



# THE TEXAS SAGE

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter

Volume 17, Number 6

August 2005

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## The President's Corner *Pat Lovejoy*

### Members and Friends:

It's time to start the second half of our NPSOT year. I'm sorry I had to miss the final part of our Smart Start Workshop at the Wildscape. I would like to thank Rosa Finsley and all who worked to put this workshop on. I hope everyone enjoyed their tour of the Wildscape and the opportunity to visit with Rosa. The Wildscape is a special place and Rosa is such an asset.

Many of my native plants are "resting" right now during this heat. I have been trying to take special note of when my plants are at their very best so I can do a better job of having an interesting landscape all year. The columbine that was so beautiful during the spring and early summer has been cut back and the new rosettes are forming. The salvia greggii, zexmenia, and blackfoot daisy have been tidied up and will soon bloom again. The four-nerve daisy just keeps going and going. Yesterday I saw five hummingbirds flitting among the flame acanthus, the salvia coccinea, and the turks cap. The grasses are growing and getting ready to be the winter interest in my landscape. Oh, how I love my native plants.

The grass, now that's another story. With all the concerns about the overuse of water, I feel guilty every time I water it. Actually my grass has adapted quite well to minimal water. We have to give our grass some water but it really doesn't need as much as we think it does. I was having a conversation recently with Heather Dowell of the Arlington Parks Department. She made the comment "you have to train your grass." What a great thought. We all need to try that theory by watering only when the grass tells us it needs it—not every day, as some of my neighbors do.

As our year continues we have more great programs during the next few months. We will learn how to make dyes from our native botanicals, how to propagate natives, and more on how to landscape with natives. Also, don't forget our annual plant swap in October. This is always a great meeting. Hope you will all plan to attend!

I hope you will complete the online survey recently sent by NPSOT. This helps us to learn ways to make our organization better for everyone. I would love to personally have your suggestions on programs or any other things you would like to see the North Central Chapter do. Also, if you would like to serve on a committee or the board, that would be wonderful.

See you at the August meeting,

Pat



August meeting: Thursday, August 11, 7:00 pm, Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Orchid Room

Anita Mills, Domestic Arts Heritage Center, heads up the August program. We often talk of the benefits to wildlife of our native plants, but ornamental value is also a high priority for us in our home gardens. Native plants played an important part in the social and economic lives of native Texans and settlers.

The Domestic Arts Heritage keeps alive traditions in danger of being lost in our modern age. Anita replicates and experiments with various plant dyes gathered from our area for clothing and ceremonial uses.

Join us for this unusual and interesting program. You'll find yourself looking at native plants from a new perspective.

## Garden Cuttings *Gailon Hardin*

It's hot, but that's why we plant native plants, not petunias. Some native enthusiasts say we only need to water seven times a year. That's not much. Let me remind you, however, that includes a lot of mulching. Mulch cools the soil in the summer, warms in winter, helps keep moisture in and improves the soil. This year's mulch is next year's compost, Mother Nature's finest soil amendment.

Now let's take note of what we need to do in August. First, order wildflower seeds to be planted in the fall from Native American Seed in Junction, [www.seedsource.com](http://www.seedsource.com). When you order from other sources, they include non-native species.

Was it too hot to prune your perennials in July? If you don't prune they will stop blooming, get leggy and fall over—not a pretty sight. I've pruned my natives as late as August 15 and still got a wonderful fall bloom. Of course it's still hot in August, but that's what natives like. When you prune them in August the heat will make them grow like weeds. Oops. Sorry.

If you are planning a new garden, now is the time to eradicate noxious perennial weeds. By fall, the area should be ready to plant. I'm planting my helicopter pad and it's 40 feet in diameter. Yes, I have a helicopter pad; that only means it's big and round.

If daytime temperatures are too hot for you to work in the garden, try working at night under a beam of battery-powered light purchased at any good camping supply store.

Happy and cool gardening.

## Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park *Molly Hollar and John Dycus*



*NPSOT's recent native plant landscaping course featured a big finale: a walking workshop at the Wildscape conducted by Rosa Finsley.*

Thanks go to the Veterans Park Master Composters and John Darling, the very king of decay, for working on the compost site improvements made possible by the COG grant. Elsewhere in this issue, you can read about the wonderful wildscape additions it will provide. But like the shepherd for whom all his sheep are precious, let's also show a little love for the sturdy new wheelbarrow donated by park visitor Nora Green. Nora has become a frequent and energetic volunteer at both the wildscape and the greenhouse.

The wheelbarrow, tools and hoses no longer need to be loaded and unloaded from various vehicles, since they now stay on site in the storage vault provided by the grant. What wonderful timing. Ready for the dog days of summer — no more loading and unloading! And in the triple-kiosk area,

decomposed granite has replaced the wood-chip mulch to further decrease maintenance.

Arlington Parks & Rec has continued planting inland sea oats in the erosion area, where large amounts of coralberry will be added later. In the fall, the parks department will add a cedar rail fence. A wood-chip trail, boulders and wildflowers will complete the picture.

During the summer, the wildscape volunteers concentrate on watering and weeding in the shade, with frequent rest breaks in the pavilion. At the greenhouse, the propagation volunteers work outdoors under a huge tree in a breezy spot. A misting fan supplements the breezes, so our cool volunteers can indeed stay cool. Behind the greenhouse, where the growing plants enjoy the outdoors, shade cloth now covers the overhead frames to keep the plants cool. Thousands of plants here will go into the fall plant sale and be planted in the wildscape.



*Devanie Fergus and Pat Lovejoy experienced different degrees of happiness while injuring weeds at the last workday.*

## Don't forget the Fall NPSOT Symposium in Big Bend, October 20-23, 2005

Attention Procrastinators! Registration forms for the 2005 NPSOT Symposium in Big Bend will be mailed mid July, via first-class mail to all NPSOT members. There are only 220 slots available and registration forms will be received only by snail mail. That means no faxing, no on-line registration, no phone calls, no carrier pigeon. This is very important to our members who want to attend this event. Please, do not put your registration off until the last minute.

## COG Grant Allows Compost Site Improvements *John Darling*

Several months ago, Lorrie Anderle, Arlington's Recycling Coordinator and head of the Master Composter program, received a \$48,000 grant from the North Central Texas Council of Governments. The grant was intended to improve our three compost demonstration sites, and that's just what has happened at River Legacy, Tierra Verde, and Veterans Park. They've all received benches made of recycled materials and vandal-resistant signs. At Veterans Park we've also gotten native plants, rocks, a storage vault, composting tools, cedar for displays and an entrance structure, a pavestone retaining wall, and materials to build several new compost bins.

Although it all began with Lorrie's skill at grant writing, she insists that the improvements have been a team effort. I watched a lot of it happen at the Wildscape and I'm still amazed at how much hard work the Parks & Rec guys have done. And twice, when I've asked about some heavy construction process, different Parks guys have shuffled their feet and said, "We just cut the grass. This is kind of a nice break." Molly's volunteers have also pitched in at crucial times, moving a zillion leaf bags so benches could be installed. And the Master Composters showed up for a special compost site workday, hefted pavestones and built the retaining wall. We're not done yet; there's still some planting to do and bins to build, but all the heavy work is over, thanks to the efforts of so many dedicated people.



**Join us here for our free 2-hour composting class 9:00 am -11:00 on the first Saturday of every month.**



## Next Meeting

**Thursday, August 11**

7:00 pm

Fort Worth Botanic Gardens

Anita Mills  
Domestic Arts  
Heritage Center

**Native Plants in the Lives  
of Early Texans**

Visit us on the Web at  
[www.txnativeplants.org](http://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
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Sponsor	\$1000

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Affiliation: North Central Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

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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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