



The Texas Sage

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Vol. 12 No. 8
August 2000

President's Corner . . .

[*This month's article was written by Gailon Hardin, North Central Chapter Vice-President*]

John Davis is always enthusiastic and entertaining when he gives us a program. This time was no exception with his 'Designing Landscapes for Wildlife'.

He discussed the components of habitat: food (natives of course), water, shelter, and space. He explained how habitat patches can be connected through design.

- Create habitat by layering vegetation from the canopy to the ground cover.
- Be aware that the vegetation type, width, and continuity will affect how a wildlife corridor will be used.

- Multiple connections of habitat patches are crucial, so that circuitry (flowing movement patterns) of wildlife is possible.
- Hard edges encourage movement along the boundary, while soft and convoluted edges encourage movement across the boundary.
- The size of habitat patches, their shape, and their distance from a source habitat all affect the re-colonization rates of the 'island patches'.

All of these concepts can be

applied to the backyard, but each one becomes more critical as we apply them to entire regions, such as cities and counties. Therefore, it is extremely important that we, as citizens, get involved in our local governments so we can guide the decisions that affect the health of our natural ecosystem.

Next month, Jane Bartosiewicz, Master Naturalist and Master Gardener, will show us some beautiful wildflowers and tell us how and when to plant them.

- Gailon Hardin

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Keep Our Gardens Beautiful!

Have you been to one of our demonstration gardens recently? Wouldn't you like to visit one to see how the younger plants have filled in and to admire the beautiful landscaping? You'll have the perfect opportunity if you volunteer one morning of your time to help with the maintenance of one of our demonstration gardens!

Chapter volunteers have done a wonderful job maintaining our beautiful demonstration gardens at the Hulen Library and at the Granbury Road Sub-Courthouse. But new faces are always welcome to help on garden workdays. If you would like to volunteer a few hours of your time contact Helena Van Heiningen or Vickie Neal (Granbury Road Garden) or Ev Woodrey (Hulen Library Garden).

Veterans Park Wildscape News

Molly Hollar would like to extend her thanks to the many NPSOT volunteers who gave their time and expertise to make the Good Turn Day a success! She would also like to express her appreciation to John Snowden of Bluestem Nurseries, who has donated all of the grasses that have been planted at the wildscape since the projects inception and has volunteered his horticultural expertise. And the people who have been digging out the privet really appreciate the use of your bushwhacker, John!

During this hot time of year, most of the maintenance at the wildscape consists of mulching, aerating, trimming and preparing beds for fall planting. In September when the temperatures

cool down a bit, volunteers will begin planting around the new pavilion. Over the fall and winter, understory trees will be planted where the privets have been taken out and a small prairie will be planted in a clearing.

If you receive this newsletter in time, you might want to come out to the wildscape on the morning of Saturday, July 29 to help clear the last of the privet. (John will be there with his bushwhacker.) The next scheduled workday will be on Saturday, August 5. They can always use more volunteers.

- Debbie Fierros

Please bring
photos and newspaper articles
of our Chapter projects to
Ev Woodrey,
our Chapter Historian

Wanted: Newsletter Editor

I have decided to retire from newsletter editing at the end of this year, so I'm searching for a volunteer to replace me in 2001.

If you have any interest in:

- putting the newsletter together or
- writing articles for the newsletter or
- being the busybody that knows everything that's going on...

please let me know. We can use your help.

If you've always wanted to learn how to use Microsoft Word...I'll be glad to teach you.

Give me a call at 249-3241.

- Debbie Fierros

Treasurer's Report

by Jean-Marie Smith

Balance (6/20/00)	\$1,393.14
Deposits (raffle, newsletter subscriptions)	\$ 56.00
Expenditures (Internet service renewal, room rental, bank fees, grasses for Hulen)	[\$ 343.40]

Balance (7/20/00)	\$1,105.74

TPW promoting wildlife co-ops, nature tourism

[The information in this article was taken from news articles on the Texas Parks & Wildlife web page: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/news]

A 1999 study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture showed Texas as the leader in loss of undeveloped land from 1992 to 1997. The report claimed that every two minutes another acre of Texas land becomes a subdivision, shopping mall or road. Large tracts of land are being fragmented by development, disrupting natural wildlife corridors and feeding areas.

To combat this habitat fragmentation, Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) is assisting cooperative efforts of landowners to band together to implement wildlife management programs.

One group, the Middle Trinity River Conservation Cooperative includes 100,000 acres of public and private land. This cooperative is boosting wildlife populations along the river and protecting a large

portion of bottomland hardwood forest along the river. The improved wildlife habitat is increasing ecotourism in the area, which may in turn create financial incentives promoting more cooperation.

TPW is also working with the Texas Department of Transportation to propose a trail (for automobiles) that will provide wildlife viewing opportunities from the south Texas coast through the Texas Panhandle. The trail will be modeled after the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail that was completed in April.

According to TPW, nature tourism is the fastest growing segment of the travel industry. The potential for income from nature tourism will hopefully provide incentive for individuals and communities to preserve wildlife habitat and protect natural corridors.

- Debbie Fierros

Tree Information On-Line

If you've ever wished for a convenient source of information about tree care and maintenance, then your wish has been answered. The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) has an informative web site they call Arboriculture On-Line at www.isa-arbor.com.

The web site contains information that you'd expect for an organization of professional arborists: trade show calendars, current research, professional publications and discussion groups. But the really interesting part to amateurs such as me, is the section on tree care consumer guides.

ISA provides free on-line guides on such topics as selecting and buying trees, planting new trees, caring for trees, pruning, and growing trees in turf. Their two newest titles are 'Avoiding Tree Damage During Construction' and 'Treatment of Trees Damaged by Construction'. These guides weren't written specifically with our Post Oaks in mind, but they provide some very good general information.

ISA has also written guidelines for developing and evaluating tree ordinances! Here's an area where some of our local communities can use a little help.

- Debbie Fierros

Gardening for Hummingbirds

I could sit and watch hummingbirds for hours. In fact I have! Most of the hummingbird watching I've done has been while sitting on my mother-in-law's porch near San Antonio. The hummers come to visit the profusion of flowers she has growing near her porch. They like the numerous kinds of salvia growing there, as well as the Coral Bean, Purple Horsemint, and Lantana. They also love the big, old Vitex tree and the Bird of Paradise flowers, which aren't native to Texas, but certainly attract the local hummingbirds anyway.

I wanted to be able to enjoy this same extraordinary sight every day at my home in Fort Worth. But since I'd only recently moved into my house, I hadn't converted much of the traditional landscape to native plants yet. So in March, when I knew the hummingbirds were beginning to arrive, I decided to go for the quick fix ... hummingbird feeders. After a few weeks of boiling sugar water and refilling the hummingbird feeders every couple of days, I began to think that maybe I didn't need instant gratification. Maybe I could live without the daily sight of hummingbirds until my native plants grew big enough to attract them. So I got to work planning my garden.

Hummingbirds are attracted to red, but they also feed on nectar-rich flowers of all colors. Large patches of red flowers make a wonderful invitation to any hummingbirds flying by.

Providing a wide variety of plants that will provide nectar throughout the season (March to October) will help entice them to stay. Spreading the nectar-rich plants throughout the garden will give the birds more space in case any of the males should become protective of their food source. During these really hot, dry months hummers also appreciate the chance to bathe (or play) in garden misters.

In Texas, we have several native vines that are favored by hummingbirds. The Coral Honeysuckle is my favorite perennial vine, and it succeeds in creating a mass of red/coral flowers that will catch a hummingbirds attention. Cross-vine with it's showy red and yellow flowers is another good climbing vine that will cover a large area. It also conveniently flowers during spring migration. Hummingbirds particularly like trumpet vine, but many people consider this vine to be a little too aggressive. Cypress Vine, morning glories, Snapdragon Vine, Carolina Jessamine and Texas Clematis are also good vining nectar sources.

Flowering trees that attract hummingbirds include the Mexican Buckeye, Anacacho Orchid Tree, Wright Acacia, Desert Willow, Red Buckeye and White Buckeye. Of the trees listed here, the Desert Willow is the only one that will bloom through the entire summer.

Hummingbirds are fond of many of the salvias: Tropical Sage (*Salvia coccinia*), Autumn Sage (*Salvia greggii*), Big Red Sage (*Salvia penstemonoides*), and Cedar Sage (*Salvia roemeriana*). These salvias get top marks for color, hardiness, and nectar production.

Other flowers in the red- and coral-colored category include: Flame Acanthus (which holds up wonderfully in the heat), Red-flowered Yucca, Cardinal Flower (for a shady spot), Turk's Cap (a versatile plant that grows in sun or shade), Standing Cypress (a gorgeous biennial wildflower), Drummond's Phlox, Red Columbine and Indian Paintbrush. Butterfly Bush and Lantana are good nectar plants that are a little more orange in color.

Hummingbirds are also attracted to Purple Horsemint (a purple aromatic wildflower), Hill Country Penstemon (the pink-flowered *Penstemon triflorus*), False Indigo (a large shrub with purple flower spikes), Cenizo (the well known shrub with silver green leaves and lavender flowers), and Bush Honeysuckle (a native evergreen shrub).

Well, I haven't managed to get all of these plants in my garden yet, but I'm off to a good start. And even though my plants are still quite small, I've already had at least one hummingbird stop by. Hopefully she'll bring her family back next year.

- Debbie Fierros

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Next Meeting:
Thursday, August 3rd at 7PM
at FW Botanical Garden

Join the Native Plant Society of Texas!

As a member of the state organization, you will receive an annual subscription to the *NPSOT News*, and you will be invited to attend the NPSOT Annual Symposium.

Memberships :	___ Individual	\$20
	___ Family	\$25
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Check here if this is a membership renewal

Make check payable to NPSOT and mail this form and check to:
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P.O. Box 891
Georgetown, TX 78627

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The Texas Sage
is a monthly publication of the
North Central Chapter of the
Native Plant Society of Texas.

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The Texas Sage is printed on
recycled paper.