



The Texas Sage

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter

Vol. 12 No. 5

May 2000

President's Corner . . .

Our last club meeting featured guest speaker Dotty Woodson. Not only did she deliver a good explanation of pruning methods, Dotty also covered symptoms and solutions, timing for the best flowering results, and also her opinion on the best shape for many of our plants. We saw a large selection of pruning tools and learned their uses. Since our meetings are at the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, it was nice to finally go outside and use the gardens to discuss specific

pruning situations. Thanks Dotty!

Just a reminder

We are planning on having our first public garden tour as a fundraiser this fall. If you would like to serve on the committee that is planning the tour, please call me at (817) 281-5991. This will create great visibility for our club and our great Texas native

plants. There are opportunities available in media relations, flyer distribution, garden hosting, etc. Something for everyone! We would like every member to participate. Let's make this first tour a great experience for the public.

Calling you soon!

- Glen Nerwin

CONTENTS

President's Corner	1
NPSOT Symposium 2000.	1
Northrop Grumman	2
Treasurer's Report	2
What's Happening	3
Bee Friendly	4
Fall 2000 Master Naturalis	4
Invite the Butterflies	5

NPSOT Symposium 2000: Sneak Preview of Fieldtrips

Don't forget that the annual NPSOT symposium is being held in Denton this year, on October 19-22. The planning committee is hard at work organizing exciting fieldtrips and informative speakers. Here is a sneak peak at some of the trips they've lined up.

- A guided tour of the Noble Foundation's Coffey Ranch in the North Cross Timbers
- A guided kayak trip
- An indoor guided tour of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) herbarium and library
- A guided tour of a landscape designed by Rosa Finsley
- A self-guided tour to the Lake Lewisville Environment Learning Area (LELA)
- Hiking and Canoeing tours at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge
- A guided trip to the LBJ National Grasslands
- Guided tours of two area ranches - the Hugh Garnett Ranch in Montague County and a ranch on the Grand Prairie

Northrop Grumman Does 'Good Turn'

Each year for the last 18 years, Northrop Grumman Corporation (NG) located in Dallas has had a community service activity known as Project Good Turn. Employees of NG submit candidates each year for the event and their suggestions go through a selection process. The main criteria for the project is that it has to benefit the community and be a good fit for NG employees. Two to three hundred NG employees, their families and friends volunteer and participate in this effort each year. This year's project will be the Wildscape located in Veterans Park in Arlington. Last years selection was Fannin Elementary located in Grand Prairie. Over the years, Project Good Turn events have been held throughout the Dallas/Ft. Worth area with NG employees enthusiastically giving something back to the community in which they live and work.

The Wildscape opened in 1995 and is considered one of the most succesful nature retreats of its kind. It's been primarily funded by government grants and volunteer efforts. For Project Good Turn, volunteers will:

- Build an arbor,

Welcome our
New Subscriber:

Bob Gamble

On June 1st
at our chapter meeting,
we'll have a **special guest**
you won't want to miss!

See the next newsletter
For more information
about our special speaker.

- Build benches with backs,
- Add wood chips to 1500' of paths,
- Remove non-native privet,
- Build three bridges,
- Construct a 30' french drain,
- Create a dry stream bed for erosion control,
- Build two rail fences,
- Plant native plants and shrubs and
- Make signs.

The estimated financial commitment to the project is \$11,000, excluding the hundreds of volunteer hours that will be contributed.

The Good Turn work date has been set for Saturday, June 17th, rain or shine. For further information about this project, contact NPSOT member and Wildscape Project Good Turn Chairman, Marian Hiler at mern11@airmail.net or (817)277-3998.

- Gailon Hardin

Treasurer's Report by Jean-Marie Smith

Balance (3/21/00)	\$1,550.96
Deposits (newsletter subscriptions, raffle, speaking fee)	\$ 167.00
Expenditures (program, bank fees, room rental)	[\$ 74.00]
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Balance (4/19/00)	\$1,643.96

What's Happening . . .

Thursday, May 4

7:00 PM

Fort Worth Botanical Garden

North Central Chapter meeting. Evonne Sandas, Arlington Golf Operation Superintendent, will speak on the design and construction of the Tierra Verde Golf Course which is an Audobon Signature Program. To be associated with the Audobon Signature Program a golf course must be environmentally friendly, organic, water conservative, and it must use native plants. There are 16,000 golf courses in the US and only 18 Audobon Signature Programs.

Saturday, May 6

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

White Rock Lake Prairie, Dallas

The North Texas Master Naturalist group will host a tour of the remnant prairies at White Rock Lake in Dallas. Tours will be from 10am to 2pm on the hour and will be led by local botanists, including authors of Shinners and Mahler's *Illustrated Flora of North Central Texas*. Meet at 10 am at the Bath House at White Rock Lake. Take Northwest Highway to Buckner, turn south on Buckner (Loop 12) to Northcliff, go west on Northcliff to the Bath House parking lot. Contact Jeff Quayle at (817)738-1322 or prairies@tx.freei.net

Sunday, May 7

9:00 AM - NOON

Stella Rowan Wilderness, Ft. Worth

NPSOT's first annual state sponsored fieldtrip will be a tour of the Stella Rowan Wilderness prairie remnant. This 90 acres of Grand Prairie (located in south Ft. Worth) has over 270 species of plants. At the intersection of I-20 and Campus Drive (where TCJC south campus is located), go north. Turn left at the church. Go to the stop sign, turn right. Park in the first parking lot on your left. Call Jeff Quayle for more information ... (817)738-1322 or prairies@tx.freei.net.

Wednesday, May 10

6:30 PM

Country Day School of Arlington

You are invited to the Country Day School of Arlington for a pot luck supper and to learn about the school's natural environment curriculum. They have outdoor projects such as wildlife habitat, native plants, birding, water testing, community gardening, and other environmental projects for Kindergarten through eighth grades. The school has invited members of all the local environmental organizations in hopes that groups with like interests will work together. The school is located at 1100 Roosevelt St. at Randol Mill Rd. in Arlington.

Saturday, May 13

Ft. Worth Nature Center & Refuge

Buffalo Boogie 2000 at the Ft. Worth Nature Center is scheduled for May 13th!

This non-competitive walk is a fun event for the whole family. There are great prizes that will be awarded on the basis of total contributions collected for various categories. Native Plant Society members are invited to contribute plants suitable for prizes or participant gifts. If you are interested in donating plants or participating in another capacity, please call the Nature Center at (817)237-1111.

Saturday & Sunday, May 27-28

LBJ Grasslands

Members of the Master Naturalist groups will spend the weekend conducting botanical inventories at LBJ Grasslands. They will be looking for species not previously recorded. If you would like to help with this project, contact Jeff Quayle at (817)738-1322 or prairies@tx.freei.net.

Sunday, May 28

2:00-4:00 PM

Fort Worth Botanical Garden

Members of the Tarrant County Butterfly Society will be available to identify butterflies in the Trial Gardens at the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens from 2 to 4 pm on the last Sunday of each month through October. This service will be offered to acquaint the public with local butterflies and to provide information on butterfly gardening in the area. For more information please call Joann Karges, President of the Tarrant County Butterfly Society at 923-8474.

Bee Friendly

Growing native plants (and abstaining from pesticide use) will provide our native pollinators with good food sources. But our native bees are also suffering from a lack of nesting sites in urban areas. The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) has some great ideas for building 'bee houses' in your garden.

To create an attractive nesting site for those sweet, docile bumblebees, place a flat rock or board (at least 8" square) in a dry, shady spot in your garden. Lay a handful of nesting material (such as fine dry grass, moss, dryer lint, or upholsterer's cotton) on the board in a pile that is 2" to 3" tall. Place a 6" clay pot upside down over the nesting material, making sure that the edge of the pot hangs out over the edge of the rock forming an entry for the bees. Then just plug up the pot's drain hole with a cork, and you're done. Bumblebees nest all summer long, so even if you don't get around to building one 'til July, you may still have a family move in.

Leaf-cutter and mason bees nest in early spring, so we may have missed our chance this year. But you can get one ready for next year! NWF has suggestions for two different 'models' of homes that are attractive to leaf-cutters, masons, and other native bees.

The first style is made out of a block of wood, about 6" square and 7" to 8" long. Pine works best... just make sure it hasn't been pressure treated with chemicals. Drill holes into one end of the cube using different sized drill bits ranging from 1/8" to 5/16". The holes should be 4" to 5" deep and spaced about 1/2" apart. The bees can pick the size of hole that they like best. To mount the bee house, you can attach a strip of wood (about 10" long) to the back of the wood block. Then this mounting board can be nailed to a tree or building. Locate the block so that it gets morning sun and afternoon shade.

The second bee house is even easier to make if you have access to hollow bamboo canes. Gather bamboo canes with 1/4" to 1/2" openings. Cut the cane into 6" lengths and insert into an empty coffee can. Continue inserting more pieces until the canes fit snugly. Use twine to tie the can to a tree or a post in a shady spot in your garden. The bees will nest in the open ends of the cane.

Remember...pollinators will make your garden fruitful!

-Debbie Fierros

Fall 2000 Master Naturalist Class Forming

If you are interested in participating in the Fall 2000 Master Naturalist class, you must have your application turned in by July 24. Classes will be held on Tuesday evenings from 6-9pm beginning August 9. Experts in Ecology will provide 50 hours of education on wetlands, forests, and prairies over a nine week period. There will also be four field trips on selected Saturdays from 10am to 4pm.

The Texas Master Naturalist volunteer program is sponsored statewide by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. The program's mission is to develop a group of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources (including native plants) within our community.

The Cross Timbers Chapter here in the Fort Worth area requires its members to volunteer 40 hours of service per year and to take 8 hours of advanced training hours each year. The volunteer and training opportunities are extremely diverse, allowing you to choose areas that suit your personal interests and expertise. Maintenance on our native plant demonstration gardens is an approved Master Naturalist volunteer project and many of our monthly meetings qualify as advanced training hours!

For information or an application form call the Cross Timbers information line at (817) 355-4832. Don't delay... the class is limited to 25 participants.

Invite the Butterflies and They Will Come!

As I served in the recent butterfly exhibit in the Botanic Gardens Conservatory, I saw wonder and enchantment on the faces of visitors of all ages, from the very young to the elderly, as they viewed not only the beautiful flying butterflies but also those just emerging from their chrysalids in the puparia (cages where the pupae were hanging). I wanted then to tell them (and to some few I did) that they could have wonderful butterfly experiences in their own yards, simply by having the right kinds of plants. Of course, we cannot expect to have such vibrant blues as those large Morphos or the dramatic diversity of the Heliconians, but with over 100 species of butterflies breeding in our area, there is still much diversity and some brilliant colors. In late March, I saw nectaring on a small cluster of sand plums over 200 butterflies of 17 different species, all of which will find their respective, obligatory food plants, hosts for their caterpillars to mature on. These plants may be

milkweed (Monarch and Queen), sunflower and other composites (Bordered Patch and Gorgone Checkerspot), thistles (Painted and American Ladies), prickly-ash (Giant Swallowtail), prairie parsley (Black Swallowtail) – and the list can go on and on – most of them desirable plants for the home garden. Many other species of butterflies will come to nectar on the flowers of these same plants. Add lantana, asters, phlox, salvia, turk's cap, even wild onions, and one has invited the butterflies.

Visitors in the Conservatory were as fascinated by the various shapes of the chrysalids as they were by the whole process of metamorphosis. This, too, is something we can experience easily, and the rearing of butterflies and moths is one to be recommended for families with children (or grandchildren, or nieces and nephews, or neighbors). It is as easy as finding the caterpillars on their food plants. Of course, the rearing can be outdoors but birds and

other predators will take their toll and lead to disappointment, whereas a large jar, plastic box, or aquarium inside can accommodate the larvae for full viewing of the life-cycle. A constant food supply and the mini-puparium cleaned daily are all that is necessary, and within a few weeks the miracle of metamorphosis will occur. Hackberry trees, milkweeds, native asters examined carefully will yield the larvae now, and others will be found throughout the year – a most inexpensive and gratifying hobby.

This morning, I released one Gorgone Checkspot, the caterpillar having been found on a tiny volunteer sunflower seedling and reared on larger ones, and one huge Polyphemus moth which I had overwintered from the fall. And I was just as excited and enthralled as I was on the first butterfly I had reared and released many years ago.

- Joann Karges

State Organization Sponsors Annual Spring Fieldtrip

The Native Plant Society of Texas state organization will begin sponsoring a fieldtrip each spring that will focus on a particular vegetational region in Texas. Our chapter will be hosting the first one! Jeff Quayle has organized a tour of the Stella Rowan Wilderness in south Fort Worth on Sunday, May 7. This Grand Prairie remnant has had over 270 plant species identified so far. A variety of NPSOT members from across the state are expected to attend, as well as members of other organizations. The annual fieldtrips will give us a great opportunity to meet members of other chapters and to learn about plants native to other regions of Texas. See page 3 of this newsletter for more information on this fieldtrip.

Native Plant Society of Texas,
North Central Chapter
Debbie Fierros, Editor
1017 Usher St.
Benbrook, TX 76126

Next Meeting:

Thursday, May 4th 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
	___ Student	\$15
	___ Sr. Citizen	\$15

Check here if this is a membership renewal

Make check payable to NPSOT and mail this form and check to:
Native Plant Society of Texas
P.O. Box 891
Georgetown, TX 78627

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Arlington, TX 76010

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Glen Nerwin, President
(817) 281-5991

For changes of address or
information about contributing to
the newsletter, please contact:

Debbie Fierros, Editor
The Texas Sage
1017 Usher St.
Ft. Worth, TX 76126
(817) 249-3241

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