



N P S O T

North Central Texas News

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Volume 18, Number 8 November 2006

The President's Corner John Bridges

Greetings,

This is our last newsletter of the year. Our next issue will appear in February.

Starting in February, all meetings will be held on first Thursdays. Our last second Thursday meeting will be on November 9, 2006. I hope this will bring in more bird and pond people, without losing any of our extremely valuable Master Gardeners.

Our November speaker, who I'm looking forward to hearing, is our own Helena van Heiningen. Her many hats include being the State's NPSOT VP/Chapter Liaison. NPSOT turned 25 this year and Helena will present its history from the beginning.

Also, November is when we hold elections. All of the elected officers from 2006 have agreed to do the same job again. So unless there is a motion from the group for someone else or we have a public hanging, the ballot will read: President: John Bridges, Vice President and Programs Chairman: Hester Schwarzer, Treasurer: Donna Morris, Secretary: Sandy Balch.

Let us speak of next year: We plan to appear at have four major shows over a ten-week period. Maybe I should have left out any comments about public hangings. Four shows in ten weeks will strain our volunteers. This includes one more show than last year.

Why do we need to be at four shows? Because the shows are directed at three different audiences, because the public is eager for the information we give, because it is a great way to attract new members, and because it is the best way possible to get more native plants into North Central Texas yards.

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Year 2006 Officers and Committee Chairs

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**November meeting: Thursday, November 9, 7:00 pm,
Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Deborah Beggs Moncrief
Garden Center, Orchid Room**

Helena van Heiningen, NPSOT VP/Chapter Liaison will be our speaker. Helena will speak to us on the history of NPSOT from its beginning through today. She will also cover the benefits of belonging to such a great state-wide organization.

Also, several members will discuss some of the topics presented at the state symposium in San Antonio.

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Dates for your calendar:

Arlington Home & Green Living Show
(Howard Garrett's old organic show)
Arlington Convention Center
January 12th – 14th, 2007

Fort Worth Home and Garden Show
Fort Worth Convention Center
January 26th – 28th, 2007

Neil Sperry's All Texas All Garden Show
(subject to members e-vote)
Arlington Convention Center
February 23rd – 25th, 2007

Fort Worth Home Show
Will Rogers Auditorium
March 16th – 18th, 2007

How many volunteer hours will it take to put on 4 three-day shows? While we can fudge some, we could use 200 volunteer hours for the 12 days of shows. That isn't counting setup and take down. Both of the Fort Worth shows are directed at the general popula-

tion. Both are good shows, and both are free.

The show in Arlington is going on its third name. It started as "Howard Garrett's Organic Home and Garden Show." Then last year it was called the "Arlington House and Organic Gardening Show." Now it's "Arlington's Home and Green Living Show." By whatever name they call it, people attending this show want all the information on native plants they can get. They come looking for "earth friendly" gardening information. What's more earth friendly than natives? Great show.

Then we have the "Neil Sperry All Texas Garden Show". This is the BIG one. Last year was our first time at this show. At its busiest (10 till 2) we will need 4 people to man our 10-foot booth, only because 5 won't fit. This show is packed full of common gardeners. Many of them aren't even aware that they can buy natives that already like their yard. They are very receptive to our message. Our voices may be the only sane ones they hear. To help, please e-mail me at presidentncnpsot@earthlink.net.

I hope to see you November 9th for our last meeting this year. Have a great holiday season and grow native.

John Bridges

Native Plant Propagation Marilyn Sallee

Propagating – science or art? Who do you believe?



This month's native to propagate is extremely easy, or extremely difficult, depending on whom you consult. And then we'll have the surefire short-cut at the end. (Whew!)

Butterfly weed is a type of milkweed in the family Asclepiadaceae

and is the essential food source for the Monarch caterpillar and its relatives, the Queens and Admirals. A number of very different types are native to our region. When most people say butterfly weed, they mean *Asclepias tuberosa*, the perennial forb with clusters of bright orange flowers. An introduced species is becoming very popular in our region. Tropical butterfly weed, *Asclepias curassavica*, has the same form but with red and yellow flowers and has been doing well in DFW area over the last few years.

Propagating butterfly weed from seed: I recently needed to label packets of butterfly weed seeds with instructions for planting. I was most surprised to find the following information on tamu's aggie-horticulture website: Planting success less than

50%, germination 30-90 days, two years or more to establish, transplanting difficult. Monarch Watch also has several pages of instructions on the difficulty of starting these seeds. And the Jill Nokes book is silent on the subject.

Maybe it was a good thing I was so unaware of how difficult butterfly weed is to grow from seed, since last May I was given a handful of them to grow. I picked through the fuzzy parachutes for the 1/4-inch hard brown seeds and scattered them in a flat of 4-inch pots, covered them lightly with seed starting medium and sprayed with water. They germinated quickly and within two weeks I had nice little plants. These plants have been growing and being eaten by Monarchs, all summer, and are now a good 8-12" tall. They are sturdy plants to be set out this fall. Since they did so well, it never crossed my mind to label them as difficult to propagate. They have not bloomed yet, and that may well take a year or two.



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The easy way: Cuttings. One of the things I learned this summer, with the Monarchs eating my milkweed, is how easily they establish from cuttings. I was not even trying to propagate them—just cut pieces of stems and pushed them into potting soil for caterpillars to eat. The caterpillars ate every piece of green off the stems and sometimes parts of the stems. Apparently the milkweed really likes this form of stimulation because every piece of stem put

out roots and grew new leaves. Those cuttings are doing great and many of them are now in flower. By far the easiest propagation I've done yet.

If you want fast results and flowers quickly, I recommend just snipping a 6-8 inch tip off an existing plant. Push it into moist starting medium and pick off all green growth. (Allowing a caterpillar to eat it off is ideal). You should have a transplant in 4-6 weeks, ready to bloom.

The Molly Hollar Wildscape John Dycus



October embraced the Molly Hollar Wildscape like a lost love. Organic guru Lucy Harrell, a specialist on demanding environments, awarded scholarships for her prized gardening classes to Jean Hiler, Josephine Keeney, Hester Schwarzer and Kay Sekio, all tireless volunteers. Devanie Fergus, Pat Lovejoy and Anne Alderfer also were in

the scholarship derby but had time conflicts. A true wildscape friend from the very beginning, Lucy has taught wildscape volunteers much that they can now apply at their own homes. Her continuing generosity and support mean so much.

It was another red-letter day when David Hopman, ASLA, an assistant professor in UTA's School of Architecture, brought his class to tour the wildscape. He pointed out the advantages of using native plants — water conservation, elimination of chemicals, minimal maintenance, attracting wildlife — and suggested a meeting to discuss cooperation between the landscape architecture classes and the wildscape. Several of the students said they come to the wildscape often and are interested in volunteering for a little hands-on learning.

The emphasis on Texas native plants is very different from earlier years in landscape architecture. The wildscape faithful cheer this exciting development and look forward to a growing relationship with these students and their professor.

On Oct. 27 the Rotarians who recently worked as volunteers had their regular noon meeting at Veterans Park so they could tour the wildscape after their picnic lunch. A big thanks to these great people for planting more than 100 plants and moving countless wheelbarrows of wood chips to mulch the trails.

The next day, John Davis, Urban Biologist supreme at Texas Parks and Wildlife, brought the latest graduating class of about 25 new Master Naturalists for the annual tour. Four in the class live in Arlington, and three of them are already frequent wildscape volunteers. When the tour ended at noon, the Master Naturalists joined the Saturday regulars for lunch at Mijo's to celebrate a great October.



Back in the trenches, volunteers worked every Saturday in October to finish planting all the perennials and groundcover plants large enough to go in the ground. October is the only really good month for planting in this part of Texas to maximize water conservation. After the regular first-Saturday wildscape workday Nov. 4, the only perennials and groundcovers remaining in the greenhouse will be the ones that need to get larger before being planted.

Wildscape volunteer schedule: 9 a.m.-noon Saturdays through Dec. 2 and Tuesdays through Dec. 19.

Invaders of Texas Citizen Science Program

Monday Nov. 13, 2006 at BRIT. Fee: \$10 - includes all-day class plus lunch.

To register: sbrodsky@charter.net

Invaders of Texas is a program to train people to identify common invasive plant species and help the state track the spread of the invasives. Read all about it at www.texasinvasives.org/Citizen_Science/become.html

Next Meeting

Thursday, November 9
7:00 pm
Fort Worth
Botanic Gardens

Helena van Heiningen
History of NPSOT

Visit us on the Web
at
www.txnativeplants.org

Join the Native Plant Society of Texas!

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 with the appropriate remittance to:

Native Plant Society of Texas
PO Box 3017, Fredricksburg, TX 78624
830-997-9272

_____ Student	\$15	_____ Couple/Family	\$40
_____ Senior Individual (65+)	\$20	_____ Group	\$50
_____ Senior Couple (one 65+)	\$30	_____ Patron	\$100
_____ Individual	\$25	_____ Benefactor	\$250
		_____ Supporting	\$500
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e-mail: _____

The North Central Texas NPSOT News

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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