



Ferns and Vines

Ferns and vines may play a large role in ecosystem function albeit a minor, or yet to be defined role, in riparian function.



"One of the beautiful spots of Nueces Canyon ... passes by a large hole of deep blue water. Just above the waterhole is a series of strong springs from which gush sparkling streams of clear cold water. The water from theses springs is unfailing. Masses of ferns and other water plants line the river bank for some distance ..."

1930-1940

From *Nueces Headwaters Country*, by Alan A. Stoval, published by The Naylor Company, 1959. pg 363.

"Fine Ferns ... deep Pools ... rocky bottom ... and constant supply of water ... Banks were a thicket of mesquite, live oak, pecan and mulberry."

William Bollaert's 1844 description the Leona River riparian areas, reporting his finding to the Geological Society of London.

Scouring rush

(*Equisetum laevigatum*)
EQUIsetaceae

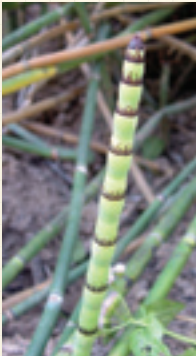
Horsetail

Wetland Indicator Status:

OBL

Stability Rating:

6



Scouring rush is an odd-looking, but unmistakable plant. The upright stems, which bear no leaves, resemble hollow green segmented tubes up to 3-feet tall. It forms colonies interconnected by rhizomes and is normally found in partially shaded areas. Since it is an obligate wetland species, it is a good indicator that the riparian area is storing water and maintaining a water table connection.

Horsetail stems contain silica and were used by early settlers to scour pots and pans, hence the name; scouring rush.

River fern

(*Thelypteris ovata* var. *lindheimeri*)
THElypteridaceae

Lindheimer shield fern

Wetland Indicator Status:

FAC

Stability Rating:

6

This large robust fern forms colonies by a network of rhizomes. Leaves are long and triangular, with many smaller leaflets. River fern sometimes occurs in large thick beds under dense shade within floodplains. It can also be seen around springs and seeps.



Maidenhair fern

(*Adiantum capillus-veneris*)
PTERidaceae

Wetland Indicator Status:

FACW

Stability Rating:

5



This delicate fern also forms colonies through a network of rhizomes. The leaf is composed of many irregular-shaped and lobed segments. The plant is found most often on seepy limestone bluffs or around springs in the Edwards Plateau portion of the basin.

Vines

Vines are an undergrowth component of many riparian woodlands. Often overlooked, they are seldom valued for their riparian function. Some have edible berries; most are browsed by wildlife; and many host insects. Vines seem to tie things together in the riparian area.

Spanish grape

Graybark or Gray-leaf grape

(*Vitis cinerea*) VITACEAE



Possum grape

Cow itch

(*Cissus incise*) VITACEAE



Mustang grape

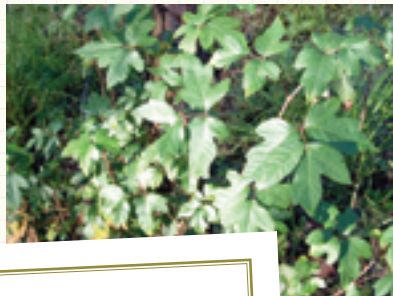
(*Vitis mustangensis*) VITACEAE



Poison ivy

(*Toxicodendron radicans*)

ANACARDIACEAE



1767—"We crossed it four times...All this intervening space and its surroundings are composed of hills and very dense thickets of blackberries, plum, pear and apple trees and mesquites, cedars and silver birches intertwined with a great many wild grape vines. A man on horseback can travel this road only with difficulty."

Historic Note on the East Nueces River in Edwards Co by Nicolás de Lafora.

1850's—"Regarding the coastal Nueces...A number of long, narrow islands form the shore, and are so near one another as to form the segment of a circle around the coast, so that the interjacent sea is thus completely land-locked and continues ever calm. Near the shore, and for about 100 miles inward, the country is flat, abounding with rich prairies and well-watered by rapid and shallow rivers, the banks of which are generally fringed with stately and graceful trees of various kinds, such as the cotton tree, live oak, mesquite, mulberry—most of these are thickly-crowned with grape vines which bear abundance of fruit in season. It is a curious feature in the level country that no trees grow in any part of it, except near rivers or some collection of water. The chaperelle, or underwood, with which the country abounds, cannot be regarded as an exception to this."

Historic notes on lower Nueces country from *Recollection of Western Texas 1852-55* by Two of the U.S. Mounted Rifles published by Texas Tech Press.

Purple leather flower

(*Clematis pitcher*)
RANUnculacea



Common morning glory

(*Ipomoea cordatotriloba*)
CONVolvulaceae



Sawleaf greenbriar

(*Smilax bona-nox*)
SMILacaceae



Dewberry

Zarzamora
(*Rubus trivialis*)
ROSAceae



Alamo vine

(*Merremia dissecta*)
CONVolvulaceae



Dodder

(*Cuscuta sp*)
CUSCutaceae



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