

ORANGE ZEXMENIA

Wedelia acapulcensis var.
hispidia (Kunth) Strother

plant symbol = ZEH12

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center

Alternate Names

hairy wedelia

Zexmenia hispida, *Wedelia hispida*



Uses

Ornamental: Orange zexmenia, *Wedelia acapulcensis* var. *hispidia*, is an attractive plant for landscape use, because of its all-around hardiness, shrubby growth form and brightly colored flowers. It is easily cultivated.

Range: Additionally, orange zexmenia is a good plant for inclusion in native seed mixes for range use. It is eaten by sheep, goats, and cattle.

Wildlife: Orange zexmenia is also useful for native site restoration. It is often browsed by white-tailed deer.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

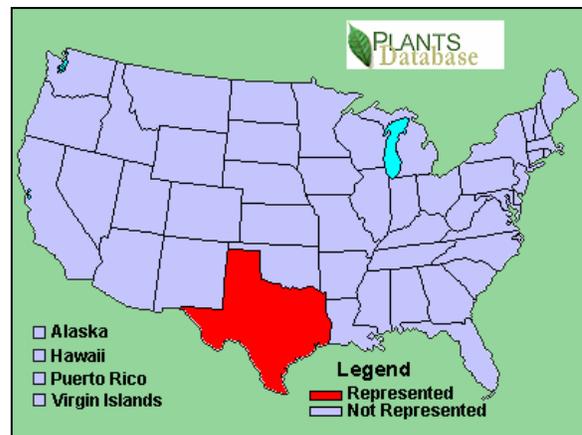
Description

Orange zexmenia is a common, native, warm-season, perennial forb. A member of the sunflower (Asteraceae) family, it grows approximately 24 to 30 inches tall blooming from March to December in South Texas, and May to September in the Texas Hill Country. It has a shrub-like growth form and has bright yellow-orange composite flowers. The seeds are an achene, and appear similar to a sunflower seed, but are smaller. The seeds come in a wide variety of colors, shapes and patterns. There are approximately 140,520 seeds per pound. Dryland (non-irrigated) field production can yield 60 pounds of seed per acre per year.

Adaptation

Orange zexmenia is hardy in both dry and moist conditions. It grows on varied soil types, on brushy sites, and in open spaces. It is found in parts of Texas and Mexico. In Texas, it is found along the Edwards Plateau, the Rio Grande Plains, and less frequently in the Trans Pecos, and in the southern portions of north central and southeast regions of Texas.

Known Distribution



6/6/01

Establishment

Orange zexmenia can best be established from seed. Seeds can be sown directly, or can be grown in a greenhouse to establish transplants for later planting. Germination of this species is variable between collections and harvests. Germination tests conducted at the Kika de la Garza Plant Material Center (1999) found germination rates ranging from a low of one percent to a high of 73 percent.

For direct seeding, we recommend broadcasting seed in the late winter or early spring into a clean, weed free seedbed. Seeds should be covered from ¼ to ½" depth to ensure good soil to seed contact. Transplants should be planted in early to mid-spring, to ensure good root establishment before the summer heat arrives.

For greenhouse seeding, we recommend seeding into a shallow germination tray filled with a thin layer of gravel, a layer of sand to promote drainage, and a layer of potting soil. Small seedlings can then be transferred to larger pots or containers when they are ¾ to 1 inch in height. It is important not to over water, because the small seedlings are prone to damping off, but soil should not be allowed to dry out completely either. New plants can be transplanted into their permanent locations after two and a half to three months.

Plant survival is usually fairly good. A 1998 field evaluation conducted at the Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center in Kingsville, Texas, found that orange zexmenia had the best survival rate of the four forbs evaluated.

Management

Orange zexmenia requires little management other than occasional weeding. It can survive in both droughty and moist conditions. For seed production purposes, occasional irrigation during extremely droughty periods may help seed fertility.

Orange zexmenia can be harvested with a combine. When harvesting orange zexmenia, we run the combine's cylinder speed at 900 RPM, the concave is at 6 mm, the sieve is open ¼", and the fan is off. Orange zexmenia can also be harvested using a weed eater with a stripper attachment. To clean the seed, it should first be run through a brush machine and can then be cleaned further using a clipper style seed cleaner.

For additional assistance regarding the production and establishment of orange zexmenia, please contact the Plant Material Center at (361) 595-1313.

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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