

**NECHES RIVER ROSE-MALLOW**     *Hibiscus dasycalyx*

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**STATUS:** Federal candidate designation since February 28, 1996 (50 CFR Part 17 FR Vol. 61, No. 40 [61 FR 7595 7613])



**DESCRIPTION:** The Neches River rose-mallow (*Hibiscus dasycalyx*) endemic to Texas, is a wetland species. This shrubby perennial plant grows from 3-7 feet tall with one or more stems per clump. It is fairly erect and often branched with non-pubescent cylindrical stems. The 1-2 inch petioles support leaves that are non-pubescent, simple, alternate on the stem and light to dark green in color. Leaves are arrowhead-shaped with three deep lobes that measure 2-4 inches long and 1-4 inches wide at the base. These linear leaves gradually narrow to 0.1-0.2 inches wide at the tip and have irregularly cut or saw-tooth margins. Flowers are produced in the leaf axils near the tips of branches. The bracteoles and five sepal calyx are densely pubescent. The

large showy blooms are 3-6 inches wide with five white to cream colored petals. Red or purple coloration is usually present near the center. Budding and leafing normally occur late March to April, with most flowering in early June to August. Fruits are generally present July to November.

**HABITAT:** It is a perennial herb found in wetlands with areas of open sun. Populations are generally located within the floodplain of a permanent stream, river, or other body of water that is flooded at least once a year. Plant bases are normally in standing water in these lowland terrains, with water level dropping but soil remaining wet until very late in the season.

**RANGE:** The Neches River rose mallow is known to occur within Cherokee, Houston and Trinity Counties, Texas. The known populations are located within the floodplains of the Angelina, Neches and Trinity Rivers and most occur on private land or highway right-of-way. Each population site is less than ten acres.

**THREATS:** Site disturbances that alter wetland drainage, stream channelization, and urban and highway development reduce suitable habitat for this species. Herbicides, brush clearing, and wetland conversions to improve pastures affect available habitat. Interspecific hybridization with other members of the same genus also threaten this species.



**RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT:** Avoid site disturbance and alteration of the natural hydrology. Minimize herbicide application and use selective spot-treatment for unwanted, invasive, and competitive species. Provide a 50-100 feet buffer between rose-mallow habitat and any activity.

**REFERENCES:**

Texas Natural Heritage Program element occurrence records.

Warnock, M.J. 1995. Statue report on *Hibiscus dasycalyx*. Prepared for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 40pp.

Creech, D., Parish, D., Clark, B. Saving the Neches River Rose Mallow, *Hibiscus dasycalyx*. <http://www.sfa.edu/ag/arboretum/RRR/npsotfall1999hibdas.htm>.