



Garden of Eatin' 4/14/07 planted at Harlingen's Ramsey Park by RGV chapter TX Master Naturalists
Author: Christina Mild [www.riodeltawild.com]

A demonstration garden of locally-native plants which produce edible fruit, seed or blooms. Separated by thornless or thorny habit. These are appropriate choices for sustainable private & public landscaping for humans and wildlife.

Clearing & site preparation by Dick Roesler & Frank Wiseman. Mulch & plant funding provided by Hgn. Parks Dept. Plants from [Heep's Nursery, Harlingen \(457-6834\)](http://www.heepsnursery.com) [www.heepsnursery.com]. CWCMA-NC participating.

Notes of caution: It is important to consume small quantities of unfamiliar fruits to avoid stomach upset. Please note that several poisonous fruits (black, red, orange) are also native to the LRGV.

Thornless	Growing notes:	Fruiting attributes:
<u>Anacua</u> , Sugarberry <i>Ehretia anacua</i>	Long-lived, large tree provides dense shade. Initially is slow growing. Dark green foliage. Medium water requirements.	Fruit is sweet when orange, but becomes soapy tasting when over-ripe. Produces ¼" fruit after rain. Aromatic bloom clusters.
<u>Chapote</u> , TX Persimmon <i>Diospyros texana</i>	Small evergreen tree with beautifully smooth, peeling bark. Requires good drainage.	1' fruit. Ripe when almost black. Very tasty. Females bear fruit once per year. Good for jam.
<u>Fiddlewood</u> , Negrito <i>Citharexylum berlandieri</i>	Evergreen. Fast-growing and adaptable. Tall shrub or tree. Foliage develops attractive orange coloration during stress.	Some plants non-fruiting. Water for frequent fruiting. Attractive clusters of ¼" orange fruits ripen to black. Date-like flavor.
Stinky <u>Passionflower</u> Vine <i>Passiflora foetida</i>	Groundcover or climbing vine prefers full sun. Devoured by Gulf Fritillary caterpillars. Aromatic, disagreeably to some.	Delicately beautiful flowers followed by 1" yellowish fruits. Many seeds; flesh is juicy, tart and sweet. Continuous fruiting with ample irrigation.
Sugar <u>Hackberry</u> , Palo Blanco <i>Celtis laevigata</i>	Tall, attractive tree. Prone to root-rot. Reseeds easily and abundantly.	¼" fruit with thin hard covering. Date-like flavor. Ripe when dark brown. Fall fruiting.
Texas <u>Torchwood</u> <i>Amyris texana</i>	Aromatic 3-leaflet evergreen foliage. Slow to establish. Forms tall shrub in full sun. Tolerates shade.	Flowers after rain. Clusters of ripe fruits are blue-black, citrus flavor. Attracts hummingbird-like hawkmoths in early evening.
Wild <u>Tomato</u> <i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i> var. <i>cerasiforme</i>	Full sun preferred. Will re-seed. Short-stature herbaceous mound or groundcover.	¾" yellow fruit throughout warm season. Small but tasty. Adored by wildlife.

Also edible, not very tasty: Anacahuita (Wild Olive), Barbados Cherry, Turk's Cap, David's Milkberry.

Very hot but edible: Chile pequin.

Edible but pungent: Mountain Torchwood.

Edible blooms: Indian Mallow (*Abutilon fruticosum*) yellow 1-in. blooms open in late afternoon. Colony-forming.

Edible stems/leaves: Verdolaga, Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*) Contains oxalic acid; eat in moderation.

On back: **THORNY** specimens (several are quite tasty!)

Thorny “edibles”	Growing notes	Fruiting attributes:
Brasil <i>Condalia hookeri</i>	Lime-green delicate foliage. Tree or tall hedge. Thorn-tipped branches	Very tasty ¼” blue/black fruit. Large-fruited specimen grows at S TX Heritage Museum in Edinburg. Fruiting after rainfall.
Brush Holly, Coronillo <i>Xylosma flexuosa</i>	Open, airy growth. Tolerates partial shade. Long thorns on central branches. Reddish coloration on new growth. Found near resacas.	Winter fruiting. ¼” fruit ripens to dark red/black. Nice specimens grow at Valley Nature Center in Weslaco. Some specimens produce multiple crops of fruit each year.
Coma, Chicle, Saffron Plum <i>Bumelia celastrina</i>	Forms colonies (<i>comal</i>) from roots. Shiny evergreen foliage. Very fragrant small white flowers.	Blue-black sticky fruit loved by birds. Latex in fruit led to the name “chicle.” (an organic, natural chewing gum)
Dewberry (Rio Grande) <i>Rubus trivialis</i>	Typically found near ponds or riverbanks. Prefers full sun. Butterfly nectar & host plant. Thicket-forming.	Fruit ripens to blue-black in late spring. Requires ample water for best fruiting. Delicious!
Granjeno, Spiny Hackberry <i>Celtis pallida</i>	Spread abundantly by birds. Very thorny. Difficult to control once established. Very well-suited to this area. Adaptable to many soils. Forms interesting arches.	Orange fruits taste like melon or pumpkin. Abundant fruiting after seasonal rain. Survives very well in LRGV growing conditions, too well for many gardeners!
Lotebush, Clepene, Gumdrop Bush <i>Ziziphus obtusifolia</i>	Leafless during drought; leafy after rain. Grows long lanky branches. Attractive foliage & stems. Extremely drought tolerant. Very strong thorns.	Blue-black fruit can be very tasty. Best grown in remote corners away from traffic or as a specimen plant with ample space. Grows well on fences or beneath mesquite.
<i>Biznaga de Chilitos</i> , Tom Thumb; Peanut Cactus <i>Mammillaria multiceps</i>	Shade-tolerant, colony-forming cactus, about 1 inch in size. These grow nicely in pots. Rot-susceptible.	Chili-like red fruits are tart & tasty. Fruiting is frequent, following rains or watering.
Tuna, fruit of the Nopal, Prickly Pear <i>Opuntia engelmannii</i>	Rapid growth. Young pads form in springtime & are edible. Spring flowers are gorgeous. Requires frequent trimming as maintenance.	Fruiting occurs throughout summer. Ripe tuna can be eaten raw after spines are carefully removed. Delicious red drinks, jellies and popsicles created by adding ample sugar.
Strawberry Pitaya <i>Echinocereus enneacanthus</i>	Native to the western LRGV. Upright columnar cactus forms colonies. Gorgeous spring blooms spring. Full sun, good drainage.	Strawberry flavored fruit is extolled by many who have eaten it (after removing spines).
Wolfberry, Berlandier’s <i>Lycium berlandieri</i>	Often planted by birds, thus found under trees, along fences. Leafless in drought & warty-leaved at times.	Very delicious small red fruits appear after every rain. Easily grown under mesquite. These thorns aren’t terribly problematic.

Several leguminous trees have edible beans and/or pods and sticky edible substances surrounding the beans: Mesquite, Ebony and Retama are examples. (Cautionary note: some leguminous seedpods are extremely toxic.)

Edible Fruit/Stems (pads): Night-blooming Cereus (*Acanthocereus pentagonus*) and Nopal, Prickly Pear (*Opuntia engelmannii*) Remove spines from tender new growth. Serve raw or cooked.

Edible Blooms: Spanish Dagger (*Yucca treculeana*) Avoid harvesting entire bloom-head to promote re-seeding.

.....Wolfberry.....Coma.....Biznaga de Chilitos.....Clepene.....Granjeno.....

