



THE TEXAS SAGE

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter

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The President's Corner



Our September meeting featured a speaker in the BRIT Distinguished Lecturer Series. Our country seems to be in a pretty big mess since its discovery 400 years ago,

according to Dr. Andrew Sansom, Executive Director of the International Institute for Sustainable Water. Deterioration often centers on the 20th century populace; however, the biggest damage began in the 19th century. Example: grassland savannahs were destroyed by grazing in 30 years—before 1900, before cotton farming.

Texas is 95-97% privately owned, and conditions have improved in the last 100 years through better stewardship by land owners. However, during the 20th century overhunting eliminated black bear, jaguar, and elk. In the 1930s whitetail deer almost became extinct—today they are out of control. During the 1940s hunters took home more wild turkey than the entire turkey population existing today. Bighorn sheep are back in the hunting game since the 1920s.

Women began our major conservation movement. They voted in Texas before anywhere in the nation and their first issue was conservation. In 1921 women's

organizations campaigned for a parks system; they recognized the need for recreational destinations as automobiles grew in popularity—and our state parks were born.

Sansom introduced three great challenges for Texas' future and described water as the biggest environmental issue of our lifetime. We depend on rivers for fresh water and only 0.25 of 1% is fresh water. The remainder is salt water or is locked up as ice. River authorities are managed by many entities, yet there is no watershed management in our state. The second challenge: Since Texas is mostly privately owned, we're losing rural and agricultural land faster than any state. We lose one and a half million acres of land each year. The third challenge is demographics. Our population will double in 25 years. Since 90% of Texans live in 15 cities, the growth will be in urban areas among people who normally do not hunt, fish, or camp. As a result, children will not learn to connect with nature, so we must work even harder to introduce our kids to nature and biodiversity.

On a happier note, it's a pleasure to welcome our newest members: Homer and Dorothy Babbitt, Jean Baggerly, Bryan Hummel, Sean Kilpatrick, Donna and Bob Ressler, and Leeann Rosenthal. I hope to see you all at the next meeting. Until then,
Gailon

Annual Plant Swap!

October meeting:
Thursday, October 2, 7:00 pm, Fort Worth Botanic Gardens

Our normal monthly meeting will resume on Thursday, October 2, with our annual plant swap. Please bring a native plant with a complete description and its cultural requirements for a fun and educational meeting.

Fall Native Plant Sale and Workday

at Molly Hollar Wildscape, Veterans Park, Saturday, October 4. Sale: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: 8:00 am - noon or noon - 4:00 pm.

This Saturday, October 4, will be the Wildscape's Fall Plant Sale and regular First Saturday workday. The propagation crew has been busy since the spring sale and there will be lots of great natives grown from local sources. Here's the best part: Prices are already low, but volunteers get about 1/4 off, now through sale day. If you're a volunteer and would like to pre-buy, or if you can volunteer on October 4, please call Molly at 817/860-5580.

Butterfly of the Month: Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*) Joann Karges



Photos from *Butterflies of North America*, USGS Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/distr/lepid/bflyusa/bflyusa.htm. Copyright Paul Opler.

While the Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*) is not a true heliconian, it is considered a member of the Heliconiinae, a subfamily of the brush-footed family (the nymphalids). Nevertheless, like almost all butterflies in this group, it has only one larval host plant: passionflower.

Very common in this part of Texas, the Gulf Fritillary readily accepts the native species of *Passiflora*, *P. incarnata* and *P. lutea*, as well as *Passiflora* of other areas of Texas and *P. caerulea*, a native of Brazil commonly available in nurseries, which has the advantage of staying green even through light fall frosts when caterpillars are still feeding. Some passionvine species found in the nursery trade it and others will not accept, so that planting for Gulf Fritillaries

should be planned with natives or very successfully adapted species (like *P. caerulea*) in mind. The natives and adapted species are perennial.

The mated female (sometimes mated while still in her chrysalis!) will lay eggs on the tips of the vine tendrils. The caterpillars emerge about 3 days later, and as they grow to maturity will consume a lot of their host plant leaves. Frequently the caterpillar becomes a chrysalis on the passionvine, but just as often it will wander off as far as 50 feet to other plants or to human structures to pupate. Ordinarily pupation lasts about a week to 10 days, longer in cooler weather.

Other heliconians in the area are: Zebra Longwing, (*Heliconius charithonius*), which has been breeding in the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens all summer and the Julia (*Dryas julia*) which drifts into the area from time to time. Technically, the Variegated Fritillary (*Euptoietia claudia*) is also a member of the subfamily but uses a variety of host plants (such as flax) in addition to passionvine; this species is quite common even during the winter months.

Look for Gulf Fritillaries from mid-spring until fall frost—and even afterwards there might be an occasional one. They nectar on many kinds of flowers, especially on lantana, zinnias, eupatorium, and red ones such as Turk's cap, flame acanthus, and pentas.

Texas Discovery Gardens has a short program on gardening, frequently emphasizing butterflies and birds, on WRR FM (101.1) Saturday mornings at 8:30. During the State Fair, the Gardens in Fair Park will again display local and exotic species of live butterflies.

October Garden Cuttings Jim Leavy—Reprinted from The Texas Sage, October 1998

Fall is for planting! When the temperatures fall to the low 80s or below, it is time to dust off the spade and start transplanting, dividing, replanting and reconfiguring. Trees usually transplant best when they are dormant or lose their leaves in the fall. A seasoned gardener may successfully move a tree now, but the novice may want to wait until after November. New trees can be planted now. In fact, anyone searching for a fall color tree should pick their tree when it has put on its new foil. Shumard Red Oak (*Quercus shumardii* var. *shumardii*) can vary from tones of brown to orange to red because of genotypic variation as well as the past year's climatic changes. Texas Ash can vary from tones of brown to yellow to purple. Picking a tree that displays red leaves one year will increase the likelihood of getting a tree that displays red leaves in the majority of years to follow. Most shrubs can

be successfully moved now by carefully digging an adequate root ball and reducing the top growth by one third to a half. Again, if you are in the experimental stages of garden knowledge, waiting till the plant goes dormant can increase the likelihood of success. Most perennials can be moved and divided at this time with little worry. Any perennial with a basal rosette of leaves should be trimmed to those leaves after transplanting; others should have their foliage reduced at least by half in order to ensure survival after a move. Some perennials have very long taproots (*Asclepias* spp.) and should be left until winter to move. Some perennials may be tender like pavonia, anisacanthus or lantana and should not be moved until spring when temperatures are in the 70s.

These tender perennials that tend to thrive in the heat may

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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 10:00 am October through April, 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 information, contact Molly Hollar at 817-860-5580.

Native Plant of the Month: False-gaura *Amy Trauth Nare*

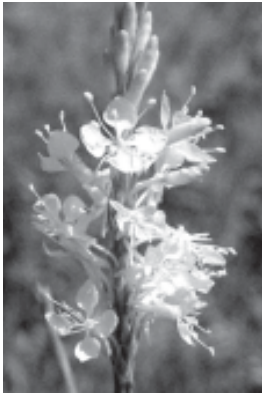


Photo copyright Charles S. Lewallen, from Oklahoma Biological Survey website www.biosurvey.ou.edu/okwild

You are probably familiar with Gaura or Butterfly-weed, the perennial herb with small delicate white to pink flowers borne at the ends of stalk tips, which sway gracefully in the breeze. Our native Gaura has a sister species called *Stenosiphon linifolius* or False-gaura. False-gaura vaguely resembles but is closely related to species of Gaura growing here in north central Texas. Both *Gaura* and *Stenosiphon* are members of the Evening-primrose family, Onagraceae. While the genus *Gaura* contains some 21 species, *Stenosiphon* is monotypic, meaning it has only one species in the genus, *Stenosiphon linifolius*. In fact, recent DNA analysis shows that False-gaura should actually be a member of *Gaura*, rather than in be a genus by itself. The family Onagraceae has little economic value other than as ornamentals, yet contains many well-known plants: Evening-primrose, Fireweed, Fuchsia (or Fushia), False-loosestrife or Water-primrose. All members of the family have flower parts in fours, with eight stamens. Sepals, petals and stamens are fused at the base to form a tube called a hypanthium. Derived from two Greek words, *steno* meaning narrow or straight and *siphon* meaning tube, the species *Stenosiphon linifolius* alludes to the whitish thread-like hypanthium of the flowers.

False-gaura is a conspicuous member of the flora of prairie remnants. The stem is tall and slender, usually between two and eight feet tall, and has numerous narrow, simple leaves. The leaves are small, between one and three inches long and less than an inch wide and are crowded on the stem. Flowers are numerous, densely clustered in long, slender terminal spikes, which can be more than 2 feet long. Like Gaura, it too sways gracefully in the warm summer breezes. Plants are easily cultivated in our heavy clay soils and seeds should be planted in sunny locales in the fall. False-gaura makes an excellent honey plant, attracting bees and other small insects. Its delicate, airy appearance makes an attractive addition to native plant gardens and habitats.

October Garden Cuttings *continued from page 2*

not winter well even as newly planted pots in the fall, especially if we have a cold, wet winter. Grasses can be divided now, but you will probably miss their full potential unless they happen to be cool-weather grasses. Wait until they have pushed their inflorescences to their full splendor and then cut them back to the ground before moving and dividing. Many plants, especially newly planted ones, wilt during the afternoon sun. The response for the inexperienced gardener is to water right then and there. The experienced gardener will wait until the following morning and see if the plants are still drooping; if they are, then they water.

Southwest Regional Library Native Plant Garden *Evaline Woodrey*

This garden is a cooperative project of the Native Plant Society and Tarrant County Master Gardeners. We loosely refer to it as the Hulen Library garden and meet once a month on the last Thursday except holidays. Beginning in October, we will meet later, at 10:00 am during the cooler months.

In August eight volunteers—Jack Mitchell, Patsy Johnson, Peggy Falconer, Bery Bock, Pat Lovejoy, Sharon Chastain, Joyce Miller, and Susann Draper picked up trash, trimmed, and weeded. We met inside the library, as we do each time, to discuss the plants in the garden and native plants in general. I never leave a meeting without someone expressing appreciation for these discussions. This month Pat Lovejoy gave a report on Deer Muhly grass. This is not one of the garden plants but is related to Lindheimers muhly, so it seemed an appropriate plant to discuss. And we answered a question about sacahuista with help from Sally Wasowski's book.

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 Native Plant Society of Texas
 2311 Perkins Rd
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Next Meeting

Join us **Thursday,**
October 2,
 at 7:00 pm, at the Fort Worth
 Botanic Gardens for
 the

Annual Plant Swap

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:

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