

Development of Native Forb Germplasm Releases for Habitat Restoration in south Texas

Forrest S. Smith, William R. Ocumpaugh, Paula D. Maywald, John Lloyd-Reilley, Shelley D. Maher, and Keith Pawelek

South Texas Natives, the E "Kika" de la Garza Plant Materials Center and Texas Agrilife Research are working on the development of several native forb germplasms for release to commercial seed producers. These include orange zexmenia, clammyweed, tallowweed, and deer pea vetch.

Goliad germplasm Orange zexmenia is a warm season, perennial forb or sub-shrub to be released in 2008. It provides good to excellent forage for white-tailed deer and livestock, and produces seed eaten by bobwhite quail and other wildlife.

Zapata germplasm Rio Grande Clammyweed is a warm season, annual forb to be released in 2008. It produces large amounts of seed eaten by white winged doves, mourning doves, bobwhite quail, scaled quail, and other wildlife.

In 2009 we will release a plantain blend of 3 species including redseed, Hookers, and bottlebrush plantain. Plantains are commonly called tallow weed by ranchers and wildlife managers. Tallow weeds are cool season, annual forbs that provide excellent forage to wildlife and livestock, and produce seed that is frequently eaten by quail.

Also in 2009, we hope to release deer pea vetch. This plant is a cool season, annual forb that produces large amounts of seed utilized by a variety of wildlife species, and forage that is consumed by white-tailed deer and livestock.

These upcoming forb releases will be important additions to native seed mixes for south Texas, provide native plant options for wildlife food plots, and the potential for increasing diversity in stands of non-native grasses with the aid of grass selective herbicides.

Cooperative funding was provided by the numerous donors of South Texas Natives