



THE TEXAS SAGE

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Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Vol. 13 No. 3
March 2001

President's Corner

Dear Members:

As I look outside and see sprigs of green appearing everywhere, it becomes a real test of self control to go to an office without windows and concentrate all day on processes and procedures behind a desk. I envy those of you whose work is outside or you are free to take advantage of the miracle of spring any time you like.

If you missed the speaker last month, Joe Liggio, I will take a few moments to share some highlights. Joe and his wife Ann, collaborated on the book and both display a sustained enthusiasm for the subject, which became contagious as we learned and saw numerous species of orchids. What a surprise to hear that Texas actually has a respectable number of native orchids which literally grow all over the state. Texas is a meeting ground with its diverse climate and topography that creates ideal conditions for orchids that are native to the eastern United States, the southwestern United States and Mexico. Most of the 54 types of orchids found in Texas are terrestrial, growing with their roots firmly embedded in the soil. Their book, Wild Orchids of Texas, is full of high quality pictures mainly taken by Joe himself. Orchids appear at all times of the year, so keep your eyes open any time you find yourself in the wild.

her side and she took home an Eve's Necklace and a yaupon holly. The largest plant, a mature Mexican Plum was taken home by Carol Wirtz. Carol made it apparent that no one was going to threaten her win as she sat next to it with feet resting on the pot. Other prizes were American Beautyberry (Jeff Quayle), potted parsley (Genette Lea), winter honeysuckle (Ann Robertson), ceramic frog (Joann Kargis), Garden Design Workbook by John Brooks, (Joe Liggio). Winners, don't forget to bring a prize for the raffle next month!! A special thanks to Weatherford Nursery who provided the winter honeysuckle.

Last weekend my husband and I took the back way over country roads to Austin. What a thrill to see a preview of the wildflowers that will be appearing in our area in a few weeks.

Hope to see everyone at the April meeting.

Helena van Heiningen

The raffle was enjoyed by everyone, especially Dagmar. Lady Luck was on

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When Spring is in the Air...So are Nitidulids

What is a Nitidulid? The Nitidulid is a beetle that is generally considered a beneficial insect. However, this sap-feeding insect can also carry the tree disease Oak Wilt from one oak tree to another. It looks like a very skinny 1/4" long brown June bug and is commonly found on the underside of rotting fruit. The insect is numerous in the spring-time, which coincides with the time that the fungal spores of the Oak Wilt fungus are being produced on red oaks (Shumard, Spanish, and Blackjack). They are attracted to the "sweet smell" of fruit, fungal spores, and of wounds on trees which makes them ideal vectors.

The Oak Wilt fungus is a tree disease that affects oaks in the red oak family and Live Oaks. It does not normally kill trees in the white oak family (Bur and Chinkapin) in Texas. Once symptoms are noticed on a tree, the tree can die within 4 weeks to 6 months. The fungus spreads two ways. Once a Live Oak is infected, if it has root grafts to other Live Oaks, the fungus will move through those root grafts from tree to tree. If a tree in the red oak family has Oak Wilt, the disease will spread through connected roots as well as form a fungal spore "mat" under the bark. The Nitidulid beetle feeds on the mat, flies to other wounds on trees, and transfers Oak Wilt. This second form of transmission allows the disease to spread long distances.

This relationship between the fungal spores and the beetle is the "weakest link" in the Oak Wilt disease cycle and therefore is your best opportunity to prevent the disease from occurring in your neighborhood. Between February 1 and June 1, limit the wounds on your oak trees. If pruning is necessary on susceptible oaks, use a pruning paint to cover the "fresh smell" of the wound as soon as the cut is made. Bark chips and firewood from infected trees are safe to use only if they are "seasoned" or dried out.

For more information about the Oak Wilt disease feel free to contact jandavis@tfs.tamu.edu or visit the following websites: <http://txforestsERVICE.org> and <http://www.ci.fort-worth.tx.us>.

Demo Garden News

Granbury Road Sub-Courthouse

Come one, come all and join the Granbury Road Raiders to help weed and clean up the garden. The salvia's are already starting to bloom and the weeds are doing an excellent job of invading the garden and paths. Workday, April 14, 8 am to noon. Contact Helena van Heiningen 817.244.5338 for additional information.

Hulen Library

We will meet at the garden for grooming and maintenance work on the last Thursday of the month at 10:30 AM through April. Summer dates are the last Wednesday at 8:30 a.m., other days as needed. Contact Ev Woodrey at 817.295.4683 for additional information.

Veterans Park Wildscape

There will be a workday on Saturday, April 7 from 9:00-NOON. If you would like more information, contact Molly Hollar at 817.860.5580.

Free Compost Location Sites

Every year in the spring the Parks and Community Services Department provides free compost to the citizens of Fort Worth. Below is a list of sites where the Parks Department has stockpiled the compost. This has been done in the past and is very popular in the spring as people's interest turns to gardening. The Parks Department always has free compost year round at the Rolling Hills soccer fields at 2525 Joe B. Rushing Road. For more information, see the FWLiNC Newsletter at <http://www.fwliNC.org>.

Compost locations: Greenbriar Park - Mapsco 90R, Highland Hills Park - Mapsco 91V, Rosenthal Park - Mapsco 102D, Westcreek Park - Mapsco 90X, Oakmont Park - Mapsco 88N, Ridglea Hills Park - Mapsco 74, Ed Collett Park - Mapsco 75P and Overton Park (tennis courts) - Mapsco 75Y.

What's Happening . . .

Thursday, April 5

7:00 PM

Fort Worth Botanic Gardens

NPSOT North Central Chapter Meeting. This month's program will be Suzanne Tuttle on the Fort Worth Nature Center demonstrating different techniques for propagating plants, both from seed and vegetatively. Contact Helena van Heinigen, President, at 817.244.5338 for further information.

Saturdays, March 3 and 17

9:00 AM - NOON

Veterans Park Wildscape, Arlington

Volunteer Workday at the Veterans Park Wildscape. If you would like more information, contact Molly Hollar at 817.860.5580. The Wildscape is located at the intersection of Arkansas Lane and Spanish Trail. Meet in the Southeast corner of the park.

Saturday, March 31

7:30 AM (9:00 AM)

Fossil Hill

This a great opportunity to visit Fossil Hill (SW Montague Co on Lake Amon Carter), the weekend getaway place owned by Jeanne Erickson and her husband, Wayne. Located in the Western Cross Timbers, this 68 acre tract is home to several rare and unusual plants, and various birds and mammals. Carpooling is encouraged, due to limited parking and to discourage compaction. What to bring? Snacks or a lunch, water (drinks provided), folding chairs, sunscreen, appropriate clothing (long pants for exploration), flashlights (for looking in the hiding places in the rocks), binoculars, and cameras. You get the idea! Toilet facilities will be available. Canoeing is an option in the afternoon if the wind cooperates. **Please RSVP to Jeff Quayle at prairie lover@bigfoot.com, 817.738.1322 by March 28th.** We will leave at 7:30 am from the Cracker Barrel at I-35 @ Meacham Blvd to carpool. To get Fossil Hill: Go north on I-35W, then Hwy 287 north about 22 miles to Decatur and another 28 miles to FM 1125 near Bowie. Take exit for Amon Carter Lake/FM 1125. Go south on FM 1125 and go 5.6 miles to Turkey Creek Road on the left (a gravel road). Go 0.75 miles to Laird Road and turn right. Go 1.8 miles to the triple fork in the road. Take the middle fork for 0.5 miles to gate. They'll meet us at the gate around 9:00 am. Jeff's mobile number is 817.729-0283 in case you get lost.

Saturday, April 7

10:00 AM - NOON

The Old Bedford School

Come hear Joe Liggio of Houston, author of *Wild Orchids of Texas*, at a program sponsored by the Cross Timbers Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. This program will also include a book signing, with books available at \$29.95 plus tax. The program will be at the Old Bedford School in Bedford. The school is in the vicinity of the Northeast Mall, in northeast Tarrant County. To reach the school from the interchange of NE Loop 820 and 121/183, go east on 121/183 to the Forest Ridge Drive exit. Go north on Forest Ridge Drive to Bedford Road. Turn right on Bedford Road. The school is about 2 blocks on the left, next to Bedford Glass and Mirror. The physical address is 2400 School Lane, in the 1800 block of Bedford Road. The phone number is (817) 952-2290.

April 7 - 22

Wildseed Farms Market Center

The annual Wildseed Farms Wildflower Celebration will be held in Fredericksburg from April 7 - 22. Acres of Texas bluebonnets and other wildflower fields will be on display. Wine tastings from Hill Country wineries and toe-tapping Texas music will be performed on the weekends. The walking trail will be open everyday for visitors to view and cut their own wildflower bouquet. Wildseed Farms is located seven miles east of Fredericksburg on US 290. Call 830.990.1393 for additional information or visit <http://www.wildseedfarms.com>.

Sundays, April 7 and 14

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Fort Worth Nature Center

Texas has over 88,000 miles of rivers and streams that you can canoe. Learn the basics of how to enjoy this great outdoor resource and become a Red Cross certified instructor at the Fort Worth Nature Center. Contact the Fort Worth Nature Center to sign up for one of these classes at 817-237-1111.

Saturday - Sunday, April 21 - 22

The Heard Museum

The Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary in McKinney will hold it's Twelfth Annual Native Plant Sale from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM on Saturday and from NOON - 4:00 PM on Sunday. For more information, either call the Museum at 972.562.5566 or visit their website at <http://www.heardmuseum.org/plantsale99/plantsaleindex.html>.

Saturday, April 21

White Rock Lake Prairie

This is the second annual walk made possible to educate the public about the prairie ecosystem at White Rock Lake. Several remnant "Austin Chalk" prairies in the Blackland Prairie exist at White Rock Lake. For more information about tour times and directions, please contact Becky Rader, North Texas Master Naturalist president, at (214) 320-1848, or by e-mail at brader@juno.com.

Saturday - Sunday, April 28 - 29

Newton County

In response to the many NPSOT members who were not able to attend the field trip on March 16-18, another trip has been organized. Visit the "Monthly Park Events" link at <http://www.whisperingcreekrvpark.com> for additional information on this "Native Plant and Nature Tour" program. Or call 409.379.8400 for information/reservations.

Saturday, April 28

10:30 AM - NOON

Clark Gardens

Jeff Quayle is leading a wildflower walk in Mineral Wells at Clark Gardens, a new botanical garden. There is a fee. Their entrance fee is \$6.00 for adults, plus a \$4.00 program fee. The walk will be from 10:30 am - 12:00 pm. Afterwards, for those interested, but not for the general public, I will take everyone to see the Quayle's Ragwort (*Senecio quayle*). It is a short distance from Clark Gardens. This has a very narrow window to bloom, so you won't get much of chance to see it. It only blooms from mid April to mid May. An optional plan afterwards is to go over to Lake Mineral Wells State Park. Please RSVP to Jeff with your intentions by

Wednesday, April 25. Contact him at (817) 738-1322, or prairie lover@bigfoot.com.

Plant of the Month Yaupon Holly

Latin Name: *Ilex vomitoria*

Landscape Zone: 4 - 8

Size: Shrub or small tree to 15 feet

Leaves: Evergreen

Fruit: Quarter inch shiny red berries fall through winter

Soil: Adaptable, poor to well drained

Exposure: Full sun, partial shade, shade

Water: Moderately drought tolerant

The Yaupon Holly is one of the most widely used native Texas plants in the Metroplex landscapes. For many years it has been a staple plant in traditional monotonous landscapes. All too often tortured (sorry, I meant topiaried) into poodle pom poms, cubes, spheres, mushrooms and every other imaginable contrived shape. However, it doesn't have to be this way. Yaupon Hollies left to develop into their natural form make a beautiful evergreen large shrub or small tree. The Yaupon Holly more naturally forms a large shrub but can easily be cleaned up into a leg to form a multi-stemmed tree. The small dark green leaves are accented in the winter by masses of shiny red holly berries. The berries last throughout the winter and are the last thing to be eaten by the birds. Some people think the birds find them unpalatable and leave them for last and another school of thought is that the freeze thaw action of the winter soften the berries making them more easily digestible for the birds. Yaupons are dioecious, thus the berries are only born on the female plants. But Yaupons are so numerous; a male is never far away for pollination. The Yaupon is adaptable to almost any soil and will grow in almost any light condition except deep shade. If you have a traditional urban landscape that you are trying to transition into a native plant garden and have a poodle pom pom Yaupon, don't despair, just cease pruning it and allow it to grow out. They will recover.

Stephen P. Haydon

Don't forget, we hope to have the "plant of the month" as one of the raffle prizes at each month's meeting.

Texas SmartScape CD to Encourage Native Landscaping

A team of local professionals is currently hard at work on an interactive CD that encourages landscaping with beautiful north central Texas native and adapted plants. Native and adapted plants (not your typical xeriscaping types) require less pesticide, fertilizer, and water to thrive in our north Texas area. The Texas SmartScape CD will highlight the benefits of native and adapted plants to urban storm water quality and drinking water conservation.

In the first week of March, all cities, counties, and agencies participating in the regional storm water program will receive a Texas SmartScape CD to use as a public information tool in both storm water and water conservation programs. Each city, county, or agency will be able to duplicate and distribute the CD on a free, or duplication cost only, basis. A small city within limited growth might

choose to duplicate a small number of Texas SmartScape CDs on an in-house or personal computer. Other entities could act independently or cooperatively to duplicate large numbers of CDs and add professional labels at reasonable costs. Many business in Texas and this area would gladly take an order.

For additional information, please contact Leslie Calderon, NCTCOG, at 817-608-2341 or the project manager, Gene Rattan, Tarrant County Environmental Health Division at 817-871-7511.

(Taken from the *Post Oak*, a publication of Arlington Conservation Council, January 2001, John Darling, editor.)

From our Man in the Field

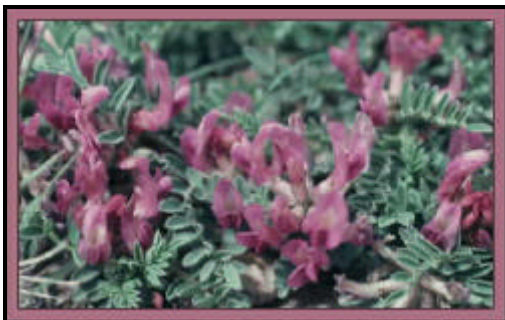
I spent part of the day in search of wildflowers to photograph. This morning I went to the Ft. Worth Nature Center and photographed the Blue Funnel Lily (*Androstegium coeruleum*). I also got good photos of Drummond's Onion (*Allium drummondii*). The Indian Paintbrush (*Castilleja indivisa*) and the Bluebonnets (*Lupinus texensis*) are both beginning to flower, particularly along the highways, where they have been planted. I haven't seen bluebonnets actually flowering yet in the wild. I also saw one clump of Purple Paintbrush (*Castilleja purpurea*) between Weatherford and Mineral Wells on highway 180.

I then drove to Parker County to Lake Mineral Wells State Park to check on the progress of the flowering of Quayle's Ragwort (*Senecio quaylei*). Along the way, near Mineral Wells, I found a roadside colony of Ground Plum (*Astragalus crassicaarpus*). But these colonies consisted of various color shades, ranging from off-white with a blue tinge on the keel, to light reds mixed somewhat with white, to light purple, to bluish-purple, to bluish-red, you name it!!!! I got several great photos of these! These are found from late March to early May from Mineral Wells westward and northwest in the Western Cross Timbers. Also reported from Dallas county, probably on the white rock escarpment.

Then just outside Mineral Wells, I found Lindheimer's Milk Vetch (*Astragalus lindheimeri*), which is an awesome sight! The petals are bicolored purple-blue with a white keel, and have a sweet scent like Kool-Aid (a comment from Suzanne Tuttle)! These are absolutely gorgeous when photographed at 1:1 or at 2:1!!!

The Quayle's Ragwort is coming along pretty well. Looks like there will be more than last year, judging from what I found today. I couldn't count every plant coming up, but I'd estimate 50-60 plants. Last year there were only about 20 plants. Several plants were already 1 foot high with a inflorescence in the midst. They're usually about 3 to 3.5 feet tall.

Jeff Quayle
(Photos courtesy of www.noble.org)



Astragalus crassicaarpus



Astragalus lindheimeri

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Next Meeting

Thursday, April 5 at 7PM
 at the Fort Worth Botanic
 Gardens

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
 Check here if this is a _____ Student \$15
 membership renewal _____ Sr. Citizen \$15

To receive a one-year subscription to the North Central Chapter newsletter, *The Texas Sage*, please enclose an additional \$15. Send your check, payable to NPSOT, and updated contact information to:

Alan Klein
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 Arlington, TX 76018

Name: _____

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City, State Zip: _____

Phone: _____

e-mail: _____

The Texas Sage

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

For changes of address or information about contributing to the newsletter, please contact either of the newsletter editors.

The deadline for submitting articles for inclusion in next month's newsletter is the 10th of every month.

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