



Natural Resources Conservation Service

2022 Progress Report of Activities E. "Kika" de la Garza Plant Materials Center Kingsville, Texas

The following are highlights of Plant Materials Center (PMC) activities for 2022. Please contact the PMC for more detailed information.

Projects and Opportunities at the STPMC



Field planting of a pollinator friendly seed mix of native plant species

Most of 2022 was spent just keeping the plants alive and recording data. A large backlog of seed cleaning was completed over the summer thanks to our labor agreement with the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and seed germination tests will be performed on those samples starting in January 2023.

We completed our third year of data collection for our Engelmann's daisy evaluation plot, and genetic samples will be taken early this spring. Collection of the second year of field data and seed harvest from the Maximillian sunflower plot was completed

and we plan for one more year of data and seed harvest. The gulf cordgrass advanced evaluation plot is in its second year here at the STPMC and in Baytown with Scott Alford, NRCS. The germination trials and evaluation of the field data this summer should indicate if we should pursue a seed release for South Texas or recommend the LAPMC plant release, West Bay Germplasm released in 2020.

Our contract with former PMC Manager John Reilley has also been productive and we received two drafts of Native Plant Journal Articles, one final study report, and two technical notes which will be finalized in 2023. Look for technical notes on Native Seed Mixes for Wildlife and Pollinator Plantings on Sandy and Clay Soils in South Texas and Cool-Season Forages for South Texas to be out soon.

As travel and meeting restrictions eased, we were finally able to attend a SWCD meeting and give updates to the board. As always, we appreciate their continued support of our program.

Plant Materials Center Staff

Shelly Maher
PMC Manager

Randy Miller
Agronomist

Rebecca Aguilar
Biological Technician

Kristy Oates
Texas State Conservationist

Charles Kneuper
State Resource Conservationist

E. "Kika" de la Garza
Plant Materials Center
USDA – NRCS
3409 North FM 1355
Kingsville, Texas 78363

Phone: (361) 595-1313

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/plant-materials/stpmc>

PMC hosted a tour for a university group, where students and faculty were introduced to the PMC program as well as other career opportunities in NRCS by field office staff.

PMC hosted three sessions of UTV training for the local Zone UTV coordinator to train field office staff. As training sessions are being planned for Field Office staff, I encourage anyone to reach out to the PMC to let us know how we can assist.

More information about our NRCS plant releases and publications is available on the PMC website.

Staff Changes

Rebecca “Becca” Aguilar joined the STPMC staff in August 2022 as our new Farm Foreman. Becca graduated from Texas A&M–Corpus Christi with a bachelor’s degree in Environmental Sciences with a minor in Biology. She worked with Dr. Devlin during an undergraduate internship with black mangroves, *Avicennia germinans*, where she found her love for restoration and plant work.

Becca also worked 2.5 years in the natural resource management field as a Biological Science technician and interned with the National Park Service where she worked with South Texas native grass species that also are used by NRCS.

Becca plans to earn her master’s degree in Natural Resource Management and use it to further her career with the NRCS.



New STPMC Farm Foreman Rebecca Aguilar

Seed Collections Needed

The STPMC is seeking seed collections from South Texas in 2023 of the following: Texas crownbeard (*Verbesina microptera*) AKA frostweed, blood sage (*Salvia coccinea*) AKA tropical or red sage, copper globemallow (*Sphaeralcea angustifolia*) AKA narrowleaf globemallow, Virginia wildrye (*Elymus virginicus*), and partridge pea (*Chaemaecrista fasciculata*).

We plan to start our evaluations of frostweed and red sage in spring 2024, so collections of those would be the most helpful.

Please contact the PMC if you would like more information.



Queen butterfly on frostweed plants

About the PMC

The E. "Kika" de la Garza Plant Materials Center (PMC) is a 91-acre facility established to provide cost-effective vegetative solutions for soil and water conservation problems. This means identifying plants and developing techniques for successful conservation use. It also means assisting in the commercial development of these plants and promoting their use in natural resource conservation and other environmental programs.

The PMC was established in 1981. It is one of 25 centers located throughout the United States. The PMC is operated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in cooperation with Texas A&M University-Kingsville, the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute (CKWRI), South Texas Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and the Gulf Coast Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts. The E. "Kika" de la Garza PMC serves approximately 27 million acres of the southern portion of Texas.

Program Emphasis

The mission of the E. "Kika" de la Garza PMC is to develop and transfer plant science technology to solve natural resource problems in the South Texas area. Plant testing and plant selection, as well as the development of new plant science technologies, are the primary products of our program. The PMC conducts plantings and studies at the Center and off-Center with cooperating partners. The PMC works with NRCS Field Offices, Conservation Districts, federal and state agencies, and private landowners.

Our current program emphasis at the PMC is in the following areas:

- Rangeland Habitat Restoration and Enhancement
- Pollinator Habitat
- Coastal Shoreline Stabilization
- Cover Crops and Soil Health

Presentations & Trainings for FY 2022

Maher, S. A status update of the E. "Kika" de la Garza PMC program and activities in 2021 was given at the SWCD regional board meeting.

Guerra, S. The STPMC hosted three sessions of ROHVA Basic Driver Course.

Maher, S. Tour of the PMC grounds and equipment given to the NRCDP TEXAS TAMUK/Puerto Rico Student participants.

Native Plant Society of Texas South Texas Chapter and S. Maher. Pollinator brochure and seed packets handed out the Butterfly Tent at the Rockport Hummerbird Festival.

Maher, S. The Pollinator Game, pollinator brochures, and fact sheets presented to the Gulf Coast Women's Club President's group.

Publications for FY 2022

Faulk, T. and S. Maher 2022. Loma Germplasm purple threeawn release brochure.

Faulk, T. and S. Maher 2022. Loma Germplasm purple threeawn release notice.

Maher, S. 2022. Year 2020 Progress Report of Activities.

Current Availability of South Texas Ecotype Releases

Common Name	Scientific Name	Available From	Available
Lavaca Germplasm Canada Wildrye	<i>Elymus canadensis</i>	Turner, Douglass King, Bamert, and Pogue	Now
Falfurrias Germplasm Big Sacaton	<i>Sporobolus wrightii</i>	Douglass King, Bamert, and Pogue	Now
Kinney Germplasm False Rhodes Grass	<i>Trichloris crinita</i>	Douglass King, Bamert, and Pogue	Now
Catarina Blend Bristlegrass	<i>Setaria leucopila</i> & <i>Setaria vulpiseta</i>	Douglass King, Bamert, Pogue, and Turner	Now
Mariah Germplasm Hooded Windmillgrass	<i>Chloris cucullata</i>	Douglass King, Bamert, Pogue Agri Partners	Now
Welder Germplasm Shortspike Windmillgrass	<i>Chloris subdolichostachya</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Dilley Germplasm Slender Grama	<i>Bouteloua repens</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Chaparral Germplasm Hairy Grama	<i>Bouteloua hirsuta</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Atascosa Germplasm Texas Grama	<i>Bouteloua rigidiseta</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
La Salle Germplasm Arizona Cottontop	<i>Digitaria californica</i>	Douglass King, Bamert, Pogue, and Turner	Now
Zapata Germplasm Rio Grande Clammyweed	<i>Polanisia dodecandra</i> ssp. <i>riograndensis</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Maverick Germplasm Pink Pappusgrass	<i>Pappophorum bicolor</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Webb Germplasm Whiplash Pappusgrass	<i>Pappophorum vaginatum</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Hidalgo Germplasm Multiflower False Rhodes Grass	<i>Trichloris pluriflora</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Oso Germplasm Hall's Panicum	<i>Panicum hallii</i> var. <i>filipes</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
South Texas Germplasm Sideoats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i> var. <i>caespitosa</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Rio Grande Germplasm Prairie Acacia	<i>Acacia angustissima</i> var. <i>hirta</i>	Douglass King	Fall 2022
Venado Germplasm Awnless Bushsunflower	<i>Simsia calva</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Balli Germplasm Prostrate Bundleflower	<i>Desmanthus virgatus</i> var. <i>depressus</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Fall 2022
Goliad Germplasm Orange Zexmenia	<i>Wedelia texana</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Duval Germplasm Red Lovegrass	<i>Eragrostis secundiflora</i> ssp. <i>oxylepis</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Ramadero Germplasm Spike Lovegrass	<i>Eragrostis spicata</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Nueces Germplasm Sand Dropseed	<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now
Carrizo Blend Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> var. <i>scoparium</i>	Douglass King, Pogue, and Bamert	Now, limited
Fuego Germplasm Indian Blanket	<i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	Douglass King	Now
Loma Germplasm Purple Threeawn	<i>Aristida purpurea</i>	Douglass King	Now, limited

Seed companies abbreviated above are Douglass King Seed Company, Pogue Agri Partners, Bamert Seed Company, and Turner Seed Company

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