

# NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS

## *Lindheimer Chapter*

### PLANT OF THE MONTH JULY, 2010

#### YELLOW BELLS, ESPERANZA, *TECOMA STANS*



Left – *Tecoma stans* var. *angustata*

Below – *Tecoma stans* var. *stans* “Gold Star”



The species, *Tecoma stans*, consists of a number of varieties that occur naturally in South Texas and the American Southwest, Mexico, Central and South America as well as South Florida and the Caribbean. They are loved for their display of large yellow trumpet shaped flowers that appear from April through November. It has long thin seed pods in the fall.

The variety most commonly found in “big box” nurseries is a tropical, *Tecoma stans* var. *stans*, or its cultivar, “Gold Star.” It has broad leaves, is very cold sensitive, and requires more water than our native variety, *Tecoma stans* var. *angustata*. This variety occurs in Texas in the Trans Pecos and Big Bend regions. It requires full sun and a well drained soil, and tolerates drought better than the tropical variety. In fact, it is reported to bloom better when allowed to dry out between watering, simulating the summer monsoon rains of the desert Southwest. It can be distinguished from the tropical variety by its narrower leaves (see picture and inset).

Esperanza is an irregularly shaped, deciduous shrub that can be 3’ – 6’ tall and almost as wide (the tropical can reach 9’). It can be cut back in winter and will resprout and flourish the following spring. Look for our native variety at native plant nurseries, or start it from freshly collected seed or softwood cuttings. Deer tend to leave this plant alone once it is established.