



The Sabal

May 2019

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Plant species page #s in the Sabal refer to:
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NPP meeting topic/speaker:

"Flora of the Chihuahuan Desert " by *Michael Eason*
Tues., May 28th, at 7:30pm

In this talk, Eason will focus on plants found in West Texas from Val Verde County to El Paso. He will discuss species with interesting seed dispersal and pollination biology, as well as the topography, geology and climatic influences which make this region so diverse.

Eason is a freelance botanist who performs plant surveys and inventories on both private and public lands throughout Texas. At San Antonio Botanical Gardens, he heads the Rare Plant Research and Conservation Program. From 2003-2012, he served as Conservation Program Manager for Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, TX.

Eason's "Wildflowers of Texas" (2018) will be available for purchase and author signing. Organized by bloom color, this wildflower guide is designed for easy use in the field. Many of our South Texas species are included. Excellent photographs help with identification.

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



Above: Michael Eason, an "outlier" in his field. As a photographer, Eason gets right down to business. He will share photos from his recent work in the Trans-Pecos area.

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>

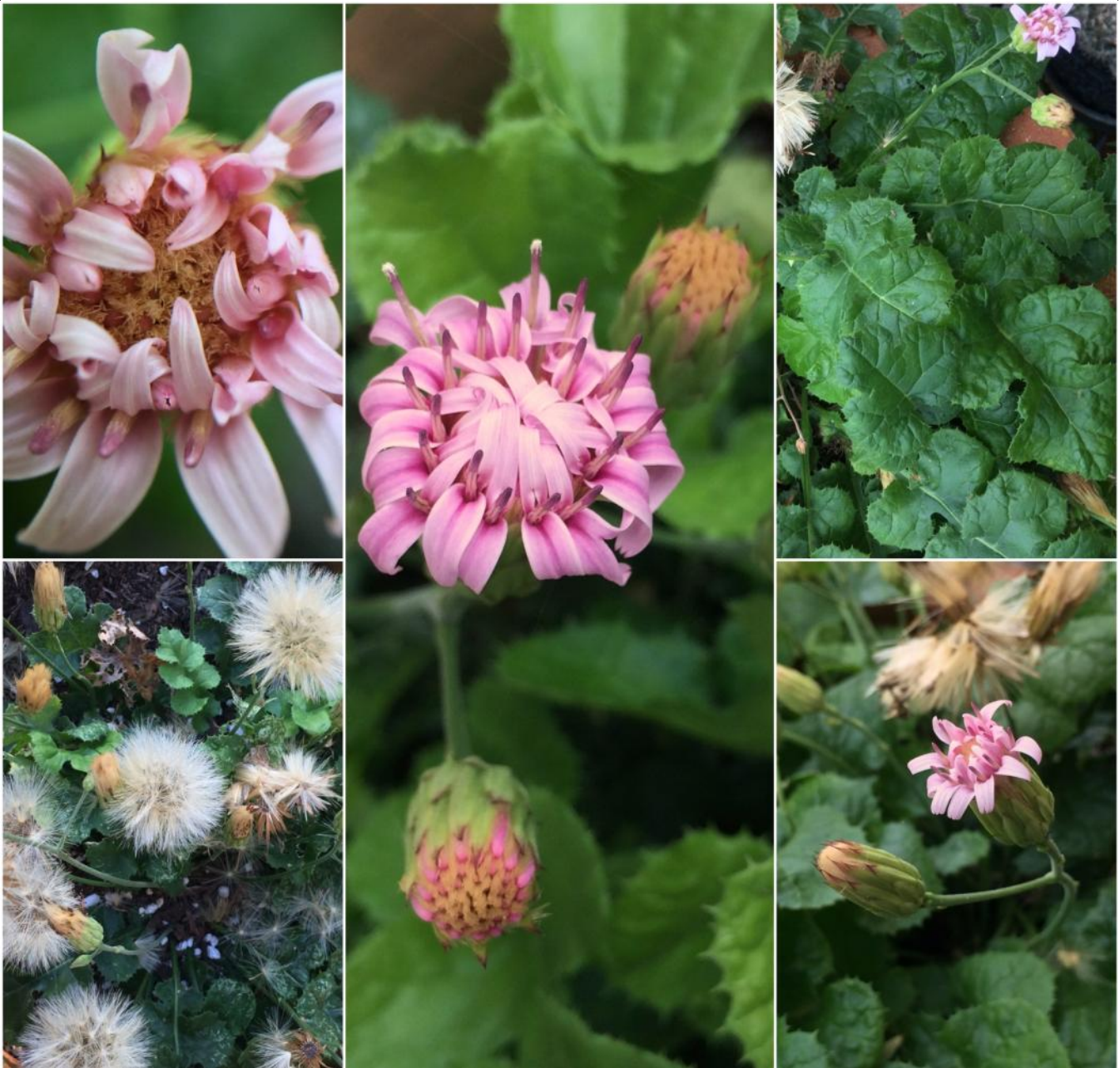
President - Ken King - <wk_king01@yahoo.com>

“Selections from Jann Miller’s Amazing Gardens” —*illustrated by photographer Rachel Nagy.*

Editor’s introduction: For several years, Ken King has been urging this editor to visit the amazing garden spaces of board member Jann Miller and her talented daughter Rachel Nagy. It is a visit to die for!

Jann became interested in native plants around 22 years ago, when we worked together at Valley Nature Center. Billie McWhorter, now deceased, used his powers of persuasion on Jann, convincing her to transport him to the most remote habitats in this area. Along the way, Jann collected plants, seed, knowledge and ideas. The diversity she harbors in her front and backyard areas is immense.

On the following pages, you’ll see some of the ways she and daughter Rachel Nagy promote and protect some of the most rare species we have, as well as those we know well. For example, they have found that species which tend to be overgrown by other species actually thrive in large clay pots.



Rachel Nagy photo collage above. *Acourtia runcinata*, **Peonia**, PDST 82. This specimen resides in a large pot. Note the unusual two-lipped flowers growing in a circle, with reproductive parts emerging between paired lips. Leaf edges bear prickles, most noticeable at the bottom of the central photo. Dandelion-like fruiting structures.

Guest photographer Rachel Nagy:

Rachel has been a vital participant for the past 2 years in the City Nature Challenge hosted by iNaturalist.

The detail found in her photos is amazing. She submitted 251 observations this year from her yard and nearby fields, comprising 173 species. Her observations added several unique species to the Valley's total. She did this while recuperating from therapy for lymphoma and leukemia. Few of us have that dedication or intellect.

Rachel agreed to provide photos for this (and future) editions of The Sabal; prepare to be amazed!

When I commented on the quality of Rachel's photos and photo collages, this was her incredible response: "I use a program on my laptop called PhotoScape X to make the collages. I use my iPhone 5s as my camera and for my macro shots I use a little clip-on macro lens that fits over the iPhone camera lens." Thank you, Rachel!!



Above: *Mirabilis austrotexana*, South Texas Four O'Clock, PDST 330. Leaves of this species might be confused with those of *Palafoxia texana* or *Florestina tripteris*. Usual habitat is sandy soils. Pot-grown specimen. Lower right: Note the two large seeds backed by fused papery bracts (about 3/8" wide) with purple venation.

Jann Miller and Rachel Nagy are frequent contributors to the plant and seed exchange held at each of the Native Plant Project meetings. Plants are offered on a donation basis. Feel free to bring native plant specimens and seeds which you would like to share or specimens needing an I.D.



Above: *Kosteletskya depressa*, **Saltmarsh Mallow**, PDST 310.

(Note: this is a species correction which you may want to note in your copy of *Plants of Deep South Texas*.)

This pretty, tall, thin, upright mallow prefers mildly salty wet soils.

It is found in Cameron County, as well as Florida and Mexico.

Note the following traits: Yellow floral column arching downward (photos left).

Unusual five-compartment seedpods (upper right).

Stiff, prickly hairs (lower right, photographed at magnification).



Menodora longiflora, **Showy Menodora**. (This will appear in the next edition of Plants of Deep South Texas.)
 Note the long floral tube (much magnified above, it is actually about 2" long).

Excerpted from Michael Eason's "Wildflowers of Texas" page 268.

Infrequent in Starr County. Common from El Paso into Edwards Plateau.
 Erect branching perennial with numerous branching stems to 3+ feet tall.



Photo on right by Ken King:
 Seedpods of *M. longiflora* resemble those of more common Red Bud Menodora.
 In this photo there are 2 rounded reddish-green pods tucked below the blooms.
Menodora heterophylla, PDST 334.



Tillandsia baileyi, **Bailey's Ball Moss**, PDST 28. These lovely blooms are pollinated by hummingbirds. Fox squirrels eat the hearts of these, thus killing them. This epiphyte occurs in profusion in old arroyo brush, especially where mist and fog are common. Jann and Rachel rescue this species from nearby old cemeteries, where caretakers discard them. Miller and Nagy perch them in hanging wire baskets from the limbs of an enormous mesquite tree. Note the "baby" *Tillandsia*, lower right, attached to a barren stem of "leatherstem."

Eason includes this species on page 414 of "Texas Wildflowers," noting it is a "species of concern" in Texas.

Similar, smaller, closely-related *Tillandsia recurvata*, PDST 28-29 plays an important role for a special bird. On May 17, 2019, Tim Brush posted photos on the "Native Plants of the Rio Grande Valley" Facebook page, including video, of an active Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet nest in Weslaco, TX in a specimen of the less-celebrated *Tillandsia recurvata*. On March 30, 2017, Michael Emenaker posted photographs and video on the "Rio Grande Valley Birding" Facebook page of another Northern Beardless-Tyrannulet building a nest in *Tillandsia recurvata*. Perhaps we should also value this species a bit more.

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

office 956-583-5400x754 Max Munoz

<max@nationalbutterflycenter.org>

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

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

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:

Landscaping, Etc. Inc.

Noel Villarreal

125 N. Tower Rd, Edinburg

956-874-4267, 956-316-2599

NPP Board & General Meetings are held at

Valley Nature Center

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

Brd Mtgs 6:30pm — Speaker 7:30pm

(meetings begin again in the fall)

* 9/24/2019, 10/22/2019, 11/26/2019 *

(*No meetings during summer or in December.)

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>

[www.heepsnursery.com]



Come visit the VNC:

301 S. Border Ave.

Weslaco, TX 78596

(956) 969-2475

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Photos: Jann Miller and Rachel Nagy use wonderful pots to protect plants and the people who traverse near them. This lovely Horse Crippler Cactus seems happy in a sunny, elevated garden space. *Echinocactus texensis*, PDST 163.



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: _____

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



NPP meeting/speaker:

The Native Plant Project will present:

“Flora of the Chihuahuan Desert ”

by Michael Eason

Tues., May 28th, at 7:30pm

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We hope to see you there!
Feel free to bring a native plant for identification.
Native Plants are available for a donation!!

Below: Photo by Michael Eason, from the terrain of Trans-Pecos Texas. Eason is the author of “Wildflowers of Texas,” a brilliantly illustrated, color-coded manual for wildflower identification. This 2018 publication will be available for purchase and author signing at this month’s meeting. Eason will share his more recent photographs from the Trans-Pecos area, the subject of his presentation and the focus of his next botanical publication.



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Jann Miller’s Gardens, Illustrated With
Rachel Nagy’s Photographs. Species included:
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Kosteletskya depressa, Menodora longiflora,
Tillandsia baileyi, and Echinocactus texensis.