



THE TEXAS SAGE

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Volume 16, Number 9
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The President's Corner



Those who didn't come to the NPSOT State Symposium really missed out. The Northeast and Tyler Chapters outdid themselves. After various hikes and a paddleboat tour, the first evening

began with good cooking by the members—chili, chicken soup, and all the trimmings. I missed the Blake Brothers band from Louisiana because it had been a long day, but I heard they were entertaining and funny.

Friday morning we registered and received our t-shirts and tote bags. The original watercolor sold at the silent auction for a handsome price; the last time I saw the bid, it was approaching \$300.

Friday speakers Peter Loos, Ron Loper, Charles Allen and Paul Cox introduced us to the Piney Woods. It's always amazing to be reminded that East Texas contains one sixth of North

America's flora. Saturday's speakers were David Lewis, Joe Liggio, David Creech (always a scream), Tom Kiphart, Eric Keith, Jim Culpepper and Peter Loos, all very interesting and informative.

Saturday night's awards banquet was a catfish fry in a barn unlike any I've seen before—a party barn. Our North Central chapter received the 2004 Example Award by partnering with other organizations in maintaining demonstration gardens. Thanks go to our fine partners: Tarrant County Master Gardeners, Crosstimbers Master Naturalists, Arlington Master Composters, and Arlington Conservation Council.

If you haven't been to a State NPSOT Symposium, now is the time to consider a trip. The 2005 symposium will be in the Big Bend area, in Alpine, Marfa and Fort Davis, and hotel reservations are needed early.

Hope to see you at our next meeting on November 4, and don't forget to bring something for the raffle. Until then,

Gailon



North Central Chapter attendees at the NPSOT State Symposium in Longview were: (seated, left to right) Helena van Heiningen, Taylor Stephens-Parker, Gailon Hardin, Pat Lovejoy, and (standing, left to right) Jeannie Browning, Susan Higgins, Evaline Woodrey, Jim Higgins, Sandy Balch, Carol Wester, Anne Alderfer, Hester Schwarzer, and Molly Hollar.

November meeting:

Thursday, November 4, 7:00 pm, Fort Worth Botanic Gardens

Our speaker will be Steven Chamblee, Education Director for the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens. He will speak on "Creating Beautiful, Sustainable Urban Living Spaces."

Note that we will be voting for 2005 officers at the November meeting. Nominees are:

President - Pat Lovejoy

Secretary - Hester Schwarzer

Vice President - Anne Alderfer

Treasurer - Devanie Fergus

Butterfly of the Month: The Common Buckeye *Joann Karges*



One of our most frequently seen butterflies is also one of the most strikingly beautiful and most easily identifiable: the Common Buckeye (*Junonia coenia*: Nymphalidae). A rich brown, it has one large eyespot on the forewings, and one large and one smaller eyespot on the hindwings. These spots resemble eyes, perhaps (with some imagination) the eye of a deer, giving it the name “buckeye” and no doubt affording it protection from predators as it lands and flashes open its wings. The eyespots are beautiful in themselves, black rimmed, an orange ring encircling the blue-black “pupil.” No other butterfly resembles it except the two species (and/or subspecies—the taxonomy is still not definitely decided) found in more tropical climates such as the Rio Grande Valley.

The Common Buckeye may be seen in our area frequently in open sunny areas during the warmer seasons and occasionally during a mild winter. It is one of the

few butterflies that are not host-specific. Some of the plants that the female may use for her eggs are plantain (*Plantago* sp), frogfruit (*Phyla* sp), snakeherb (*Dyschoriste linearis*), ruellia (*Ruellia* sp) and most commonly in this area toadflax (*Linaria canadensis*) in spring and gerardia (*Agalinis* sp) in the fall. The caterpillars themselves are quite handsome, too, black with lateral stripes of yellow and white and blue-black spines poking up from orange bases. The adults seek nectar from many flowers but also come to mud. Often they light on the ground, wings spread open, eyespots displayed, basking in the sunshine.

The Common Buckeye is known throughout North America and south into Mexico and the Caribbean. East of the Rocky Mountains they are somewhat migratory, traveling south in fall and northward in springtime. Some mass migrations have been observed in southeastern states. Locally the butterflies arrive mostly singly or in small, loose, hardly discernible flocks.



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

It doesn't get much nicer than this: 70s to low 80s during the day and 50s to 60s at night, truly a gardener's paradise. You've waited all summer long for a chance to get out in the yard without losing ten pounds of water while standing in one spot for five minutes in utter despair over a garden that has gone into shock because of extreme temperatures and no water. The plants have also come out from beneath the rocks to revel in the pleasantries of the season. So tote that shovel, lift that plant and let's get crackin' while the weather is slackin'.

Now is also the time that bulbs appear in the nurseries, but no matter how tempting they might be, it is too early to plant them. If you must buy them, pick the largest bulbs, put them in a paper bag and deposit them in the refrigerator until December or January. An exception to the rule is *Lycoris spp.* or Oxblood Lilies, which may take up to two years to reestablish a bloom cycle after planting. Remember, not all bulbs are perennial here (unless they happen to be natives). A good reference book for bulbs is Scott Ogden's *Garden Bulbs for the South*.

When planting in the glory of fall, other than the compost you have added to the new bed, do not feed your plants with high nitrogen fertilizers (organic or inorganic). Doing so may encourage lush new growth that may then succumb to our erratic winter weather. Feed the roots instead with a little phosphorous or a lot of potassium in many small doses, then wait for spring and stand back! Those of you who are still fooling around with pansies should know the exception to this rule. Pansies are heavy feeders of nitrogen and must have lots of it to look good during the warm spells of winter.

So, whether it be natives or adaptives or both, have a great time.

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: Shumard oak *Amy Trauth-Nare*



I have to admit that it really bothers me when I see a new residential development being planted with the same garbage plants—fruitless mulberry, Bradford pear trees, boxwood shrubs, and red-tipped photinia. There are so many great native plants to choose from in Texas, we should never have to rely on exotics as the mainstay of our landscapes. Native oak trees are one example of the variety from which we can choose. It is likely that Texas has the largest diversity of oaks in North America, with more than 40 species. In north central Texas alone there are about 15 native oaks.

Shumard oak, or *Quercus shumardii*, was named after Benjamin Shumard, a Texas state geologist in the mid-1800s. All oaks are members of the genus *Quercus* and are a part of the beech family, Fagaceae. Other genera in this family are beeches (*Fagus*), chestnuts (*Castanea*), tan-oaks (*Lithocarpus*), and southern-beeches (*Nothofagus*). Most are tall, long-lived trees of hardwood forests. Oaks are notorious for hybridizing—Shumard oak, for example, with readily hybridize with Texas red oak (*Q. buckleyi*) and blackjack oak (*Q. marilandica*). When two species of oaks hybridize, it can be almost impossible to accurately identify them. The best way to identify any oak is to use fully expanded, mature leaves and acorns.

Shumard oaks can be identified by some key characteristics. They are large trees, up to 30 m tall, and the leaves are 8-18 cm long and deeply lobed with rounded sinuses. On the undersides of mature leaves tufts of white hairs are conspicuous where two veins meet. The acorns are 16-25 mm wide, 20-25 mm long and flat at the base. The cup or “hat” covers less than a third of the acorn. In the fall, the leaves of Shumard oak turn a beautiful red color.

Oddly, the leaves do not immediately fall from the tree after its

autumn color. Instead, the leaves will brown and remain on the tree through the winter, until the first signs of spring when new growth occurs.

Like many oaks, Shumard oak can be propagated from fresh, mature acorns. Shumard oak will grow in many habitats, but thrives best in moist forests and upland limestone woods. It will grow in sand, loam, clay, and limestone soils. Shumard oak will grow in part shade and full sun. While they are not terribly fast-growing, Shumard oaks can be strategically planted in order to provide valuable shade for your house or yard.



Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park *John Dycus (Adapted from the Post Oak, October 2004)*

What a wonderful day! This year’s fall plant sale was the most successful ever, thanks to the wholehearted efforts of exceptional volunteers. The Molly Hollar Wildscape crowd’s year of propagating native plants on Wednesday and Friday mornings reached its zenith with sales exceeding \$3,000.

The sales committee of Pat Lovejoy, Gailon Hardin and Taylor Stephens-Parker pulled off the best sale to date. O.K. Carter devoted a long column in the Star-Telegram on giving your yard some “creature comfort.” Howard Garrett, offered a huge plug on his radio show, and volunteers distributed flyers far and wide.

Steve Smith, Dale Denton, Pat Lovejoy, Gailon Hardin, Charlie Shiner, Hester Schwarzer, and Jennifer Hiler provided pickups, trailers and vans to haul thousands of native plants to the sales site. By 12:30 the parking lot was full, with crowds of people looking for the plants on their list. Sales volunteers could hardly get tickets written up fast enough, as a line stretched out at the money table presided over by Jean-Marie Smith and Jan Miller. Jan procured and sold a record number of books. Countless wildscape and native plant informative handouts she collected were given away.

John Snowden, Henry Turner and Steve Smith, enlisted to offer information on butterflies, grasses, and compost, helped customers find plants while answering questions. There were no off times, only steady customers, until the close at 5, evidence of a broader outreach. Some folks came from as far away as Lewisville. Could wildscapes be catching on?

All along, behind the scenes, propagation volunteers have been toiling at the greenhouse to make the sale possible. Two who rarely miss working two mornings a week are Jean Hiler and Hester Schwarzer. They also plant at the wildscape and do whatever else needs to be done. Glenn Troutman, Arlington Parks Board member and president of WeCAN, is a regular on Wednesdays at the greenhouse, moving sacks of soil, loading and moving plants around and generally making himself the handiest of volunteers.

Back at the wildscape on Tuesday mornings, regulars Anne Alderfer, Devanie Fergus, Ann Trenton, and Jan Stout are working to get plants established. Other members of ACC, the Native Plant Society, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and Master Composters provide assistance Tuesday mornings and on first-Saturday workdays.

Without the support of the Arlington Parks Department, especially Martin Sanchez and Jay Falgout, we wouldn’t exist.

Hats off and a huge thanks to all these supporters, super volunteers, and the fine people from Arlington Parks and Recreation who work together to make this little 3-acres-plus slice of heaven happen.

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

Next Meeting

Thursday, November 4

7:00 pm

Fort Worth Botanic Gardens
 Steven Chamblee,
 Education Director,
 Fort Worth Botanic Gardens
 will present

**Creating
 Beautiful, Sustainable
 Urban Living Spaces**

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

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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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