



Its ability to grow anywhere in Texas makes clammyweed a desirable pollinator plant that can flower from April to October ensuring pollinators have nectar and pollen available over an extended period of time.

Clammyweed

Its value is in the eye (or proboscis) of the beholder.

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When you read or hear of a plant whose name ends in “weed” does it give you an uncomfortable feeling? I suppose it would depend upon your frame of mind, for instance to a quail hunter the words broomweed and ragweed bring memories of excellent quail hunts when these plants were plentiful. To a farmer or rancher

these plants have lessor value and bring up memories of trying to eliminate plants they despise.

Clammyweed, *Polanisia dodecandra*, is represented in Texas with three subspecies, but the appearance of the plants are all very similar, differing more in the regions of the state where they grow. One or more of these subspecies of clammyweed can

be found in all 10 vegetational regions of Texas so everyone gets to share this desirable “weed.”

Clammyweed is an upright growing annual that reaches a height of 24— 30 inches on a single stem or with several branches, all with gland-tipped sticky hair on the stems and leaves. Leaves are alternate with each lower leaves three-





Clammymyweed grows across Texas and produces spectacular flowers that are very showy and worthy of any native wildflower garden.

lobed with each leaflet ½ to 1 ½ inches in length. The flowers are found on the terminal tips of the stems and may stretch as long as 10 inches with each flower having four white petals up to 1 inch in length, each with a notch in the tip. The flowers have a red gland at the base of each petal and numerous dark pink to purple stamens on long stalks, longer than the petals, giving the flower a spidery appearance.

Fruit is a slender, pointed capsule that grows pointing upward and is covered with gland-tipped sticky hairs. Pods grow 1 ½ to 2 inches in length and split to release the seeds. Handling the plant will reveal the sticky or clammy feel and the rank-smelling odor of the leaves and stems, hence the name clammymyweed.

The value of clammymyweed lies in its flowers and seeds. Seeds are eaten by quail, dove and other gamebirds and songbirds. The unusual and showy flowers of clammymyweed are especially attractive to butterflies. The value of a plant for

pollinators is often overlooked, but in the past decade the value of a highly-diverse habitat for many species of birds, mammals and insects is gaining attention. It has low palatability to livestock, deer and antelope but occasionally you will see a plant with a few bite marks.

To find clammymyweed, look for disturbed areas since it is quick to establish on areas with little competition. The perimeter of pads built for oil, gas or wind turbine activities will often show the emergence of clammymyweed. The seed was already in the soil, just needing disturbance to bring it near the surface to hasten germination. Following the terrible wildfire season of 2011 clammymyweed was one of the first forbs to appear after the burned areas received a rain. Seed is commercially available for the South Texas region as “Rio Grande Clammymyweed” which was released jointly by the E. “Kika” de la Garza Plant Materials Center, Kingsville Texas and South Texas Natives. ☺

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