



The Sabal

October 2022
Volume 38, number 2

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NPP meeting topic/speaker: Tues., October 25th , at 7:30pm

"Seagrass Status Report" *presented by* — Hudson Deyoe

Prof. Hudson Deyoe will give a presentation on the status of seagrass in the Lower Laguna Madre. Seagrass has been declining in cover over the past 30 years. Deyoe will provide some possible causes for that decline. Related to the seagrass story is the Texas Coastal Ecosystem Health Report Card which is currently in revision. The purpose of the effort is to give a synopsis on the health of the Lower Laguna Madre which includes the status of seagrass.

Deyoe is Professor and Associate Director of the School of Earth, Environmental and Marine Sciences and Biology Department, University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley. His education includes Cornell University (BS), University of Vermont (MS), Bowling Green State University (PhD), and University of Texas Marine Science Institute (Post-doctoral).

His research interests include: impacts of man on aquatic ecosystems, algal and seagrass ecology, and use of algae in biotechnology. Deyoe serves on a wide range of committees, planning groups, networks, and partnerships aimed at improving local ecosystems.

The meeting is at: Valley Nature Center,
 301 S Border, (Gibson Park), Weslaco. 956-969-2475.



see also page 4.

Texas Tridens,
Tridens texanus.
 (not a seagrass)

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.

Change of address, missing issue, or membership: <bwessling@rgv.rr.com>

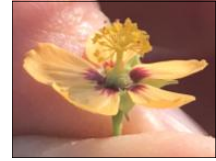
Fall is Butterfly Season. Many Butterflies Use Mallows as Host plants.

Photos of each butterfly species below are from [<http://leps.thenalls.net/>], **Berry's Butterfly Photos**, the most complete source of butterfly information in our locale. Host information for each butterfly below comes from this source.



Erichson's White-Skipper,
Heliopyrgus domicella

Bladder Mallow, *Herissantia crispa* PDST p 309



Laviana White Skipper
Heliopetes laviana

Three Furrowed Indian Mallow
Abutilon trisulcatum, PDST 305
Texas Indian Mallow
Abutilon fruticosum, PDST 302, 304



Mallow Scrub-Hairstreak
Strymon istapa

Indian mallows (*Abutilon* sp.) PDST 301-306

Texas Powdered Skipper
Systasea pulverulenta

TX Indian Mallow, *Abutilon fruticosum*
Shrubby Indian Mallow, *Abutilon abutiloides*
Wright's Abutilon, *Abutilon wrightii*



Tropical Checkered-Skipper
Pyrgus oileus

Threelobe False Mallow, PDST 312-313
Malvastrum coromandelianum



White Scrub Hairstreak
Strymon albata

Indian mallows (*Abutilon* sp.)



***Looking for Mallows to grow
in your garden?
Try the Abutilons!
See page 3.***



Abutilon abutiloides.
Shrubby Indian
Mallow, PDST 301.
2 photos. Fruit
capsule is hard and stiff
with sharp points.



Beautiful Mallows: the Abutilons.

Nine species of *Abutilon* are found in this area. Some are tall and aggressive colony formers: *A. trisulcatum*. Some are less aggressive, still tall, with edible blooms: *A. hypoleucum*. Dwarf Indian Mallow closely resembles *A. fruticosum*, in a mini-version. All are attractive and hardy. Most have pointy seed capsules. Many are cultivated by local native plant enthusiasts. Thanks to Dr. Al Richardson and Jann Miller for growing these and providing photos.



Abutilon umbellatum,
PDST 305. Flowers
are in clusters arising
from a single point.
Fairly rare here.
Grown by Jann Miller.

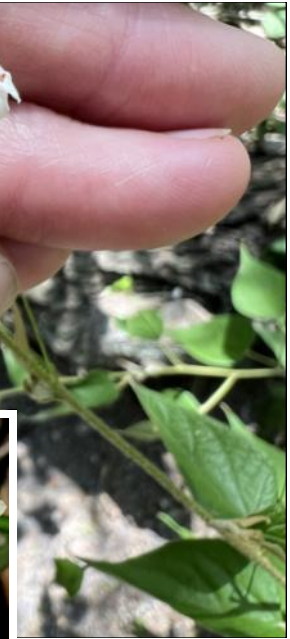


Abutilon hulseanum.
Jann's Mallow, PDST 303.
This very hairy plant
attracts all kinds of insect
attention, and blooms in the
evening, almost year-round.



*Abutilon
parvulum.*
Dwarf Indian
Mallow,
PDST 304.

Quiz yourself. Sometimes you can identify a plant species by a look at the tiniest details. Some of these photos are highly magnified.



Descriptions are clockwise from upper left.



Guayacan, *Guaiacum angustifolium*, PDST 425. Wonderful shrub. Host for Lyside Sulphur butterfly, which can often be seen egg-laying on the plant.

Texas Stonecrop blooms, *Lenophyllum texanum*, PDST 201. Tiny succulent, sometimes found in the shelter of surrounding colony-forming ladyfinger cacti. Host for Xami Hairstreak. Eaten by rabbits and other critters.

White Velvet Leaf Mallow, *Wissadula periplocifolia*, PDST 321. Note the swirling red stigmas of this classic mallow bloom. The next photo shows the same bloom from the side and foliage and the hairy stem are visible in the lower right of the photo. Ken King says this species forms colonies rapidly, as has happened recently in Ramsey Park.

Allthorn, Junco, *Koerberlinia spinosa*, PDST 176, in bloom. These blooms smell sweet in the spring. When the weather is very hot, blooms smell like carrion, which attracts pollinating flies. Great for xeriscapes.

Spanish Moss, *Tillandsia usneoides*, PDST 29, in bloom, much magnified. This plant is an epiphyte, taking nutrients from the atmosphere. (Blooming in the yard of Dr. Al Richardson.)

Shrubby Blue Sage, Mejorana, *Salvia ballotiflora*, PDST 287, blooms in detail. Aromatic shrub with brittle stems. A lovely plant for the sensory garden.

Schott's Twintip, *Stemodia schottii*, PDST 389. Related to snapdragon. Uncommon here. In Texas, it is only found in Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Zapata and Val Verde counties. May bloom year-round.

Texas Tridens continued: This native grass occurs in clay, loam and sandy loam soils and on dry rocky hillsides.

Often found in the protection of shrubs and along fenced road right-of-ways. It provides fair forage for livestock, and the large seeds are eaten by birds and rodents. It is a warm season grass.

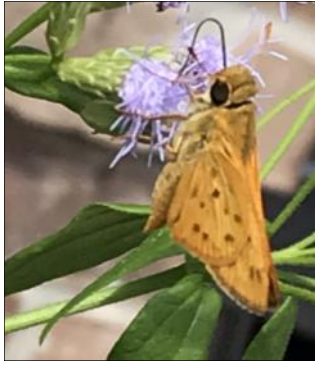
Flowering period: Mostly May to June and again in late August to November.

Distribution: Southern Texas, Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon and Coahuila, MX.

Appearance is delicate, with drooping reddish seedheads and narrow leaves.

This scanned specimen (p1 & 4), was found in Hugh Ramsey NP in Harlingen, near Citrus Garden.





Fall Mistflower, Crucita, *Chromolaena odorata*, PDST 91, is a magnet for the many butterflies which hatch in the fall. Above is a sampling of species attracted to one specimen in a suburban yard surrounded by turf grass and farm fields. Crucita can be grown from seed or cuttings.

Additional mistflower species fill different niches. Below right: White-blooming *Fleischmannia incarnata*, PDST 98-99, has smelly leaves and delicate white blooms. It can grow on a trellis and may bloom year-round.

Conoclinium betonicifolium PDST 93, and *Tamaulipa azurea* PDST 127, are other mistflowers which attract many butterflies. (Not so many years ago, these were all classified as *Eupatorium*, which was much less confusing.)

Planta Nativa

returns to Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen.

This year's schedule is as follows:

Date: October 27 (Thursday)

Time: 6:30 PM - 9:30 PM

(last hour or so is for the keynote presentation)

There will be tours, plant sales, talks, and a good ol' time.



NPP Volunteer Opportunity: NPP board members will be hosting a seed give-away table. If you have native seeds to donate or wish to help out, please attend the event and find the seed give-away table.

Vines as Butterfly Nectar:

Several of our native vines bloom during fall. Common Balloon Vine (right) is an especially good nectar source for many pollinators. *Cardiospermum halicacabum*, PDST 380. Host plant for Silver-Banded Hairstreak. Larvae eat the seeds.

Vines can provide a very large biomass, growing up into trees and shrubs which may not be blooming in fall or winter. Vines can be messy, but they can also be wonderful. Most native vines die back during drought or extreme cold. They grow back when conditions are favorable.

Center Photo by Jose Palmos. Nectaring here: Red Metalmark, upper and lower wing views.





Left: South Texas Four O'Clock, *Mirabilis austrotexana*, PDST 330. Typically grows in sandy areas, at the coast and inland. Dr. Alfred Richardson gave this specimen to the editor. It grew nicely in a pot. The plant can reach 5' tall and may bloom in all seasons. Photos illustrate the seeds, blooms and foliage on the lower leaves.

Native Plants and Photography.

John Brush mentioned his phenology project on iNaturalist. Each of us can participate in that project by posting good photos, year-round, on iNaturalist. Sometimes it takes more than one photo to illustrate a plant, especially if the plant is tall, spindly, hairy, has seeds or other delicate structures which you want to document. The wind may be blowing, so several shots may be needed to catch structures in focus.

Most cell phones these days will give you a macro photo. Take your time, touch the screen on the feature you want to focus on, and wait to see if it does indeed come into sharp detail.

It's difficult to see your cell phone screen out in the sun. A wide-brimmed hat helps to shade the screen, as does a friend with a black or white umbrella. Try different perspectives, moving a fraction up, down, left or right. Try shading the plant with your body, or asking a friend to do so.

And take a lot of shots; there may be an awesome insect which comes into focus when it moves just a bit. Or a cloud may suddenly give you a shadow or move to illuminate things better.

Remember to post plant and animal photos on iNaturalist. That treasury of photos is a goldmine of information we can refer to in the future.



Be on the lookout for larvae. This is the season when many butterflies are laying eggs on our natives. In the photo above, a likely Southern Dogface larva is gobbling up *Dalea scandens*, PDST 261.

NPP's **Butterfly Gardening** handbook is a great resource for anyone who loves to attract butterflies. The handbook is available as a hard-copy (at Planta Nativa, p5) and can be viewed on the NPP website. Used in combination with NPP's **Shrubs Handbook**, anyone can select native plants suitable for small to large spaces, part to full sun and any sort of drainage or soil type. [<https://nativeplantproject.com/butterflygardening.pdf>]



LRGV Native Plant Sources

See also our
Sponsors on right

Perez Ranch Nursery

(Betty Perez)

12 miles north of La Joya, TX

(956) 580-8915

<PerezRanchNatives@gmail.com>

These vendors may sell exotics:

National Butterfly Center

Old Military Hwy/3333 Butterfly Pk Dr
Mission, TX 78572

[<http://www.nationalbutterflycenter.org>]

Rancho Lomitas Nursery

(Benito Trevino)

P.O. Box 442

Rio Grande City, TX 78582

(956) 486-2576 *By appt. only

M&G Double D Native Plants & Seeds of South Texas. (Gail Dantzker)

956-342-5979; <gdld@att.net>

7500 N 21st St; McAllen, TX 78504

[mandgdoubled.com]

Grown at The Woods, Willacy Cty., TX.

Landscapers using Natives:

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Noel Villarreal

125 N. Tower Rd, Edinburg

956-874-4267, 956-316-2599

Sponsors (Native Plant Nurseries)

Heep's LRGV Native Plant Nursery

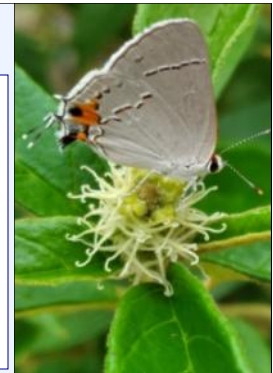
Owned and operated by Mike and Claire Heep

We grow plants suited to landscaping
and revegetation in south Texas.

1714 S. Palm Court Drive, Harlingen, TX 78552

(956) 457-6834 <heep0311@yahoo.com>

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Come visit the VNC:

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-6 acre Nature Park & Trails -Book & Gift Shop-
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Above: Photo by Dan/Honey Jones. Forbes Silkmoth caterpillar gobbling up colima leaves, *Xanthoxylum fagara*, PDST 377.

Frank Wiseman Memorial:

Sat. Oct. 29th, 11am,

Ramsey Park Pavilion, Harlingen, TX.

Friends are invited

to share memories of Frank.

Light refreshments served.

Frank was a long-time NPP member.

Right: Green Lynx spider awaiting prey on a closed bloom of Night-Blooming Cereus (Barbwire Cactus) *Acanthocereus tetragonus*, PDST 160.



NPP Board & General Meetings are held at Valley Nature Center

(4th Tues. each month, except thru summer)

Brd Mtgs 6:30pm — Speaker 7:30pm

Upcoming meetings: October 25, November 22,

January 24 Annual Membership Mtg

February 28, March 28, April 25, May 23

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
Other donation: _____

Please print:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____

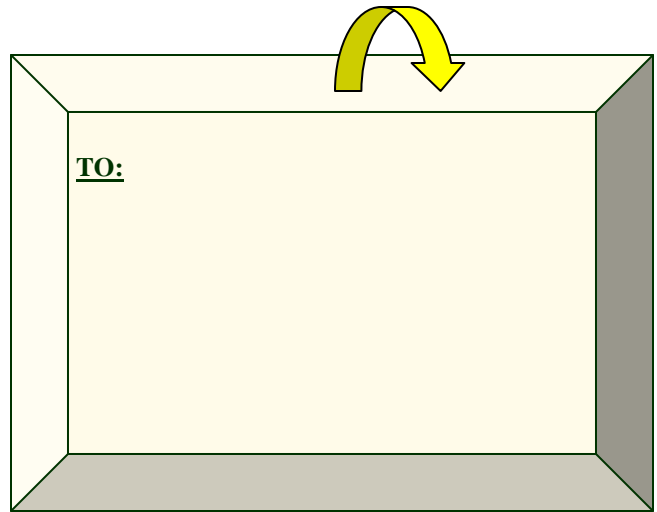
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Native Plant Project, POB 2742, San Juan, TX 78589-7742*



NPP meeting/speaker:

The Native Plant Project will present:

“Seagrass Status Report”
presented by — *Prof. Hudson Deyoe*

Tues., Oct. 25th, at 7:30pm

The meeting is held at **Valley Nature Center**, 301 S Border,
(in Gibson Park), Weslaco. 956-969-2475

We hope to see you there!

Feel free to bring a native plant for I.D.

Native Plants are available for a donation!



Coming Events:

Planta Nativa Oct. 27, p5; Frank Wiseman Memorial Oct. 29, p7.

Plant Species in this issue: *Abutilon abutiloide*, *Abutilon hulseanum*, *Abutilon parvulum*, *Abutilon umbellatum*, *Acanthocereus tetragonus*, *Capraria mexicana*, *Cardiospermum halicacabum*, *Chromolaena odorata*, *Conoclinium betonicifolium*, *Dalea scandens*, *Fleishmannia incarnatum*, *Guaiacum angustifolium*, *Herissantia crispa*, *Koerberlinia spinosa*, *Lenophyllum texanum*, *Malvastrum coromandelianum*, *Mirabilis austrotexana*, *Salvia ballotiflora*, *Stemodia schottii*, *Tamaulipa azurea*, *Tillandsia usneoides*, *Tridens texanus*, *Wissadula periplocifolia*, *Xanthoxylum fagara*.

Above left: an iridescent blue Chlorion insect. Above right: *Oncopeltus* bugs on *Capraria mexicana*, adding a bit of Halloween color to Hugh Ramsey Nature Center parking lot.