



THE TEXAS SAGE

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter

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The President's Corner

Thank you, John Darling, for an entertaining program on birds. I have no idea what you said, but you were hilarious. We all need humor and John provided it. I laughed for three days after his presentation. I would like to remind you that John is our newsletter editor and he does a great job.

If you'd like to share what you are doing with natives (native plants), send him an email and he will publish it.

Speaking of sharing news, the Wildscape bunch had a successful plant sale at the Molly Hollar Wildscape on May 10. The Wildscape

bunch consists of a group of hard-core native-ites who join Molly at her home each week and propagate plants. They are Master Naturalists, Arlington Conservation Council members, Master Gardeners, NPSOT members, and some people who just can't stay away from hard labor.

Molly's home grounds have evolved into a wall-to-wall carpet of newly propagated native babies. The Wildscape will have two sales each year, spring and fall, of plants we normally can't find in local nurseries. The proceeds help maintain the Wildscape.

I've checked on the two other demonstration gardens we maintain, and they are beginning their seasonal cycle. The wild

foxgloves (*Penstemon cobaea*) were showing off at the Southwest Regional Library. A man asked me what they were and where he could purchase some, and I had to tell him they were rarely sold in nurseries. However, Jeff Quayle recently rescued about 100 plants and gave them to

Molly for the fall sale. I'll be first in line. Granbury Road Subcourthouse was a little bare but is starting to fill in where we put new plantings last summer. The Master Gardeners have been a great help with maintenance, but we were in a quandary about what to do with the



The spring plant sale at Veterans Park in Arlington was a big success this year.

Salvia greggii. They were getting too large and leggy, so we took a chance and cut them to the ground. Now they look great.

Helena vanHeiningen has organized a special event for us at the Fort Worth Zoo's Texas Wild exhibit on Saturday, June 28, and we are inviting the area NPSOT Chapters. Do plan to come and meet fellow native plant enthusiasts.

Don't forget: our next meeting is on **Tuesday, June 3**, rather than the normal Thursday. We won't have our regular meeting on the first Thursday in July. Please bring a raffle item on June 3 and join us in refreshments that Nelda Fortson always makes available. Until then,

Gailon

SPECIAL MEETING DATE

June meeting:

Tuesday, June 3, 7:00 pm, Fort Worth Botanic Garden

John Davis will present *Holistic Pond Management*. John is an Urban Biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. He is widely recognized as an enthusiastic and knowledgeable speaker.

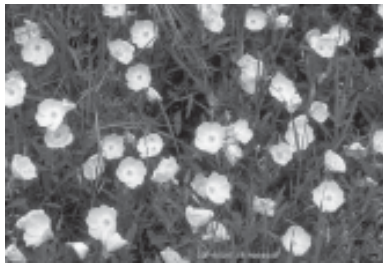
Garden Cuttings *Jim Leavy, adapted from The Texas Sage, June 1998*

Well, it looks like spring is over and summer has begun. Many of you probably have spectacularly blooming gardens with a few bedraggled plants spoiling the view here and there. So it's time to get out the pruners and cut back to the basal rosettes. Oxeye daisy, although still blooming, may be down on the ground, so snip it and snip it good!

Penstemon tenuis may be finished blooming, so cut it down by about half to stimulate an additional bloom (this does not seem to work with *Penstemon cobeae*). *Stachys coccinea* should be cut it back to its basal leaves. Stand back as it prepares to sprawl out and bloom again and again. Let your *Gaillardia* go to seed before you get rid of it, and be sure to leave the seed heads in the garden. If you want *Aster oblongifolia* to have a neat, compact form this fall, then it's time for its first shearing; cut the plant to half its existing height. If you want the wild look, then leave it alone.

It's also time to take a hard look at the garden and make notes on how to move things around this fall to get an even more spectacular display of blooms. If you have space and winecups, try combining *Callirhoe* in mass with *Oenothera speciosa* (you'll need to selectively cull your primrose every fall) or *Salvia superba* 'Pink Queen' (not native) for a contrast of pinkie purples. Or, for a more vivid contrast, try winecups and *Calylophus serrulatus*, *C. drummondianus*, and/or *C. hartweggii*. For an interesting color echo, add *Asclepias viridis*. The green butterfly weed has purple at the center of its flower (the same purple as most winecups). I hope you'll try these combos...you'll like them!

From Our BRIT Reporter *Amy Trauth Nare*



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Showy primrose is hard to miss this time of year. All you need to do is look out your car window while driving down a Texas highway and you'll see it showing off its pretty pink blooms. Blooming in mass provides for a spectacular spring display not only along highways, but also in wet ditches, in old fields, pastures and slopes.

When talking to other primrose lovers about this plant it is probably best to refer to its Latin name, *Oenothera speciosa* (ee-noh-THEER-ah spee-see-OH-sa). There are two reasons for this. First, showy primrose, perhaps because of its conspicuousness in our landscape, has been given several common names: pink evening primrose, Texas buttercup, showy evening primrose, Mexican primrose, white evening primrose, and amapola del campo. Second, there are 11 other species of primrose (*Oenothera*) in North Central Texas. Many common names and numerous species could lead to

confusion when referring to primroses. The epithet *speciosa* should help you remember the scientific name of this primrose, since it means 'showy' or 'pretty'.

The genus *Oenothera* is a member of the family Onagraceae (Primrose family). Other genera in this family are *Gaura* (butterfly weed, gaura), *Stenosiphon* (false gaura), and *Ludwigia* (water primrose, false loosestrife). Species of *Oenothera* have four petals that open near sunset or sunrise, for pollination by moths. The flowers of *Oenothera speciosa* are particularly conspicuous not only because of the pink petals, but also because of the bright yellow stamens and stigma. The stigma is particularly interesting because it has four lobes that are shaped like a cross or large X. Leaves of *Oenothera speciosa* are sword-shaped and toothed or lobed on the margins. Species of *Oenothera* are not economically important in that they provide food or medicine, but are widely cultivated since they tolerate a wide variety of cultural conditions. This species will grow in sand, caliche, or loamy soils and prefers full sun but will grow well in partial shade. Showy primrose blooms from April through July in this part of the state. They are low-growing, normally only reaching about a foot in height, and do well even with competition from taller grasses. Showy primrose can be cultivated from seed or root cuttings.

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: Gregg Dalea *Evaline Woodrey*

LATIN NAME: *Dalea greggii* (DAY-lee-uh GREG-ee-eye)

RANGE: Southeastern Trans-Pecos, Mexico

SIZE: 4-9" tall, trailing

LEAVES: Alternate, delicately compound, silver-gray

FLOWERS: Purple, ½ inch

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

EXPOSURE: Full sun

BLOOM PERIOD: May to September

WATER: Drought tolerant



This delicate-looking ground cover is evergreen (evergray?) in mild climates. At my house it has overwintered for several years. There it tolerates full sun, no extra water, sandy soil, and reflected heat, growing in a 12" wide bed between a rock retaining wall and pool decking. It has not died back in winter as some authorities suggest.

There are 160 species of native Daleas from Canada to Argentina, especially in Mexico and the Andes, occurring mainly in dry or desert areas.

Butterfly of the Month *Joann Karges*



This month, we will talk about two similar butterflies, the Painted Lady and the American Lady. The Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) is the best known butterfly in the world. It is "Painted" because of the variety of colors and patterns, particularly on the underside of the wings. Basically this Lady is orange on the upper side of the wings with some black streaks and black corners festooned with white spots in the upper wings and small bluish "eyespot" in the lower wings. Below, the upper wings are pinkish with black and white patterns while on the lower wings in a brownish and white webbing is a series of small eyespots along the edges. The Painted Lady uses many different kinds of plants as larval hosts, but thistle is the female's choice. The larva makes a loose webbing on the plant, enlarging it as it feeds on the leaves and may eventually pupate on the same plant. Because the webbing and the droppings collected in it are not pretty, butterfly gardeners should plant thistle in less conspicuous spots—say to the rear of the garden. Note: all thistles are good nectaring plants

for many butterflies.

The American Lady (*Vanessa virginiensis*) looks much like the Painted Lady on the upper side. Only by looking at the underside can one tell the difference, particularly in the lower wings where there are two fairly large eyespots instead of the several of the Painted Lady. In this area the prominent host plant is pussy-toes or everlasting (*Antennaria parlinii*), though the butterfly may use a number of other plants, usually other composites,

Both Ladies are migratory to some degree, heading south in the fall, at times in flocks, then dispersing in warm areas. In the spring new adults head northward. During very mild winters both species may overwinter as adults. They may be among the first you see on wild plums in early spring. They take nectar from many blossoms, but coneflowers, gaillardia, and other composites are almost sure attractants.

On Saturday, June 28, at 9:00 am, you are invited to attend a joint meeting at Fort Worth Zoo's Texas Wild exhibit. We will learn what went on behind the scenes in designing, installing, and maintaining the look of Texas, then take a tour of the native plant area.

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Next Meeting

Join us **Tuesday, June 3,**
 at 7:00 pm, at the Fort Worth
 Botanic Gardens for

Holistic Pond Management

presented by
John Davis

**SPECIAL
 MEETING
 DATE!**

Visit us on the Web at
www.txnativeplants.org

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