

# NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF TEXAS

## Lindheimer Chapter

### PLANT OF THE MONTH APRIL, 2014

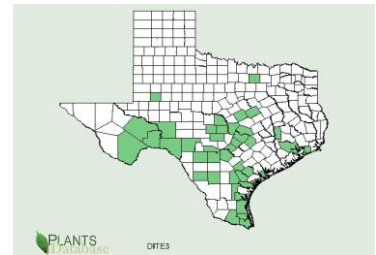
#### Texas Persimmon, *Diospyros texana*



Texas Persimmon



Fruit and  
Flower Detail



USDA Range Map - Texas

Texas Persimmon, also called Mexican Persimmon, is a large shrub or small tree, generally 10' to 15' tall, although it can grow to 35' under favorable conditions. It is common in Central and South Texas, but can be found from Houston to the Big Bend Region and south into northeastern Mexico. It generally grows in rocky upland areas and slopes of hillsides. It is very drought tolerant and disease resistant. In the southern parts of its range it is semi-evergreen. In other areas it is deciduous.

Perhaps its most striking feature of Texas Persimmon is its smooth grey bark, which on older trunks takes on a sinewy, muscular look. It has small flowers which appear in spring, with male and female flowers on separate trees. On female trees, the flowers are followed by dark purple or black fruit, about 1" in diameter, which ripen in late summer and fall. The edible fruit is sweet, with a prune like taste, and is eaten by many birds and mammals.

The wood of Texas Persimmon is very hard, and on older trunks the heartwood is almost black, similar to the true Ebony (*Diospyros ebenum*) of India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, to which it is related.

Texas Persimmon makes an attractive landscape plant for small spaces. Give it a sunny location and protection from deer, which will browse the leaves. It is generally pruned high, to show the interesting bark. The ripe fruit can stain, so avoid planting female trees near patios and driveways.

**Note:** Texas Persimmon is a NPSOT NICE!<sup>™</sup> selection for Spring 2014.

Text by John Siemssen. Photos by Sally & Andy Wasowski and Joseph A. Marcus, Wildflower Center

Previous Plants of the Month can be found on the NPSOT Lindheimer Chapter Website:

<http://npsot.org/wp/lindheimer/plant-of-the-month/>