive selection and most graze a wide variety of plant spp.. More than 300 butterfly species visit or inhabit the S. Texas and Rio Grande Valley brush and adjacent areas. This is more species than are found in all of the Eastern United States.</p> <p>REFS: Lehman, R., Ruth O'Brien, and Tammy White. 2009. "Plants of the Texas Coastal Bend". Texas A&M University Press, College Station, TX. Opler, Paul and V. Malikul. 1992. "Eastern Butterflies- Peterson Field Guide". Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, New York and London. Richardson, Alfred and K. King. 2011. "Plants of Deep South Texas-A Field Guide...". Texas A&M Univ. Press, College Station, TX.</p>				



LEFT: **Fiddleleaf, Jamaican Weed, *Nama jamaicensis***. PDST p280.



RIGHT: **Wavy Leaf Nama, *Nama undulatum***. PDST p281. Pale pink flowers spring and summer.

LRGV Native Plant Sources

Heep's Nursery (& Landscaping)

(Mike Heep)
1714 S. Palm Court Drive
Harlingen, TX 78552
(956) 423-4513 * By appt. only

Valley Nature Center

301 S. Border Ave.
Weslaco, TX 78596
(956) 969-2475
<info@valleynaturecenter.org>
[www.valleynaturecenter.org]

Perez Ranch Nursery

(Betty Perez & Susan Thompson)
12 miles north of La Joya, TX
(956) 580-8915
<PerezRanchNatives@gmail.com>

Mother Nature's Creations

(Billy & Sue Snider)
2822 Nueces, Harlingen, TX 78550
Nursery open by appointment:
(956) 428-4897

NABA Butterfly Park
Old Military Hwy & Butterfly Pk Dr
Mission, TX 78552
(956) 583-9009

Rancho Lomitas Nursery
(Benito Trevino)
P.O. Box 442
Rio Grande City, TX 78582
(956) 486-2576 *By appt. only

Valley Garden Center
701 E. Bus. Hwy. 83
McAllen, TX 78501
(956) 682-9411

Landscaper using Natives:

Williams Wildscapes, Inc.
(Allen Williams)
750 W Sam Houston
Pharr, TX 78577
(956) 460-9864
[www.williamswildscapes.com]

Sponsors

Heep's LRGV Native Plant Nursery

Owned and operated by Mike and Claire Heep
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NPP Board & General Meetings held at Valley Nature Center (ABOVE)

(Fourth Tuesday each month)

Board Meetings at 6:30pm. — Speaker at 7:30pm.

2013-14 Meeting Dates:

Oct. 22nd, 2013

Nov. 26th, 2013

Jan. 28th, 2014

Feb. 25th, 2014

Mar. 25th, 2014

Apr. 22nd, 2014

May 27th, 2014

FROM: NPP; POB 2742; San Juan, TX 78589

The **Native Plant Project (NPP)** has no paid staff or facilities. NPP is supported entirely by memberships and contributions.

Anyone interested in native plants is invited to join. Members receive 8 issues of **The Sabal** newsletter per year in which they are informed of all project activities and meetings.

Meetings are held at:

Valley Nature Center, 301 S. Border, Weslaco, TX.

Native Plant Project Membership Application

Regular \$20/yr. Contributing \$45/yr

Life \$250 one time fee/person

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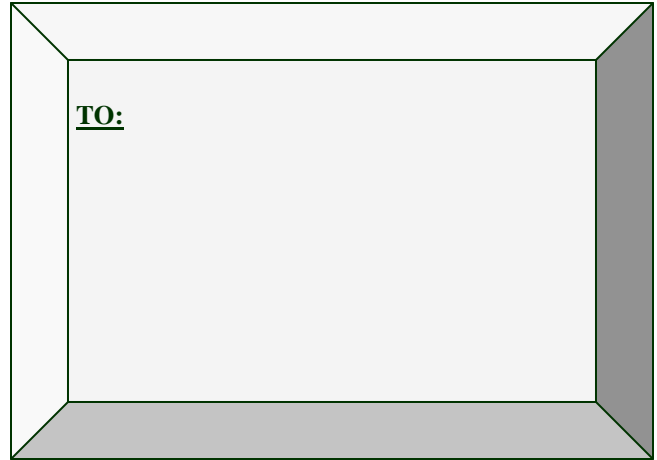
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NPP Sept. meeting and speaker on:

Sept. 24th, 2013 at 7:30pm –

**"Learn your Trees: Stories and Art
from the Native Trees of South Texas"**

by Carol Goolsby

A collection of tree anecdotes, nature art, and botany bits that can help one identify the native trees of South Texas.

Carol Goolsby has worked as an environmental educator for 20 years. She uses her passion for art, writing, and photography to help educate others about the importance of preserving the Valley's native plants. She is currently the Education Director at Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen.

**presented at: Valley Nature Center,
301 S. Border, (in Gibson Park),
Weslaco. 956-969-2475**



This is one of the native herbaceous species which appears in lawns and disturbed areas. **Wheel Mallow** *Modiola caroliniana*, PDST p314. Blooms primarily in spring. (See article with photos, pages 2-3, and more photos on page 6.)

This month's SABAL topic: "Native Herbaceous Plants in Everyday Places."