

Some Days You Just Never Know What Might Happen



Friday, after lunch, I took my own advice and took the pooches for a hike. But instead of our usual walk through the woods to the pond I decided to take them into the meadows of the Biology Station so I could check on some things. I've been spending so much time in east Texas locales that I wasn't too sure what was happening in our own backyard!

I wanted to verify the numbers and status of the Annual Sundews (hundreds of thousands of them and in bloom right now), the Yucca (flower spikes forming on half a dozen large specimens), and the basal rosettes of the Navasota Ladies Tresses (now in their usual spring die back, but fewer rosettes than I had hoped). In the process I found FOS (first of season) specimens of Rose Gentian, many "summer" Gaillardia, a Prairie Plantain about to burst into bloom, and the pink flower-balls of the Sensitive Briar. Taken together they all tell me that summer is just around the corner.

The blooms of the Green Eyes (*Berlandiera pumila*) in the dem-

onstration garden reminded me of the Roy E. Larsen Sandylands Preserve near Silsbee, TX (Hardin Co.) just north of Beaumont, where I had seen these just a day earlier. The Yucca (*Y. louisiana* or *Y. arkansana*, depending on your interpretation of the current status of the species), too, were at about the same stage—spikes about 3 feet tall.

After checking on the Yucca, I happened to see a particularly nice specimen of Ground Cherry (*Physalis* sp.) and stopped to take a photo. When I looked up, I was surprised to see a small clump of woodsorrel with smallish, red-edged "shamrock" leaves but very large yellow flowers with orange marks in the throat. Could it be? Was this the same plant that I had seen at the Larsen Sandylands the day before?

Excitedly, I grabbed a few shots of the entire plant and of leaf and flower details and returned to the house to check the literature. Sure enough, near as I could tell from the references on hand, it looked an awful lot like Price's Wood-



Price's Woodsorrel, Oxalis priceae ssp. texana, a surprising, yet entirely satisfying, new plant for the Lost Pines.

sorrel, *Oxalis priceae ssp. texana*. I quickly sent a photo off to Jason Singhurst, rare plant guy at Texas Parks & Wildlife, with a query.

He agreed with me that it looked like Price's Woodsorrel. Problem is this species is not just unknown from Bastrop Co., it hasn't been recorded west of IH 45 (Walker & Montgomery Co.)! Still, if there was anyplace that it could occur outside of its known range, the sandy prairies of the Lost Pines is definitely it. On Saturday, I returned to the location to find at least eight plants in bloom with

another half-dozen or so in-between blooms.

While there I noted a large-flowered sun-rose (another FOS) which I subsequently identified not as the nearly ubiquitous Rosemary Sun-rose but as a Georgia Sun-rose, another new species for the station (though already known to occur in the county). Knowing that good things seem to happen in threes, I trolled the meadows later that afternoon for Celestials—no such luck!

Still, there's always today...