



THE TEXAS SAGE

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter

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Year 2003 Officers and Committee Chairs

President

Gailon Hardin
817-457-4703
ghardin@flash.net

Vice President & Program Chair

Dagmar Higgins
817-496-0543
d3kh@earthlink.net

Treasurer

Alan Klein
817-784-8928
alanwk1@attbi.com

Secretary

Pat Lovejoy
817-447-7924
patlovejoy@att.net

Historian

Evaline Woodrey
817-295-4683
ewoodrey@prodigy.net

Hospitality Chair

Nelda Forston
817-498-5808
nforston@aol.com

Membership Chair

Helena vanHeiningen
817-244-5338
hvanhein@aol.com

Webmaster

Michelle May
817-924-0156
jmnmay@charter.net

Field Reporter

Jeff Quayle
817-738-1322
prairielover@ev1.net



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The President's Corner



The Fort Worth zoo was great! On Saturday, June 28, 50 of us—representing NPSOT Chapters from North Central, Trinity Forks (Denton), Dallas and Garland, and mem-

bers of Arlington Conservation Council, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and a Texas Women's University Environmental Biology class—got the inside story on the Texas Wild! Exhibit. We heard speakers from Fowikes, Norman & Associates describe how they paired native flora with Texas native animals. The animals need food, space, water, and cover just like any of the wildlife we plant for. However, there are special habitat considerations for some of the animals. They planted large caliper trees for adult black bears to scratch. What nurseries carry full grown trees? And what do you plant for Jaguar and Mountain lions to climb? Most important, the zoo is organic—naturally.

Texas Wild! features all the major vegetational regions. The Hill Country canopy is Burr and Red oaks, Cedar elms, Eastern red cedar and a bona fide snag. The understory contains Hawthornes, Texas mountain laurel, Possumhaw, Mexican plums, Soapberry, Mesquite, Eve's necklace, and Yaupons. Grasses include Lindheimer muhly, Little bluestem, Switch and Indiangrass. Perennials were Maximilian sunflower, Columbine, Aster, Sage, Salvia greggi, Coneflower, Zexmenia and Blackfoot daisy. Some Asian this and that were there, but in the minority.

The East Texas Pineywoods canopy contains Bald cypress, Sweetgum, Magnolia, and Loblolly pines. Understory plants include Dogwood, Cherry laurel, Wax myrtle, Oakleaf hydrangea and American beautyberry. The lower cover is Swamp Iris, Cattail, Honeysuckle and Virginia Creeper—all excellent habitat for Black bear and Alligators.

Way down at the Gulf Coast, we found Palms, Live oaks, and Bald Cypress in the canopy. More Wax myrtle, Cherry laurel, Yaupons, and Loquat in the understory. Chordgrass, Gulf muhly, Inland sea oats and Common reed covered the lower floor. I'd bet the pelicans and spoonbills liked those.

The Brush Country canopy includes Live oak and Chitalpa—great for the Mountain lions and Jaguar to climb. Understory is formed by Texas persimmon, Mesquite, and Hercules club. Softleaf yucca, Spanish dagger, Prickly pear, Mexican hat, Prairie verbena and Lantana covered the floor. No pansies here.

A more open canopy occurs in the Mountains and Desert area: Ashe juniper, Cedar elm and Live oak. The understory gets a little sticky, with Acacia, Agarita, Curly mesquite, Sotol, Agave and Cholla. The desert floor is sprinkled with Little bluestem, Muhlys, Shrubby skullcap, Sagebrush, and Rabbitbrush. Not a begonia in sight.

If you couldn't join us for the field trip, please take time to visit the zoo. Its latest exhibit is all about Texas and its natives.

See you in August. Until then,
Gailon

August meeting:

Thursday, August 7, 7:00 pm, Fort Worth Botanic Garden

Jane Bartosiewicz, Dallas County Master Gardener, will speak on **Wildflowers and Conservancy Seed**, a new program she has created this year. After retiring from 30 years in the allied healthcare field, Jane turned to her deep passion for plants as a second profession. Jane has completed over 400 hours of continuing education in horticulture, and contributes 200-400 hours yearly in volunteer programs.

Butterfly of the Month: The Great Purple Hairstreak *Joann Karges*



You are in the garden admiring the flowers. Suddenly you see a black, vaguely triangular shape, about the size of a quarter, perched on a blossom. Peering closer, you see that it's not black at all but a deep grey with a purplish cast—and yes, it's a butterfly with wings closed—a Great Purple Hairstreak (*Atlides halesus*)! And there are more colors: a streak of bright metallic blue, red spots near the base of the wings, black head and thorax with white polka dots, and an orangish abdomen. You find the head and the antennae—but at one point of the triangle there seem to be other appendages. Indeed these are the “hairstreaks” that imitate the antennae; just above them on the wings are the silvery blue spots which to a predator might seem like glittering eyes. This kind of deception protects all of the true hairstreaks. Should the butterfly take off, you might see the brilliant

blue of the upper wings of a male, or a duller blue of the female.

This butterfly, the largest and most distinctive of our hairstreaks, is quite common in Texas and known throughout most of the warmer areas of North America, where it flies most of the year. The tiny caterpillars feed on mistletoe flowers and leaves, and then pupate either on the ground in leaf litter of the host tree or under loose bark. On the first warm days of the year, just about the time the forestiera comes into bloom, the last brood of fall emerge from their chrysalids and readily seek the nectar of flowers. In other seasons you may find them on plains plantain, milkweed, lantana, and many composites, including goldenrod. Adults live about three weeks.

Granbury Road Subcourthouse News

Gailon Hardin

Whenever we can, Master Naturalist Gita Mani, Pat Lovejoy, Evaline Woodrey, and I are going to tell you what is going on at each native plant garden. We hope you will join us on workdays when you can and learn more about natives.

The Southwest Subcourthouse is located on Granbury Road about 2-3 miles south of I 20. Its 10,000+ square foot garden was installed in 1997 by NPSOT North Central Chapter. That's us guys, and the garden is strictly Texas natives. It is maintained by NPSOT members, Tarrant County Master Gardeners and Cross Timber Master Naturalists. We have two workdays each month: second Saturday and last Tuesday. We keep the garden free of trash and weeds and plant new natives when necessary. We spray no pesticides and Mother Nature waters for us. In the event of drought, we will provide supplemental water monthly. We are trying to show the average person (who gets car tags and votes early at the courthouse) a more environmentally friendly way to garden.

In the garden is an outstanding display of *Salvia greggii*. I don't mean 2 or 3 plants, I mean 200-300 plants. You can see them from a mile away.

On Saturday, June 27, three loyal gardeners carried out a special mission. The sign provided by Tarrant County was knocked down in its first month. Master Gardeners Art Wycliff and Pat Lovejoy and I re-installed that sign and I don't think anyone will knock it down soon. A tornado may take the courthouse, but the sign will stand.

On Tuesday, July 12, several Master Gardeners gave a hand: Kathy Beeler, Berry Bock (also a NPSOT member), Carla Pickens, Fatima Gameiro, Jim Woodlief, Art Wycliff, Blake Hardy and son, Jim Potter, Mary Jeanne Hoera, Taylor Stephens-Parker, Helena van H, Pat, and me. We ignored the weeds this time and concentrated on thinning Little bluestem, Gaura and Ruellia. Blake and his son destroyed several Hackberries that plagued the garden. The volunteers took home the extras and planted them in their own gardens—but not the Hackberries. One thing Pat and I love to do is take home some strays (plants), pot them up and bring them to share with the volunteers during the next workday. Our next workdays are August 9 and 26. Please join us and learn to be “stewards of the land”.

Demo Garden Opportunities

Granbury Road Subcourthouse Meet at the site on second Saturdays and last Tuesdays for general maintenance. We begin at 9:00 am and work for 2 or 3 hours. The subcourthouse is 2 miles south of Loop 820 on Granbury Road. Contact Gailon Hardin, 817-457-4703, or ghardin@flash.net, for more information about the garden.

Hulen Library We meet at the garden for grooming and maintenance on the last Thursday of the month at 8:30 am May through September, other days as needed. Contact Ev Woodrey at 817-295-4683 for additional information.

The Molly Hollar Wildscape Workdays are on the first Saturday of every month at Veterans Park, 9:00 am until noon. Activities include planting, gathering seed, weeding, pruning etc. For more information, contact Molly Hollar at 817-860-5580.

Plant of the Month: Wild red columbine *Evaline Woodrey*

LATIN NAME: *Aquilegia canadensis* (ah-kwah-LEE-jee-ah kan-ah-DEN-siss)

RANGE: Southern part of North Central Texas to Edwards Plateau

SIZE: 8-18 inches tall

LEAVES: Basal & alternate along the stems, palmately compound; ultimate leaflets fan-shaped and lobed

FLOWERS: Red with yellow at tips

SOIL: Sand, loam, limestone; moist, well drained

EXPOSURE: Shade, dappled shade, part shade

BLOOM PERIOD: Early spring

WATER: Some extra moisture appreciated

NATIVE TO: Hill country of Texas



This columbine is a little pickier than its yellow cousin. It may need a little more water during the summer months and it doesn't take to the sun. Overwater it and it will rot. Also, a soil rich in organic matter will contribute to its success. Even so, it is worth the effort to grow this little red gem.

Sally Wasowski says that red columbine is evergreen in Dallas and she knows of some that have been around seven years, contrary to the accepted notion that it is short-lived. She also recommends it on the patio in a pot of sand with no saucer; watch for the hummingbirds it will attract. It will seed out on bare ground. If you are happy with the number you have, merely mulch heavily.

Native Plant Landscaping Class

We know we need natives, but we might have trouble using them to create pleasing combinations. Now we can put it all together with professional help. Learn to design your garden with Texas natives November 11, 13, 18 and 20. Steven Chamblee, MS, Education Director of Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, will teach the class in the Iris Room of the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens. The class will meet from 6:30 pm until 9:30 pm. The fee for all four sessions is only \$100 per household (maximum two attendees per household). Phone Gailon Hardin at 817-457-4703 for more information.

Mail your registration fee to Alan Klein, 5745 Chelmsford Trail, Arlington, TX 76018 with the form below. Make checks payable to NPSOT or Native Plant Society of Texas.

Native Plant Landscaping Class

Name _____

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North Central Chapter
 Native Plant Society of Texas
 Chapter President
 2311 Perkins Rd
 Arlington, TX 76016

Next Meeting

Join us **Thursday, August 7,**
 at 7:00 pm, at the Fort Worth
 Botanic Gardens for
**Wildflowers and
 Conservancy Seed**
 presented by
**Jane Bartosiewicz,
 Dallas County
 Master Gardener**

Visit us on the Web at
www.txnativeplants.org

Join the Native Plant Society of Texas!

We invite you to participate as a member of the Native Plant Society of Texas. Membership is open to any individual, family, or organization. Membership is renewable annually and extends for a year from the date we receive your original payment.

If you wish to join, please indicate your category of membership, then clip and mail this application along with the appropriate remittance to:

Native Plant Society of Texas
 P.O. Box 891, Georgetown, TX 78627
 512-868-8799 or 512-931-1166

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For changes of address or
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John Darling, Editor
The Texas Sage
 1316 S. Pecan St.
 Arlington, TX 76010
 817-274-1077
1darling@airmail.net

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