

Natural Resources Conservation Service

2023 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 2023. Please contact the PMC for more detailed information.

Projects and Opportunities at the STPMC



Painted Lady Butterfly on Maximilian Sunflowers

In 2023, we replanted about half of our foundation and breeder seed fields and will replant the rest of them in 2024 to meet the current demand for our conservation plant releases by our Texas seed producers.

Collection of the third year of field data and seed harvest from the Maximilian sunflower evaluation nursery was completed in 2023. However, we plan to test the seed quality of the

harvest and do one more year of evaluation in 2024 before making final selections for further testing. The gulf cordgrass advanced evaluation planting is in its third year here at the South Texas PMC (STPMC) and in Baytown with Scott Alford, NRCS. We will complete the seed germination trials in 2024 and summarize the results of our field data to determine if a seed release for South Texas is warranted or recommend the Louisiana PMC (LAPMC) plant release, West Bay Germplasm released in 2020.

Our contract with former PMC Manager John Reilley was also completed in 2023, resulting in more technical note drafts and a draft of a switchgrass release notice. We will proceed with this conservation seed release following a field emergence trial in 2024.

Thanks to our partnership with Texas A&M University-Kingsville, the PMC was able to host a tour once again for students and faculty to introduce them to the PMC program as well as other career opportunities in NRCS. We also gave presentations on the PMC program and pollinator habitat to a variety of groups in 2023, both professional and local interest.

Plant Materials Center Staff

Shelly Chambers
PMC Manager

Hayden Taylor
Agronomist

Rebecca Aguilar
Biological Technician

Kristy Oates
Texas State Conservationist

Charles Kneuper
State Resource Conservationist

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Staff Changes



Hayden Taylor, PMC Agronomist

Hayden Taylor joined the STPMC staff in December of 2023 as our new Agronomist. Hayden graduated from Tarleton State University with a bachelor's degree in animal science and later went on to complete his master's degree at Texas A&M University in agronomy. During his time as a graduate student, Hayden studied weed science focusing on dicamba drift mitigation.

He was raised on a farm in central Texas where he grew up raising beef cattle and growing 'Coastal' bermudagrass hay. This is where he developed his life-long passion for agriculture and became a good steward of the land. In addition to his love for agriculture, Hayden is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys catching redfish on the flats.

Hayden plans to further his career as an agronomist and create a positive impact on the conservation of land in south Texas.

Seed Collections Needed

The STPMC is seeking South Texas seed collections of frostweed (*Verbesina microptera*) and red sage (*Salvia coccinea*).

We plan to start our evaluations of frostweed and red sage in spring 2025.

Please contact the PMC if you would like more information.

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



Red Sage

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 2023

Maher, S. A presentation about the NRCS PMC program seed release process was given at the November Plant Party co-hosted by NRCS, AgriLife, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Maher, S. A presentation about the E. "Kika" de la Garza PMC program and activities was given at the December Texas NRCS Office Hour.

Maher, S. A status update of the E. "Kika" de la Garza PMC program and activities in 2022 was given at the SWCD regional board meeting in February.

Maher, S. A presentation entitled Shared Resources Brings Success about the partnership between the E. "Kika" de la Garza PMC program and Texas Native Seeds was given at the 2023 National Native Seed Conference in Washington, D.C.

Chambers, 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. Chambers. Pollinator brochure and seed packets handed out the Butterfly Tent at the Rockport Hummerbird Festival.

Chambers, S. A presentation about the E. "Kika" de la Garza PMC program and activities was given at the Central Region PMC Quarterly Meeting in September.

Chambers, S. A presentation on Pollinator Habitat, pollinator brochures, and fact sheets were presented at a small acreage producers training session on September.

Publications for FY 2023

Maher, S. and R. Miller 2023. Year 2022 Progress Report of Activities.

Falk, A., K. Pawelek, S. Maher, R. Shadow, C. Carr, C. Shackelford, T. Wayland, D. Jobes, S. Lutfy, and J. Bow. 2023. Texas Native Seeds Plant Material Center Partnership. CKWRI Current Research 2021-2022.

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

Seed companies abbreviated above are Douglass King Seed Company, Bamert Seed Company, and Turner Seed Company.

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