



# THE TEXAS SAGE

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter

Volume 15, Number 1

February 2003

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## Contents

The President's Corner	1
NPSOT Spring Symposium	2
Demo Gardens	2
Garden Cuttings	2
Plant of the Month	3

## The President's Corner

Welcome to a new NPSOT year. Let me begin by introducing a few folks to you.

Dagmar Higgins, Vice President and Program Chair, has been a NPSOT member for several years. She's a Master Naturalist and volunteers at our native plant demonstration gardens and at the Fort Worth Nature Center. Dagmar has been our Hospitality Chair for the last three years and she's made sure our meetings have had lots of snacks.

Our secretary, Pat Lovejoy, joined NPSOT last year. Pat is a Master Gardener Intern Advisor and has been instrumental in introducing Master Gardener interns to our demonstration gardens. Last year Pat and the 2002 interns put in about 400 hours in the Granbury Road Subcourthouse and the Wildscape at Veterans Park alone.

John Darling is a Master Composter and newsletter editor for the Arlington Conservation Council. John helped in building an impressive composting area at the Wildscape at Veterans Park and spends a fair amount of his time composting what the volunteers prune. He also agreed to be our newsletter editor after significant bribes from me.

Nelda Forston brought snacks to almost every meeting last year. This year Nelda will be our Hospitality Chair. Please help her when she calls and asks your help with refreshments.

Alan Klein, Helena vanHeiningen, Evaline Woodrey, Michelle May and Jeff Quayle will return for yet another season on our Board. Alan continues as our Treasurer, Helena is our new Membership Chair, Evaline will continue as

Historian, Michelle will keep our website going, and Jeff reports from the field.

Note: I sent the above article to our new editor and he promptly returned it to me. He said I was missing a person on the Board—the new president. Well, that's me. I joined NPSOT in 1998 and have been Vice President for the last three years. Getting programs for our group was educational for me and not an easy task. I'm a Master Gardner, a Master Naturalist, a Master Composter, and since retirement three years ago, have become a master volunteer. I work at the three demonstration gardens we maintain, among other volunteer projects. I also live on an acre plus of sugar sand and did not want to have a \$300 a month water bill with the usual exotics. Originally I planted my place with begonias, impatiens, and the dreaded redtip photinias and was most unhappy with the results. While I gave the exotics the water they required, I killed my beautiful post oaks—28, to be exact. I mended my ways when I joined NPSOT and learned about our beautiful natives of Texas. Most likely I will share with you what I'm doing in my garden throughout the year. Currently, I'm cutting the natives to the ground and mulching the beds. I start trimming early because there are about 20,000 square feet of beds to trim.

Please join us on February 6 as we begin our new year with Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center. We'll have refreshments, and don't forget to bring something for the raffle.

Until then,  
Gailon

### A tip for seed collectors from Pat McNeal

If you are having trouble gathering seed from plants with dehiscent seed capsules (capsules that open spontaneously to discharge their seeds when ripe), try tying an old nylon stocking around the branch before the capsules have matured fully.

## 2003 Spring Symposium

The Native Plant Society of Texas and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center are pleased to announce the 2003 Spring Symposium, "Historic Flora of Texas." The event will be held March 1 at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin and will feature:

- Dr. Vaughn M. Bryant, Director, Center for Ecological Archaeology, Texas A&M University, and editor of *Through the Looking Glass: Readings in Anthropology*;
  - Dr. David Schmidly, President, Oklahoma State University, and author of *Texas Natural History: A Century of Change*;
  - Dr. Joe Sirotnak, botanist/ecologist, Big Bend National Park; and
  - Dr. Billie Turner, Director Emeritus, Plant Resource Center, UT Austin, and lead author of *Atlas of the Vascular Plants of Texas*.
- workshops including Plant Identification, Seed Care, Landscaping, Madrones, and Butterflies.

For more information and to download a registration form, please visit [www.wildflower.org/?nd=56](http://www.wildflower.org/?nd=56)

Join us for an entertaining and educational day of lectures and workshops. Space is limited, so register early. If you have any additional questions contact us by email at [kssternberg@wildflower.org](mailto:kssternberg@wildflower.org) or call (512) 292-4200.



## Demo Garden Opportunities



### Granbury Road Subcourthouse

We will meet at the Subcourthouse on the second Saturday and last Tuesday of the month for general maintenance. We begin at 9:00 am and work for two or three hours. The subcourthouse is located two miles south of Loop 820 on Granbury Road. Contact Gailon Hardin, 817-457-4703, or [ghardin@flash.net](mailto: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 10:00 am through April, other days as needed. Contact Ev Woodrey at 817-295-4683 for additional information.

### Wildscape at Veterans Park

Workdays are on the first Saturday of every month from 9:00 am until noon. Maintenance activities include planting, gathering seed, weeding, pruning etc. If you would like more information, contact Molly Hollar at 817-860-5580.



## Garden Cuttings



January and February are months that some gardeners spend indoors being inspired by a good horticultural book, magazine, or catalog. Plans and strategy are made in the comfy confines of one's home. For others, the winter months bring gardening opportunities. Many plants, especially natives, can be transplanted with minimal effort at this time of year as long as the ground is not frozen. It's a time to move around plants within existing gardens in order to fine-tune a design or color combination. Why not add a few unique plants to your garden by hunting for and salvaging plants from sites that will be developed? With permission, of course.

Many shrubs and small trees can easily be identified and moved by the novice gardener. With a little more knowledge, one can identify many perennials, biennials, and annuals from their winter rosettes or their residual stubble. Plants with thick, fleshy roots, tubers, bulbs, or rhizomes like *Penstemon cobaea*, *Liatrix* spp., *Asclepias* spp., *Callirhoe involucrata*, *Engelmannia pinnatifida*, and

*Silphium albiflorum* to name a few, can actually be bare-rooted if dug properly.

The key to a successful transplant is not to let the roots dry out. Bring plastic trash bags, zip-locks, or the appropriate sealable containers for the hunt; then plant the "goods" as soon as possible; water to minimize large air gaps around the roots of the newly planted; and then mulch, being careful not to cover the crowns of the new additions.

Transplants done in late fall and early winter have higher survival rates than those transplanted in the spring. Remember to move plants of one soil type and exposure to the same or similar soil and aspect.

Although plants from blackland prairie soil types may adapt to cross timber soil types, the reverse scenario is less likely to succeed. So now you know what avid native gardeners do during the winter.

*Jim Leavy, adapted from  
The Texas Sage, February 1998*

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

### Agarita



LATIN NAME: *Berberis trifoliolata* (*Mahonia trifoliolata*)

BER-ber-is tri-foh-lee-oh-LAY-tah

RANGE: Corpus Christi, Trans-Pecos, West Texas, Edwards Plateau, New Mexico, Arizona, Mexico

SIZE: 3-6 ft. tall

LEAVES: 3 leaflets narrowly oblong, blue-green above, green beneath with 1-3 pairs of spiny lobe-like teeth resembling holly

FLOWERS: Insignificant, yellow

SOIL: Sand, loam, clay, caliche, limestone; well drained

EXPOSURE: Part shade, full sun

BLOOM PERIOD: Very early spring

WATER: Drought tolerant

NATIVE TO: South, west and north central Texas

This woody shrub has very spiny leaves that make it a good security plant as well as a lovely specimen plant. It has very fragrant yellow flowers and very bright red berries in the fall and winter; great for the birds and for making jelly.

It is known as a nurse plant due to its disagreeableness to grazing animals which allows seedlings of other plants to thrive under its branches.

Berberis or barberry comes from the Latinized Arabic word for its fruit; trifoliolate, for the three lobes of its leaves.

*Evaline Woodrey*

### Master Composter Workshop

Offered by Arlington Neighborhood Services.

Saturday, February 15, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm and Saturday, February 22, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Learn how to make great soil by composting leaves and other yard waste in your own backyard.

Class graduates will receive books, workshop materials, and a compost thermometer.

Non-Arlington residents will be charged a small fee for class materials.

**Call 817-459-6778 by February 12 to register.**

### Newsletter Sponsors

The following businesses support our monthly newsletter. Please support them.

#### Green Mama's Organic Garden Market

5324 Davis Blvd  
North Richland Hills, TX 76180  
817-514-7336  
[www.greenmamas.com](http://www.greenmamas.com)

#### Rabbit Hill Farm

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#### Blooming Colors Nursery

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#### Redenta's Garden

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#### Shades of Green

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[sogreen@mindspring.com](mailto:sogreen@mindspring.com)

#### Mike's Garden Center

5703 Crowley Rd  
Fort Worth, TX 76134  
817-293-8736

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 Chapter President  
 2311 Perkins Rd  
 Arlington, TX 76016

**Next Meeting**

Join us Thursday, February 6,  
 at 7:00 pm at the Fort Worth  
 Botanic Gardens for  
*A Nature Lover's Celebration*  
 presented by  
 Bill Richerson and Greg Fox

Visit us on the web at  
[www.txnativeplants.org](http://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

- |   |      |  |        |
|---|------|--|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student        | \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Group             | \$35   |
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**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 the newsletter editor.

The deadline for submitting articles for inclusion in next month's newsletter is the 15th of every month.

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