



The Texas Sage

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter

Vol. 12 No. 11

November 2000

President's Corner . . .

[This month's article was written by Debbie Fierros, North Central Chapter Newsletter Editor]

At the October meeting, Suzanne Tuttle of the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge, and Barney Lipscomb of the Botanical Research Center teamed up to tell us about the exciting events planned for the NPSOT Symposium on October 19-22.

We also had a silent auction to raise money to help pay for the fees that would allow the NPSOT Symposium to serve wine at the reception. Auction items were contributed by Helena van Heiningen, Gailon Hardin, and Debbie Fierros. Carolyn Kohls generously donated two complimentary Swedish massages for the auction. As a result of these generous donations the chapter raised \$197!

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The state symposium in Denton was a great success! I hope everyone was able to attend at least some of the wonderful presentations, fieldtrips, and workshops.

In the month of November, we have a lot fun activities planned. I'll just give you the highlights. More information about all of these events can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

At our November 2nd chapter meeting we'll have our annual plant exchange. Then early on November 4th Helena van Heiningen will be leading a work day at the Granbury Road Subcourthouse demonstration garden. When you're finished there, stop by the Hulen Library demonstration garden which is just down the road. Ev Woodrey has organized an Open House from 10-2. Stop by to see the gardens and to see if Ev needs some help giving tours and answering questions. If you live closer to Arlington, Veterans Park Wildscape is also having it's monthly workday on November 4th.

On November 11th, Jeff Quayle has arranged a fieldtrip to the 100 acre Paul Mathews Prairie in Hunt County. See real gilgai at this remnant Blackland Prairie! If you want to stay in town, you can help

the Fort Worth Nature Center clean up their waterways by canoe. Also on November 11th, the Garden Tour Planning Committee (for next year's tour) will have its second potluck dinner and planning meeting. All interested members are encouraged to attend.

On Thursday, November 30th Ev Woodrey will lead the workday at the Hulen Garden demonstration garden.

Our last meeting of the year (December 7) will feature Randy Weston presenting a talk on "Cottage Gardens – Texas Style". At this meeting we also need to select new officers for the coming year. We are forming a nomination committee to develop a list of candidates. Please make their job easy. If you are the least bit interested in volunteering your time as an officer, please call Ev Woodrey at (817) 295-4683 to find out more. I'd particularly like to encourage the new members to call her. Being an officer does not require any experience with native plants and it's a great way to get involved and learn. Every organization benefits from having longtime members to impart their knowledge and expertise, and new members to bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

- Debbie Fierros

November Fieldtrip to Mathews Prairie

A fieldtrip to the 100-acre Paul Mathews Prairie in Hunt County, a remnant Blackland Prairie, is scheduled for Saturday, November 11, from 10:00am to 2:00pm. The Mathews Prairie is a Gamagrass/Switchgrass community, which is globally imperiled. Paul has owned the prairie for approximately 32 years, and he granted a permanent conservation easement to the Nature Conservancy of Texas in 1989. This is an excellent Blackland Prairie with gilgai!

This will be a joint fieldtrip with the Master Naturalists, which will be led by Jim Eidson of the Texas Nature Conservancy. Jim is expecting approximately 50 attendees, so help is needed to break into smaller groups. If you think you would like to assist or just attend, contact Jeff Quayle at (817)738-1322 or prairielover@hotmail.com. Please RSVP by November 8 so we know how many will be attending.

To get to Mathews Prairie, travel east of Dallas on I-30 through Rockwall to the exit for Caddo Mills at FM 36. Go north on FM 36 to SH 66 in Caddo Mills. Turn right, go one block, and turn left again onto FM 36. Continue north on FM 36 until you get to U.S. Highway 380 in Floyd. At the FM 36/380 intersection, go north across the railroad tracks and turn right onto county road 1119. The prairie is located on the NE corner of CR 1119 at CR 1116. There is limited roadside parking, so please consider carpooling. Allow for a two hour drive from Fort Worth.

If you wish to carpool or convoy, meet at the Target located at Eastchase Parkway and I-30 at 7:30am. Meet on the north side of the parking lot, overlooking the freeway. We will leave promptly at 7:45.

- Jeff Quayle

NPSOT Garden Tour 2001

The Garden Tour Planning Committee got off to a great start in September. We are planning a wonderful garden tour for next October. However, we can't have a great tour without great gardens. Have you been working hard on your garden? Are you proud of it? Does it feature mainly Native Plants? If so, please let us consider including it on the tour. Please call Stephen Haydon and Janan Rabiah if you would like to discuss the possibility of showcasing your garden or if you know of other gardens that you think should be considered.

This hardworking and enthusiastic committee would appreciate your help. We have areas requiring many different talents. Please come and join us at our next planning meeting, November 11th at 6:00 pm. We have lots of fun and will start again with a potluck dinner. Call for directions and details.

Stephen Haydon and Janan Rabiah
(817)924-3378
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Treasurer's Report

by Jean-Marie Smith

Balance (9/25/00)	\$ 462.96
Deposits (auction)	\$ 197.00
Expenditures (newsletter, bank fees)	[\$ 116.75]
Balance (10/25/00)	\$ 543.21

What's Happening . . .

Thursday, November 2 **7:00 PM** **Fort Worth Botanic Garden**
North Central Chapter meeting. It's that time of year you've been waiting for . . . our Annual Native Plant Exchange! Don't forget to bring a plant!

Saturday, November 4 **8:00 AM - NOON** **Granbury Road Demonstration Garden**
 Workday at the Granbury Road Subcourthouse demonstration garden. We'll be weeding, trimming, and maybe planting. If you would like to volunteer for future workdays, please call Helena van Heiningen at (817)244-5338 to let her know you are interested.

Saturday, November 4 **10:00 AM – 2:00 PM** **Hulen Library Demonstration Garden**
 Open House at the Hulen Library Demonstration Garden! The garden is on the south side of the Southwest Regional Library on south Hulen Street (the actual address is 4001 Library Lane). The general public has been invited to visit the garden. Ev Woodrey will be present to answer questions. Stop by to see the gardens and/or lend a hand answering questions about native plants. For more information contact Ev Woodrey at (817)295-4683.

Saturday, November 4 **8:00 AM** **Veterans Park Wildscape, Arlington**
 The monthly workday at the Veterans Park Wildscape will be held on November 4. There will also be a workday on Friday, November 3. If you would like more information, contact Molly Hollar at (817) 860-5580 or Mike McCorkhill at (817) 465-0763..

Saturday, November 11 **10:00 AM – 2:00 PM** **Paul Mathews Prairie, Hunt County**
 A fieldtrip to the 100-acre Paul Mathews Prairie in Hunt County, a remnant Blackland Prairie. If you would like to assist or just attend, contact Jeff Quayle at (817)738-1322 or prairie lover@hotmail.com. Please RSVP by November 8. Meet at the Target located at Eastchase Parkway and I-30 at 7:30am. Meet on the north side of the parking lot, overlooking the freeway. We will leave promptly at 7:45.

Saturday, November 11 **8:00 AM** **Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge**
 Be a part of the First Biannual River Cleansing. We'll use canoes to travel the waterways picking up cans, styrofoam, etc. Join us at the Refuge Service Center at 8am. We will leave for the canoe launch promptly at 9am. If you have any questions, call 237-0427 and ask for Curtis or Suzanne.

Saturday, November 11 **6:00 PM** **Home of S. Haydon and J. Rabiah**
 The Garden Tour Planning Committee will hold it's second planning meeting and potluck supper. They are making plans for next year's garden tour which will be held in October. If you are interested in working on this committee please call Stephen Haydon or Janan Rabiah at (817)924-3378.

Happy Thanksgiving !

Thursday, November 30 **10:30 AM – 12:00 Noon** **Hulen Library Demonstration Garden**
 Workday at the Southwest Regional Library garden on south Hulen Street (the actual address is 4001 Library Lane). For more information contact Ev Woodrey at (817)295-4683.

Thursday, December 7 **7:00 PM** **Fort Worth Botanic Garden**
North Central Chapter meeting. Randy Weston will make a presentation on "Cottage Gardens – Texas Style". You'll also want to stay for the business meeting to select officers for the new year.

Symposium Tidbits

The following 'tidbits' of information were contributed by many NPSOT members who had the opportunity to attend the NPSOT Symposium on October 19-22. They contributed new and interesting information that they learned from the many presentations, fieldtrips and workshops that they attended. I hope you will find these 'tidbits' interesting too.

- Debbie Fierros

Veterans Park Wildscape looks incredible ! If you haven't seen the newest addition, you've gotta go!

The beautiful Hugh Garnett Preserve is home to some endangered Black-capped Vireos.

Western Soapberry and Soapwort, which have historically been used for making soap, contain saponins which are toxic when ingested. Don't wash your mouth out with these soaps! Soapberries may cause contact dermatitis.

According to Dr. Francaviglia, the eastern portion of Lake Mineral Wells State Park is one of the better locations on public land to view pristine Cross Timbers.

Prickly Pear pads have the same soothing, anti-inflammatory properties as Aloe Vera. (The inside of the pads, not the outside!)

Cedar Sedge is a great groundcover for shady areas – it's short, slow-growing, and evergreen.

Ornamental grasses are great for adding structure and movement to landscapes, especially in the fall and winter. Most species of grass should be cut back to 6" in February. But not Lindheimer's Muhly - cutting it too far back or dividing it could kill it.

The Coffey Ranch in Oklahoma, which is run by the Noble Foundation, researches methods of land management that will preserve the natural resources while providing ranch owners with commercial benefits.

The Noble Foundation has found through their research that burning Cross Timbers areas every year or two will reduce the canopy and increase grass and forb density. However, the change is not significant enough to increase cattle stocking rates in Cross Timber areas; and burning this frequently appears to reduce the woody plant diversity which may result in poorer habitat for some wildlife. The species which don't fare well with burning include eastern red cedar, elm, green ash, hackberry, and black oak. The good news is that the burns succeeded in killing the greenbrier growing in the tops of the trees.

It's extremely difficult to maintain a prairie if you don't have the resources for periodic burns!

The old log cabin in Milsap (west of Weatherford) was built in the mid-1800's from Post Oak trees.

The Woodrey's learned that their house may be on an iron ore knob, based on the iron-rich, orange clays on hillsides beneath their house. This possibility came to light after Dr. Diggs interesting explanation of the geology of the Cross Timbers.

Narrow Leaf Sunflower (*Helianthus augustifolia?*) is a yellow sunflower from East Texas that tolerates shade. Tall, fall-blooming prairie flowers, such as this or the Maximilian Sunflower, should be cut back once or twice in late May/early June and again in July or they will get too tall and fall over.

Purple Aster, used as unifying color throughout the garden, is very attractive! The asters should be trimmed back each year. Some attractive combinations with Purple Aster include: white *Salvia greggii*, dwarf Katie's Ruellia, Mexican Bush Sage, and Big Bluestem.

Don't amend the soil when planting trees.

Butterflies in the Garden: Winter

The Monarchs have passed on their way to Mexico for the winter, though there may be a few stragglers even into December if the temperature remains warm. Painted Ladies and some sulphur butterflies have drifted southward, too, in loose migration, though at times in great numbers (but not like the Monarchs to single areas). So where are the rest of them?

With the first freeze many butterflies will die; their progeny will, however, remain with us. There are a few butterflies that will stay with us throughout the winter, taking shelter and going into a torpor-like condition in the coldest weather and yet flying about on warm sunny days. Butterflies that we may see during the winter are Questionmarks, Red Admirals, Snout Butterflies, Mourning Cloaks, Variegated Fritillaries, Orange (Alfalfa) Sulphurs, Sleepy Oranges, and Dainty Sulphurs.

Others with us all winter are in juvenile form: some as eggs, some as caterpillars, and others in chrysalis, each species pre-programmed to be in one of these forms. If, for example, one used a magnifying glass to scan the trunk of a soapberry tree (*Sapindus saponaria*), one might find the tiny turban-shaped eggs of the Soapberry Hairstreak. Curled inside a fallen hackberry leaf might be a very young Hackberry Emperor caterpillar, while Pearl Crescent and Satyr caterpillars will snuggle in the withered grass and fallen leaves beneath their food plant. The Eastern Tailed Blue (another hairstreak) will be a caterpillar in a pea or bean pod. All of our biggest butterflies, the swallowtails, are in chrysalis throughout the winter, their pupae attached to branches, camouflaged by shape and color, appearing to be part of the stems to which they are attached.

Those butterflies that remain with us as adults, flying on warmer days, do not mate; all reproductive activity has ceased. Many of them will take nutrients from animal scat or even from dead animals. Others will nectar on plants that bloom in the winter: dandelions, filaree, Chinese honeysuckle bush – all non-native plants. It may be that before settlement came to our area, bringing the non-native plants, these butterflies were not here in the colder months; they either died off or drifted southward. In any case as soon as the forestiera blooms, many of those that overwintered as pupae will emerge and find the nectar of this early bloomer. Others will emerge from larval-stage or pupae only when their plants begin to flower (such as Henry's Elfin) or to put on leaves (such as the Hackberry Emperor and the swallowtails).

- Joann Karges

Online Database of North American Plants and Animals

NatureServe, a new "online encyclopedia of life" developed by the Association for Biodiversity Information (ABI), is now available on the internet at www.natureserve.org.

NatureServe provides authoritative conservation information in a searchable database for more than 50,000 plants, animals, and ecological communities of the United States and Canada. NatureServe provides the most comprehensive, in-depth information on rare and endangered species currently available, and includes extensive information on common plants and animals too. It has colorful distribution maps that show where each species occurs, and how rare or common it is across its range. The database includes all native North American species of vascular plants, selected native species of non-vascular plants, as well as established non-native plants. Updates will be made to the data three times per year.

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North Central Chapter
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Next Meeting:

Thursday, December 7 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

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P.O. Box 891
Georgetown, TX 78627

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