



The Sabal

www.nativeplantproject.org

Caressing the Crotons

by Christina Mild, M.S

Crotons have been hard for me to identify. They're not the most common of plants, often occurring in a spotty distribution pattern. The flowers are rather difficult to describe, not all that showy as flowers go. Fruits are small and typical of the Euphorbia family: three-seeded or three-celled capsules. Male and female flowers occur on separate plants in some Croton species.

Peering at croton photos and caressing crotons in cultivation has brought me into harmony with them, and crotons have become some of my favorite, though difficult-to-fathom plants. I'm quite focused on rescuing crotons from destruction wherever I find them threatened.

Leafwing butterflies, sap-sippers who masquerade, wings-folded, as dying leaves, use crotons as their caterpillar host plant. Bright inner wings of these butterflies (orange, or blue-studded black) are a real treat to the patient observer. Possible visitation or residence by these beauties is one good reason to cultivate crotons.

Crotons are aromatic, usually with a pleasant scent, and this is another reason to grow them. Some species have soft leaves covered with "stellate trichomes;" others have attractively shiny leaves. I find that children on school fieldtrips enjoy rubbing croton leaves to smell them. They enjoy the texture as well as the aroma. This is an especially good reason for growing the plants in places where children will visit. It's often difficult to interest older children in plants. They're all-too-often focused on the higher excitement of animals. It isn't all that obvious to older children that animals are completely reliant upon plants for their existence. After all, they have little need of plants in their daily world of fast food, shopping malls, TV and computer games. If a child admires, enjoys and remembers even one plant from a nature field, we've opened that child's eyes to another aspect of the world.

The best I can do is to share some of my favorite croton photos with you. Mike Heep and Valley Nature Center grow some of these crotons. You'll find others in out-of-way places in need of protective care. Christina Mild, M.S. Biological Science, www.RioDeltaWild.com

A few of the Croton species native to the LRGV, photos by C. Mild (www.RioDeltaWild.com)



Above: Dove croton (*C. humillis*) Ramsey Park 2/24/06. Fruit forming left of showy white-stamens of the male flower



Above: Larva rolled into leaf for pupation. Gill Quintanilla's yard. Right: Leafwing larva feeding. 9/26/06 Mission, TX.



Above: Shiny, wet tapered leaves of Palillo, Cortes croton, *C. cortesianus* Left: Many crotons develop coloration due to stress. This plant is infrequent in Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and San Patricio counties. Does well in cultivation. Ramsey Park, Hgn. Feb. 20, 2006



Left: Soft, bluntly-rounded leaves of Torrey Croton, *C. incanus*, an infrequent native which grows well in cultivation.

Right: *C. ciliatoglandulifer*, prefers limestone and caliche. Beautiful cilia line every leaf edge. May cause contact dermatitis.

Bill MacWhorter's yard Mar.5, 2005



This issue of the Sabal is sponsored by the following native plant nursery

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Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
Shrubs		Indian Mallow, Woody	<i>Abutilon abutiloides</i>
Adelia*	<i>Adelia vaseyi</i>	Jann's Pink Mallow	<i>Abutilon hulseanum</i>
Baby Bonnets, Texas	<i>Coursetia axillaries</i>	Kidneywood*	<i>Eysenhardtia texana</i>
Amantillo	<i>Abutilon trisulcatum</i>	Lantana, Claire's	<i>Lantana</i>
Bastardia	<i>Bastardia viscosa</i>		<i>achyranthifolia</i>
Amargosa, Bisbirinda	<i>Castela texana</i>	Lantana, Desert	<i>Lantana macropoda</i>
Blue Sage*	<i>Salvia ballotiflora</i>	Lantana, Michelle's	<i>Lantana microcephala</i>
Brasil*	<i>Condalia hookeri</i>	Lantana, Texas*	<i>Lantana horrida</i>
Brush Holly*	<i>Xylosma flexuosa</i>	Lantana, West Indian*	<i>Lantana camara</i>
Bushy Lippia	<i>Lippia alba</i>	Lantana, Velvet*	<i>Lantana velutina</i>
Carlowrightia	<i>Carlowrightia parvifolia</i>	Lotebush, Clepene*	<i>Ziziphus obtusifolia</i>
		Malva Loca	<i>Malvastrum</i>
Chilipiquin	<i>Capsicum annuum</i>		<i>americanum</i>
Colima*	<i>Xanthoxylum fagara</i>	Manzanita, Barbados	<i>Malpighia glabra</i>
Coyotillo*	<i>Karwinskia humboldtiana</i>	Cherry*	
		Mistflower, Blue	<i>Eupatorium azureum</i>
Coral Bean*	<i>Erythrina herbacea</i>	Mistflower, Blue	<i>Eupatorium odoratum</i>
Croton, Cortes*	<i>Croton cortesianus</i>	(Crucita)	
Croton, Low, Dove*	<i>Croton humilis</i>	Necklace Pod*	<i>Sophora tomentosa</i>
Croton, Mexican	<i>Croton ciliatoglandulifer</i>	Oregano*	<i>Lippia graveolens</i>
		Oreja De Raton*	<i>Bernardia myricaefolia</i>
Croton, Torrey	<i>Croton incanus</i>		<i>Leucophyllum frutescens</i>
Crucillo*	<i>Randia rhagocarpa</i>	Purple Sage*	<i>Melochia pyramidata</i>
Dalea	<i>Dalea thyrsoiflora</i>		<i>Viguiera stenoloba</i>
Desert Yaupon*	<i>Schaefferia cuneifolia</i>	Pyramid Bush	
Dicliptera	<i>Dicliptera vahliana</i>	Skeleton Bush,	
Elbowbush*	<i>Forestiera angustifolia</i>	Golden Eye Daisy*	
		Snake Eyes*	<i>Phaulothamnus spinescens</i>
Fiddlewood*	<i>Citharexylum berlandieri</i>		<i>Aloysia macrostachya</i>
		Sweet Stem	<i>Amyris madrensis</i>
Granjeno, Spiny	<i>Celtis pallida</i>		
Hackberry*		Torchwood, Sierra	
Hachinal	<i>Heimia salicifolia</i>	Madre*	
Heliotrope	<i>Heliotropium angiospermum</i>	Torchwood, Texas*	<i>Amyris texana</i>
		Trixis, Mexican	<i>Trixis inula</i>
Hibiscus, Heart Leaf	<i>Colubrina texensis</i>	Turk's Cap*	<i>Malvaviscus arboreus drummondii</i>
Hog Plum	<i>Abutilon incanum</i>		<i>Allowissadula lozanii</i>
Indian Mallow		Velvet Leaf	<i>Aloysia gratissima</i>
Indian Mallow, Rio Grande	<i>Abutilon hypoleucum</i>	Whitebrush*	

Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
Shrubs		Vines	
Wissadula, Mexican	<i>Wissadula amplissima</i>	Snapdragon vine	<i>Maurandia antirrhiniflora</i>
Wolfberry, Berlandier	<i>Lycium berlandieri</i>		
Yucca, Spanish	<i>Yucca treculeana</i>	Ground Covers	
Dagger*		Angel Trumpets	<i>Acleisanthes obtusa</i>
Trees		Celosia	<i>Celosia nitida</i>
Anacua* **	<i>Ehretia anacua</i>	Cherisse	<i>Tradescantia micrantha</i>
Baretta **	<i>Helietta parviflora</i>	Frog Fruit	<i>Phyla strigillosa</i>
Blackbrush*	<i>Acacia rigidula</i>	Guapita, Pitillo	<i>Plumbago scandens</i>
Cedar Elm* **	<i>Ulmus crassifolia</i>	Lornatee	<i>Micromeria brownei</i>
Coma* **	<i>Bumelia celastrina</i>	Milkberry, Perlilla	<i>Chiococca alba</i>
Ebony, Texas**	<i>Pithecellobium ebano</i>	Orange Daisy	<i>Wedelia hispida</i>
Guajillo	<i>Acacia berlandieri</i>	Padre Island	<i>Eupatorium betonicifolium</i>
Hackberry, Palo	<i>Celtis laevigata</i>	Mistflower	<i>Simsia calva</i>
Blanco		Rebequita, Bush	
Huisache	<i>Acacia smallii</i>	Sunflower	<i>Salvia misella.</i>
Mesquite	<i>Prosopis glandulosa</i>	Selene	<i>Marsilea macropoda</i>
Montezuma Bald	<i>Taxodium mucronatum</i>	Water Clover	
Cypress**	<i>Cercidium texanum</i>		
Paloverde	<i>Caesalpinia mexicana</i>	Grasses	
Poinciana, Mexican*	<i>Solanum erianthum</i>	Bluestem, Longspike	<i>Bothriochloa longipaniculata</i>
Potato Tree,		Silver	<i>Elyonuris tripsacoides</i>
Salvadora*	<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>	Balsamscale, Pan	
Retama	<i>Esenbeckia runyoni</i>	American	<i>Setaria leucopila</i>
Runyon Tree	<i>Sapindus drummondii</i>	Bristlegrass, Plains	<i>Eriochloa punctata</i>
Soapberry* **	<i>Pithecellobium pallens</i>	Cupgrass, Louisiana	<i>Eriochloa sericea</i>
Tenaza*	<i>Cordia boissieri</i>	Cupgrass, Texas	<i>Sporobolus virginicus</i>
Wild Olive	<i>Leucaena pulverulenta</i>	Dropseed, Coastal	<i>Pennisetum villosum</i>
Tepeguaje	<i>Acacia wrightii</i>	Feathertop	<i>Bouteloua trifida</i>
Wright's Acacia		Gramma, Red	<i>Panicum hallii</i>
		Panicum, Hall's	<i>Pappophorum vaginatum</i>
Vines		Pappusgrass,	<i>Paspalum langei</i>
Apaac, Elm Leaf	<i>Urvillea ulmacea</i>	Whiplash	<i>Leptochloa dubia</i>
Urvillea	<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i>	Paspalum, Rustyseed	<i>Aristida roemeriana</i>
Balloon Vine	<i>Iresine palmeri</i>	Sprangletop, Green	<i>Tridens eragrostoides</i>
Bloodleaf	<i>Pisonia aculeata</i>	Threeawn, Roemer	<i>Tridens muticus</i>
Devil's Claw	<i>Rubus trivialis</i>	Tridens, Lovegrass	<i>Tridens texanus</i>
Dewberry, Zarzamora	<i>Mikania scandens</i>	Tridens, Slim	<i>Chloris cuculatta</i>
HempVine, Mexican	<i>Anredera leptostachys</i>	Tridens, Texas	
Madeira Vine	<i>Cynanchum racemosum</i>	Windmillgrass,	
Milkweed Vine	<i>Cocculus diversifolius</i>	Hooded	<i>Chloris subdolichostachya</i>
	<i>Tragia glanduligera</i>	Windmillgrass,	<i>Leptoloma cognatum</i>
	<i>Passiflora foetida</i>	Slimspike	
	<i>Passiflora filipes</i>	Witchgrass, Fall	
	<i>Passiflora suberosa</i>		
	<i>Serjania brachycarpa</i>	Other	
	<i>Tournefortia volubilis</i>	Axocatzin	<i>Sida rhombifolia</i>
	<i>Mimosa malacophylla</i>	Bone Bract,	<i>Sclerocarpus uniserialis</i>
		Mexican	<i>Siphonoglossa greggii</i>
		False Honeysuckle	<i>Siphonoglossa pilosella</i>
		False Honeysuckle	

Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
Other		Wetland Plants	
Garlic Weed	<i>Petiveria alliacea</i>	Brook Pimpernel	<i>Samolus ebracteatus</i>
Huaco	<i>Manfreda variegata</i>	Button Bush	<i>Cephalanthus salicifolius</i>
Lila De Los Llanos	<i>Echeandia chandleri</i>		<i>Coreopsis tinctoria</i>
Pigeonberry, Coralito	<i>Rivina humilis</i>	Coreopsis	<i>Ludwigia octovalvis</i>
Runyon's Huaco	<i>Manfreda runyonii</i>	Primrose Willow	<i>Borrichia frutescens</i>
Scarlet Sage	<i>Salvia coccinea</i>	Sea Ox-Eye Daisy	<i>Eleocharis interstincta</i>
Wild Poinsettia	<i>Euphorbia cyathophora</i>	Spike Rush	<i>Cyperus globosus</i>
	<i>Ruellia occidentalis</i>	Umbrella Sedge	<i>Cyperus sp.</i>
Wild Petunia	<i>Ruellia nudiflora</i>	Umbrella Sedge	<i>Marsilea macropoda</i>
Wild Petunia	<i>Ruellia runyonii</i>	Water Clover	<i>Justicia runyonii</i>
		Water Willow, Runyon's Willow, Black	<i>Salix nigra</i>



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.

Exclusively Native plant sources:

Benito Trevino, Landscaper/Grower, Rio Grande City 956-487-4626

Valley Nature Center – Native Plants, Weslaco 956-969-2475

Mother Nature's Creations, Harlingen 956-428-4897

Heep's Nursery, Harlingen 956-457-6834

Nature Happenings in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas

MISSION BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL – 2006

The Mission, Texas Chamber of Commerce is having its seventh annual butterfly festival **October 19-22, 2006**. For a listing of events and registration information call 1-800-580-2700, or visit the Mission Chamber of Commerce, 220 East Ninth Street, Mission, Texas. Or go to www.texasbutterfly.com

WILD IN WILLACY, Raymondville – 2006

The Raymondville & Port Mansfield, Willacy County, Texas Chambers of Commerce are having their annual nature festival entitled “Boot Fest” **October 27-28, 2006**. For a listing of events and registration information call **1-956-689-3171**, or visit the Raymondville Historical & Community Center, 427 South Seventh Street, Raymondville, Texas. Or go to www.wildinwillacy.com

RIO GRANDE VALLEY, BIRDING FESTIVAL, Harlingen – 2006

The Harlingen, Texas, Chamber of Commerce is having its ninth annual Birding/Nature festival **November 8-12, 2006**. For a listing of events and registration information call 1-800-531-7346, or visit the Harlingen Chamber of Commerce, 311 East Tyler, Harlingen, Texas. Or go to www.rgvbirdfest.com

Texas State Park Tours/ World Birding Center, Mission, Texas— Lomitas Ranch Tours and other natural area tours 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. every Tuesday and Friday from Benson Rio Grande State Park/World Birding Center in Mission, TX. Outings focus on native plants and their uses. Fees: \$25 per person: reservations required - call 956-519-6448. Or go to www.worldbirdingcenter.org

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, Sundays from 8 a.m. - 10 a.m. Call for details: 956-748-3607. WALKS are available. Call for details: 956-787-3079.

Santa Ana NWR— Tram Tours of the park. 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— Native Plant Landscaping Series 1p.m. - 4 p.m. Oct. 21, Nov. 4 & 18, Dec. 9, Jan 6 & 20. Fee: \$5 members, \$7 non-members. 714 Raul Longoria Rd., Edinburg, TX (956) 381-9922.

Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park & World Birding Center— **Butterfly Walk** every Wednesday, 1:30-3:30 p.m. 2800 Bentsen Palm Drive, Mission, TX (956) 584-9156.

Quinta Mazatlan - McAllen Wing of the World Birding Center— **Thursday “Evening Explorations”** September to November. 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. \$3.00. **Sunday “Family Excursions”** Sept. 17th – Dec. 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm. 2.00 adults and \$1.00 seniors and children. 600 Sunset Ave., McAllen, TX (956) 688-3370

The Sabal is the Newsletter of the Native Plant Project and conveys information on the native habitats, 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_lester48@msn.com. See *The Sabal* and our 5 handbooks on the 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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New Renewal Address Change

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 or g_lester48@msn.com

Native Plant Project Meetings – September 26, 2006. **Board meeting** at 6:30 pm; **General meeting** at 7:30pm featuring: Shelly Meyer from with the USDA-NRCS E. Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center at the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas A&M in Kingsville will discuss their program to produce and make available native grass and flower seeds for South Texas rangelands and roadsides.

Board and General Meetings 2006:

September 26
October 24
November 28

Board and General Meetings 2007:

January 23 April 24
February 27 May 22
March 27

SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING - JUNE 27, 2006 The

Board canceled the board meetings in July and August. B. Wessling is donating the cost for 2 years of the website www.nativeplantproject.org as well as the purchase of this URL and www.nativeplantproject.com. B. Trevino is donating \$100 to sponsor *The Sabal*.

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