



# THE TEXAS SAGE

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter  
Volume 17, Number 2  
March 2005

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## The President's Corner

### Members and Friends:

It was nice to see so many members and guests at our February meeting. Thanks to all who brought raffle items and/or bought tickets. Our raffle money helps pay for our room rental and allows us to use our treasury for programs and speakers.

We enjoyed a great program by Sarah Bjornson from Texas Tree Trails on cataloging champion trees. We learned there are 850 species of National Champion trees and that 80 of the 230 species on the Texas Big Tree Registry are national champions. In the Metroplex we have 35 State Champion trees and one National Champion. As someone who is relatively new to

Texas, I found it interesting to learn that most of our native Texas trees are multi-trunked. Texas Tree Trails have identified a tree trail at the Botanic Gardens and are very interested in a group of trees called Indian Marker trees. The Indians would bend saplings to mark their trails. Whenever one is located, Texas Tree Trails contact Native Americans to verify the authenticity of the trees. We thank Sarah for an excellent program and now whenever we go somewhere, we can be on the lookout for a tree to submit for champion status.



*A possumhaw holly at Molly Hollar Wildscape provides brilliant color, even on the grayest winter day.*

It seems there is a sudden explosion in requests for native plant info and help with projects. We have been contacted by REAL PEOPLE (Rainwater Environmental Alliance for Learning), an organization that is working with local schools establishing outdoor learning environments. Also an Eagle Scout who is landscaping an Arlington elementary school, and Arlington



*continued on page 2*

March meeting: Thursday, March 10, 7:00 pm, Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Orchid Room

Suzanne Tuttle, Natural Resource Manager, will present Ecological Restoration Projects at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge. Suzanne knows and loves native plants, and her presentations are always eagerly anticipated by our members. We may even get a status report on elusive trout lily blooms. As the largest city-owned park in the country, the Nature Center is a treasure-trove of plants spanning over 3,600 acres of prairie, woodland and wetland areas. It is truly an outdoor laboratory for both staff and outside researchers.

## The President's Corner *continued from page 1*

Community Gardens members, who are looking for assistance in designing and planting a native border around their gardens.

We would really like to assist with these wonderful projects in some way but need YOUR HELP! If you have an interest or expertise in any of these areas please let me know. This is a wonderful opportunity to **spread the word on natives** and support the mission of the Native Plant Society.

Another way we **spread the word on natives** is through the several hundred "Recommended Plants List" handouts we give away at home and garden shows. The most common reply we get is, "This is just what I need". With all the talk of water conservation and xeriscaping, we **can** make a difference by **spreading the word on natives!**

Still another way we can support the NPSOT mission is through our demonstration gardens featured in this newsletter. It may be hard work sometimes but a real learning experience and wonderful feeling to be **spreading the word on natives**. Another way is to support the Fort Worth Nature Center. Join us on March 10 to hear Susanne Tuttle tell us about what they are doing at the nature center.

Remember, our mission is *"To promote the conservation, research and utilization of the native plants and plant habitats of Texas, through education, outreach and example!"*

Pat

## Garden Cuttings *Gailon Hardin*

Did you prune your *Salvia greggii* in February? If not, do it asap. Don't let March get by without trimming. If the stems are getting a bit thick and straggly (that's a technical gardening term) cut those babies to the ground and make sure you have mulch around them. They will send out new stems and look better than ever. I have not mulched my blue larkspur yet and they are coming up. I hope I'm not too late and will mulch next week. We'll see if that is a good thing.

Since spring is around the corner, Texas natives know what to do. They WAIT!!! Adaptive plants note a warm spring day and say "spring is here, let's grow." Not the natives. They bide their time and wait like a lizard for an unsuspecting spider. Esperanza is a good example, and that's a Rio Grande plant. It's not indigenous, but it will grow here...IF PEOPLE WILL LEAVE IT ALONE!!! I don't know how many people have dug up their plant and brought it to me and asked what killed the plant. My usual answer: they dug it up. Most natives are lazy, oops, opportunists. They like to sleep late. Since our winters are mostly mild, they want to take full advantage of that. Don't forget, we have not had a true North Central winter since 1989, and we've only had two 17-degree days this year. Of course, there's always March and April for surprises.

Since I'm sure you mulched last month, now is the time to start selectively weeding before the annuals set seed and the perennials set long roots. Although this task may seem overwhelming, a little work over many times will eventually accomplish the end.

We should avoid pruning red oaks and live oaks until the sweltering heat of July or August in order to avoid oak wilt. The beetle that carries the oak wilt disease will be emerging from its winter dormancy if it hasn't already. Fresh wounds on a tree allow easy access to the boring beetle and therefore to the potential disease. When the hot weather arrives, the beetle's activity slows down to the point where it is safe to prune again. So if you must prune outside of winter, do so during the doldrums of summer and winter.

Once again, it's time to visit the garden, and if yours is like mine, something is already blooming, mostly henbit and chickweed.

## Smart Start Your Yard with Natives!

The North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas is pleased to welcome Rosa Finsley, well known Texas Native Landscape Architect, for a three-part workshop on the use of native plants in your landscape. Rosa will present workshops at our April 14 and May 12 meetings with a June 9 Walking Workshop through the Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park, Arlington.

**Fee: \$45 (Free to NPSOT-NCC members)** Information: Taylor Stephens-Parker 817-784-6003 or [soilnurse@sbcglobal.net](mailto:soilnurse@sbcglobal.net).

## Help Wanted

Designs in Nature, an organic tree farm, is hiring temporary help for spring, mid-February through mid-June. Please contact Gailon Hardin for an application. 817-457-4703 home, 817-475-0923 cell.

## Granbury Road Subcourthouse *Gailon Hardin*

Oh, the challenges of working with Mother Nature. After careful planning to get the free mulch delivered by J. Davis Tree Service in Haltom City, find some teenagers to help in their community, schedule Tarrant County employees, NPSOT members, Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists to bring wheelbarrows, shovels, gloves, sunscreen, etc.—we were rained out. Not to worry, we set a makeup for the following Saturday.

**David Finfrock**, a native plant enthusiast when he's not forecasting the weather, promised only scattered showers for the Feb. 19 mulch rain date, and he delivered. Twenty-nine volunteers, adorned in layered clothing and armed with proper tools, spread 24 yards of mulch in one hour, fifteen minutes. Someone call the Guinness Book of World Records.

**Jack Mitchell** had a cane at his side due to a bad back, yet he guided some of the teenagers to their wheeled destination. He brought along his supervisor, Gus, who stayed in Jack's vehicle most of the time but barked everyone along.

**Jim Woodlief**, **Art Witkoff** and **Jim Potter** are regulars at the demonstration garden and came in spite of thinking they were doing most of the work alone. Hey, the other regulars—**Pat Lovejoy**, **Helena van Heiningen**, **Sally Porter** and I—were there, too. **Dave Wilson** and **Devanie Fergus** came to everyone's rescue but must have felt lost, because they live way over in Arlington.

**Blake Hardy** didn't bring his son, **Will**, but Blake can push a mean load of mulch, too. I thought Will was the brains *and* brawn between those two.

Some of the Master Gardener interns wondered what was going on at this native garden, so they decided to check us out. **Donna Morris**, **Janis Ghaddar**, **Pat Higgins** and **Kim Freeman** shoveled, wheeled and spread mulch like pros.

**Bill West**, **Kelton Young**, **Mike Warren** and **Nokia Cole** provided 10 teenagers for our dusty event. Do not underestimate the young; these kids never stopped working. They were the power that turned an eight-hour job into only one.

For anyone new to this crowd or already signed on but holding back, here's what you need to know: We have fun, work hard, learn about natives and share plants from the demo garden. We work at the gardens twice a month, the second Saturday and the last Tuesday. Our next workday is Saturday, March 12, two days after our regular meeting. Please come join us in the garden.



Special Thanks to Green Mamas Organic Garden Center for their donation of a \$20 gift certificate for our February raffle. We appreciate your continued support.

## Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park



*Editor's note:* The Wildscape reporting system has collapsed under the weight of two crucial factors (Arlington Conservation Council didn't publish a newsletter last month to extract the report from, and Molly's AWOL at the crucial time).

So instead here are a couple of shots of long-time supporter Rosa Finsley and her crew installing a tank for the water feature by the pavilion.



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

The Big Bend NPSOT chapter has many wonderful activities planned. Make your hotel reservations soon as rooms are going fast! Check the NPSOT website or the next state newsletter for more details.

## Next Meeting

**Thursday, March 10**

7:00 pm

Fort Worth Botanic Gardens

Suzanne Tuttle,  
Natural Resource Manager,

**Ecological Restoration  
Projects at the Fort Worth  
Nature Center and Refuge**

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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County: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### 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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