



THE TEXAS SAGE

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Volume 16, Number 5
June 2004

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The President's Corner



If a "little old lady from Galveston" can prevent a major industry from building a polluting factory in her back yard, just think what an organization like the Native Plant Society can do. At our final BRIT Lecture Series Jim Blackburn presented "Texas Coastal Wetlands and the Houston Wilderness", and reminded us of the perils along our Gulf Coast waterway: outlandish mercury contamination, lack of fresh water, and widespread industrial pollution. I hear you saying to yourself, Mr. Blackburn is an environmental lawyer and has lots of clout. What could we possibly do in our backyard to help our environment? Well, I'm happy you asked!

Become educated by finding out which plants are invasive in our area and teach others about them. Talk to land-owners and educate them about natives

and invasive exotics. Be careful what you plant in your own backyard. Do not import non-natives when you travel. Ask your local nurseries to not sell invasives. Volunteer at one of our demonstration gardens; we have three gardens to maintain. If you help at one of the demo gardens, you will learn about planting, pruning, watering techniques, and everything else there is to know about maintenance. Our work days are on Saturday or during the week and are only two to three hours each session. That's only a few hours a month. Finally, keep planting natives. We **can** make an impact in our community.

Our June meeting location has changed. We will not meet at the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens due to a conflict with 'Concert in the Gardens'. We will meet at the River Legacy Living Science Center in Arlington at our regular time of 7:00 pm. Please bring a raffle item and join us in refreshments that Joyce Miller always makes sure are available. Until then,
Gailon

New location for June meeting

This month we will meet at the River Legacy Living Science Center. It's in north Arlington, conveniently close to Interstate 30. From I-30 exit at Cooper Street, then go north 1.5 miles to Green Oaks. The entrance is just across the street, on the north side of the intersection of Cooper Street and Green Oaks Boulevard.



June meeting:
Thursday, June 3, 7:00 pm, River Legacy Living Science Center
Master Naturalist Leeann Rosenthal will present *Hummingbirds*.

Area Garden Events June 2004 *Sandy Balch*

June 5

Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin. National Trail Day. Guided tours; talks. For more information: www.wildflower.org.

June 5

Texas Discovery Gardens, Dallas. Butterfly Plant Sale. 10 am–2 pm. For more information: www.texasdiscoverygardens.org.

June 19

Texas Discovery Gardens, Dallas. Backyard Pond Celebration. 10 am–4 pm. For more information: www.texasdiscoverygardens.org.

June 19

Native Prairies Association of Texas. Workshop: Prairies Remnant ID. Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. 9 am–3 pm. Contact Jeff Quayle: 817-738-1322. For more information: www.texasprairie.org.

June 19

Arlington Organic Garden Club, Arlington. Natural Urban Living Garden Show. 9 am–5 pm. Bob Duncan Community Center, Vandergriff Park. Free. Jay Mertz, Rabbit Hill Farms, 10:30; John Dromgoole, Ladybug Brands, 12:30; Howard Garrett, the Dirt Doctor, 2:30; plant sale. For more information: www.aogc.org.

Note: This information is compiled from notices and web sites. Dates and times may change. You are encouraged to double check event information.

Garden Cuttings *Annotated from Jim Leavy*

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. Oxeyed 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 the plant down to about half its original height to stimulate an additional bloom (this does not seem to work with *Penstemon cobaea*). Those of you who have *Stachys coccinea* should cut it back to its basal leaves and stand back as it prepares to sprawl out and bloom again and again and again. Let your Gaillardia go to seed before you get rid of it (make sure you leave the seed heads in the garden). If you want *Aster oblongifolius* to have a neat compact form this fall, then it's time to perform your 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 of 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. hartwegii*. 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!

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 fourth Thursday of the month at 8:30 am during the summer, 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: Spiderwort *Amy Trauth-Nare*

Spiderworts belong to the genus *Tradescantia*, named for John Tradescant, a New World explorer who brought many new plants back to England in the mid-1600s. Spiderworts are hybridized and widely planted in the U.K. They are still a favorite in English cottage gardens but, ironically, are rarely planted in native North American habitats. There are several species of spiderworts native to Texas, but *Tradescantia occidentalis* (Western spiderwort) and the hybrid *Tradescantia x. andersoniana* are most available in this area.

Spiderworts are herbaceous perennials with long, thin leaf blades similar to grass that grow in clumps 1 to 3 feet tall. Their blooms open in the morning and the plants will flower from late spring through fall. The flowers only last for a day or, on hot days, only for a few hours. The rest of the year the green foliage adds texture to garden and landscape beds. Flowers of spiderwort are about one inch wide, deep purple, lavender, blue, pink, or sometimes white, with three petals and three sepals. The six hairy stamens on each flower are most likely the origin of the common name, since they resemble the legs of a spider. Flowers are borne at the ends of stems or in leaf axils and green leafy bracts usually subtend the inflorescences.

Spiderworts are incredibly adaptable. They are primarily shade plants, preferring a half day of shade, but will tolerate more shade with fewer blooms or more sunny locations with less foliage. Spiderworts will grow in many soil types, from poor, rocky soil to rich organic soil, and can tolerate dry to boggy conditions. The spiderwort in my yard receives morning sun and dappled shade in the afternoon. They make a nice ground cover on the edge of woodlands or under trees in a residential lot.

Spiderworts can be propagated readily from seed and by division of shoots. They should be divided every few years to avoid crowding. If leaves become overgrown or sunburned, cutting them back will encourage fresh, new growth.



Keep NRH Beautiful 1st Annual Pond/Garden Tour

Saturday, June 5, 2004

Lecture on pond building 9 am-10 am, City of NRH Council Chambers, 7301 NE Loop 820

Tour 10 am-5 pm

This tour will offer a peek into private North Richland Hills ponds/gardens. For only \$5 you can attend a lecture on pond building and view any of the six unique garden landscapes. The gardens all include fanciful ponds and extensive perennial beds. Don't miss this opportunity to talk to specialty gardeners, horticultural aficionados, and plain ordinary folks who have an artist's eye and a green thumb.

Tickets are on sale at Green Mamas, 5324 Davis Blvd.; Tropical Greenery, 7421 Grapevine Highway; and Neighborhood Services, 7200-C Dick Fisher Dr. South. For more information, call 817-427-6651.

Newsletter Sponsors **The following businesses support our monthly newsletter. Please support them.**

Blooming Colors Nursery and Landscaping 2221 Ira E Woods Ave, Grapevine, TX 76051, 817-416-6669, bloomingcolorsnursery.com.

Green Mama's Organic Garden Market 5324 Davis Blvd, North Richland Hills, TX 76180, 817-514-7336, greenmamas.com.

Mike's Garden Center, 5703 Crowley Rd, Fort Worth, TX 76134, 817-293-8736.

Native American Seed P.O. Box 185, 127 N 16th St, Junction, TX 76849, 800-728-4043, seedsource.com.

Rabbit Hill Farm Natural fertilizers and soil amendments. 288 SW CR 0020, Corsicana, TX 75110, 903-872-4289 aogc.org/pages/rhf/.

Redenta's Garden 5111 W Arkansas Ln, Arlington, TX 76016, 817-451-2149, redentas.com.

Shades of Green Native and well-adapted plants and organic supplies, 8801 Coit Rd, Frisco, TX 75035, 972-335-9095 sogreen@mindspring.com.

Chapter President
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 2311 Perkins Rd
 Arlington, TX 76016

Next Meeting

Thursday, June 3

7:00 pm

River Legacy Living Science
 Center, Arlington

Leann Rosenthal will present

Hummingbirds

Visit us on the Web at
www.txnativeplants.org

Join the Native Plant Society of Texas!

We invite you to become 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
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$50
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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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