

Evaluation of Showy Menodora (*Menodora longiflora*; MELO2) for Conservation Plantings in North-Central Texas and Eastern New Mexico

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ABSTRACT

Showy menodora is a warm-season, native, perennial subshrub found in west Texas and eastern New Mexico. Ten field collections were evaluated at the USDA-NRCS James E. “Bud” Smith Plant Materials Center (PMC), Knox City, Texas. The PMC discontinued evaluations in 2021 due to limited number of seed collections and mediocre performance. Germplasm is maintained at the PMC and available to interested state and federal entities.

INTRODUCTION

Showy menodora is a warm-season, native, perennial subshrub (herb) found in the Edwards Plateau and Trans-Pecos regions of Texas and eastern New Mexico. This species survives in dry, rocky hillsides, canyons, and ledges along streams between elevations of 900-6500 ft (Texas Native Plants Database, 2021). Flowers attract a wide variety of nectar-seeking species such as bees, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds (Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center, 2021). Lack of a commercially available ecotype limits the use of this subshrub in pollinator and wildlife habitat conservation plantings. Objective of this study was to collect, evaluate, and release a pre-varietal selection or cultivar of showy menodora for conservation plantings.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Ten collections were received from the field, propagated in the greenhouse, and transplanted in an un-replicated single rod row for evaluation from 2008-2021 (Table 1). Accessions were visually evaluated for plant performance.

Table 1: Table showing accession numbers, county of origin, state of origin, and submission year for each line of Showy Menodora received by the James E. “Bud” Smith Plant Materials Center in Knox City, Texas.

Accession Number	County of Origin	State of Origin	Submission Year
477967	Kinney	Texas	1964
9064942	Brewster	Texas	1992
9107911	Tom Green	Texas	2008
9093058	Crockett	Texas	2008
9107780	Uvalde	Texas	2009
9107836	Sutton	Texas	2010
9107837	Crockett	Texas	2010
9107945	Sutton	Texas	2012
9110690	Crockett	Texas	2012
9112356	Val Verde	Texas	2018

Accession numbers in red did not contain viable seed for testing.

CONCLUSION

Due to the limited amounts of germplasm received, and lackluster field performance, a decision was made to discontinue the evaluation of showy menodora and close the study. Seed collections of each accession will be stored in a climate-controlled environment for future germplasm screening by interested entities.

LITERATURE CITED

Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center. "Showy Menodora." Accessed 2021. [Online] https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=MEL02.

Texas Native Plants Database. "Showy Menodora." Accessed 2021. [Online] <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/nativeshrubs/menodoralong.htm>.

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