



N P S O T

North Central Texas News

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Volume 18, Number 6 September 2006

The President's Corner John Bridges

Greetings,

I would like to thank: Sandy Plane, Mendy Davis, Larry Norris, Merita Knapp, Barbara Fleischman, Dawn Hancock, and, of course, Hester Schwarzer for their help staffing our fall (mid August ?) Home and Garden Show's booth at the Fort Worth Convention Center. I would also like to thank Wayne Broyles for hauling and setting up our booth and Gailon Hardin for taking it down and hauling it back. This was a skeleton crew barely large enough for our smallest multi-day

show. Our largest show was easily Neil Sperry's.

If we do the Neil Sperry show again in late February, we need to fill about 30 two-hour shifts or we will be wasting our money. For the peak hours, 11 till 2 Saturday and Sunday, we will need 4 people.

We had around a dozen people at the show tell us that the information they received from our booth was well worth the price of the entire show (\$6.50 each). Add to that, around three dozen people who are brand new to Texas came to the show to find what grows in Texas. Our suggested plant list along with our new "Where to Buy Native Plants" list were definitely hits. So we have included both of our lists as attachments to this newsletter. All of this information and more is also available on our Web site at www.txnativeplants.org.

Several people at the show had questions about using buffalo grass in their yards. Some wanted to know about this new shade-tolerant buffalo grass called Turffalo. Turffalo is just the company that sells two different kinds of grass. One is *Turffalo Tech Turf*, which is the latest buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) hybrid. It still needs all day sun—we're talking sunrise to sunset.

The other Turffalo is called *Shadow Turf*. It is native ... to Japan. If you look hard enough you find the grass listed as Manila grass. "You never heard of it?" Try its other name, zoysia grass.

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**September meeting: Thursday, September 14, 7:00 pm,
Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Deborah Beggs Moncrief
Garden Center, Orchid Room**

**Our speaker will be someone from the Botanical Research
Institute of Texas who will discuss Edible Native Plants.
Don't miss it.**

The President's Corner *continued from page 1*

I don't know of any suburban (1/3 acre or less) yard that has a happy, mature buffalo grass lawn. I know many a person who has tried and failed. Alliance airport has beautiful buffalo grass. Even then, the most invasive plant in the world and buffalo grass's nemesis, Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) has taken over many a buffalo grass yard.

As it stands now, the areas where I can recommend planting buffalo grass are severely limited. We need to grow out of our need for grass lawns.

John Bridges

Native Plant Propagation Marilyn Sallee

Lacy, sunny yellow, drought and heat tough: Here's a recent Texas Natives Propagation request.

Lindheimer senna. a.k.a. Velvet Leaf or Wild Sensitive Plant.

Senna lindheimeriana or *Cassia lindheimeriana*

This feathery-leafed, fuzzy, bright green to grey-green shrub displays large, bright yellow, 5-petal flowers June through November. It can grow 3-6 feet tall and 2 feet wide. It prefers full to mostly sun, in dry, rocky soil and hillsides. Also makes a good garden plant as a specimen or background plant. It may be an evergreen in a mild winter, or will freeze to the ground below 20° F but regrow in the spring.



Lindheimer senna is easily propagated from seeds gathered from the pods as they dry and turn brown in late summer. Remove seeds from pods and air dry. Plant in pots in the spring; sprouts easily. Semi-hardwood cuttings taken in late summer will root easily, though they will need protection and tending though the winter.

I started a few of these in pots from seeds last year and transplanted them into the garden last spring. They flourished and bloomed profusely last summer. In winter, they froze to the ground. This year they came back strong and withstood this year's early hot drought with flying colors. The heat and lack of water have retarded flowering, but the plants are green and strong.

Sources: *How to Grow Native Plants of Texas and the Southwest* Revised and Updated Edition, 2001, Jill Nokes
Yard Eco: www.ccsi.com/~pdd/Lindheimer_Senna.htm

North Haven Gardens: www.nhg.com/db/16932.htm

Aggie-Horticulture Native Plant Database: aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/nativeshrubs/viguierrastanol.htm

Thanks for the August Meeting Door Prizes

Hester Schwarzer - Hummingbird feeder
Redenta's - Gift Certificate

Merita Knapp - Lowland Switchgrass
Helena van Heiningen - vase and plant stakes

Next Month: The Annual October Progressive Plant Swap

It's time to pot your favorite native plant in order to have it ready to bring to the annual October Progressive Plant Swap.

However, if you do not have a plant to bring or a pot to put it in, please come to the meeting anyway. There will be lots of plants available for all to share.

This is the most informative and educational meeting of the year, and the most fun meeting of the year, yet the least attended. We will have live plants that each provider will tell about. Show and tell if you will. Please come and learn about natives.

A few of the pledged plants are: cowpen daisy and iron weed seeds, golden leadball tree, Mexican bird of paradise, American beautyberry, Lindheimer senna, Texas mountain laurel, chile pequine, scarlet buckeye, Texas sage, oakleaf hydrangea, esperanza, skeleton-leaf golden eye, datura, desert willow. That's more than a dozen plants pledged from two people.

The Molly Hollar Wildscape John Dycus

These 100-degree days have kept the wildscape volunteers scrambling. Hauling hoses to connect to the soaker hoses hidden under the mulch, trying to finish watering before the city's cutoff at 10 a.m. and then watering by hand has taken everyone's time just to keep the plants alive. Weeding, pruning and other garden chores have been put on hold.

Even the propagation volunteers have postponed greenhouse work to come help water, and a couple of hard-core types have returned in the really hot afternoon to finish watering critically stressed plants that are not yet established. These volunteers have managed to stay relatively cool by moving into the shade as the day starts to sizzle and sometimes purposely getting sprinkled along with the plants.

Meanwhile, if you're still clinging to your St. Augustine grass like a bad marriage, how much more incentive do you need to go down a new path? Dr. Phil would tell you to find a love without a drinking problem (a St. Augustine lawn uses four times as much water as indigenous native plants). Come January, you could plant more trees, too, to increase the shade. And for crying out loud, use soaker hoses, drip irrigation or one of those underground root-feeder spikes to put the water where it's needed and quit broadcasting precious droplets into the scalding sky with high-pressure sprinklers.

The wildscape will soon be home to more drought-tolerant plants, including some from western areas of the state. Desert willow has flowers like miniature orchids, and the Mexican redbud tolerates the summer better than its

eastern redbud cousin. Possumhaw has red berries that are spectacular in the winter, and the evergreen Texas mountain laurel sports wisteria-like blooms and smells like grape Kool-Aid.

More choices. Littleleaf sumac turns vivid in the fall, and skeleton leaf goldeneye delights with yellow daisy blooms all summer and is nearly evergreen. Black dalea is a lovely, low-growing shrub with purple flowers in late summer. Texas lantana provides color while attracting butterflies. Hummingbirds hover over red yucca and flame acanthus. Golden yellow zexmenia and coralberry are great groundcover that tolerates scant rainfall.

Blackfoot daisy blooms from spring until frost, violet ruellia has purplish blooms in the summer, and chocolate daisy smells like its name. Low-growing snakeherb, horseherb, pink evening primrose and frogfruit require little water.

Nearly all of these plants do need good drainage and about an inch and a half of water weekly until established. It may take three years for the roots to grow deep enough to resist drought. After that, 3-6 soakings during a (normal) summer will keep them spry. Once established, some will go dormant but survive to reappear the following spring.



Next Meeting

Thursday, September 14

7:00 pm

Fort Worth

Botanic Gardens

Edible Native Plants

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

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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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