

# NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS

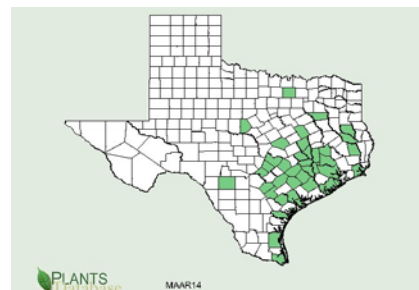
## *Lindheimer Chapter*

### PLANT OF THE MONTH SEPTEMBER, 2011

#### ***TURK'S CAP, MALVAVISCUS ARBOREUS VAR. DRUMMONDII***



**Turk's Cap Flower**



**USDA Range Map: Texas**



**Turk's Cap Fruit**

Turk's Cap is a great plant for shady areas. In its native habitat it is found in partially shady, sandy soils along streams and at the edge of woods. However, it is quite adaptable and will grow in a variety of soils, moisture, and sunlight conditions. It is a hardy perennial that will remain evergreen in mild winters, but usually dies back in the Hill Country. Here it is rarely larger than 4' x 4'. From late spring through the fall it has interesting red flowers that never fully open. Still hummingbirds and butterflies seek them out for their nectar. It has also been reported that Orioles sample the nectar. In addition to the commonly seen red blooms, there are cultivars that have white or pink flowers.

In late summer and fall the flowers are followed by small red fruit that resemble miniature apples. This leads to another common name: Manzanilla (Spanish for small apple). These are edible, either raw or cooked, but they are also sought after by many small mammals so they may be hard to find. If you do collect some of the fruit, it can be dried and the seeds used to start new plants. Propagation can also be done with softwood cuttings taken in summer or fall. Turk's Cap can be periodically pruned to keep it short, or allowed to grow taller for background planting in shady areas where few other plants will thrive. In favorable conditions it can spread aggressively. It is considered moderately deer resistant, but deer will browse it when conditions are severe.