



Chile pequin

NPSOT News

North Central Texas

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Volume 19, Number 1 February 2007

The President's Corner John Bridges

Greetings North Central, N.I.C.E. is coming.

This year has started out looking very hopeful. Could our drought be ending? If so, people will start replanting their landscapes soon. Now is the best chance we have to get them to replant with a few of our great native plants. How can we tell people about our great natives? If you have ideas, please share them with us.

(NICE is coming)

We have started selling *Native Texas Plants: Landscaping Region by Region*, 2nd edition by Sally and Andy Wasowski at cost, with tax that's \$22. We hope that every book grows another native gardener or benefits an existing native gardener. We will be selling the same book at our meetings also. After this spring's garden shows are over, your NPSOT board will decide if we continue, so get yours now. As a fundraiser this deal stinks, but as for being helpful and promoting native plants, its great.

(NICE is coming soon)

I'm real excited about having Gailon Hardin on stage giving her "Texas Native Plant" seminars at the garden shows. I hope by the time you read this that she will have become a fixture at all of Tarrant County's three-day garden shows. This is a fantastic way to get people interested in natives.

At Arlington's first garden show on January 12-14, two other nurseries wanted to get on our list of native nurseries list. While no one has checked them out yet, expanding our

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Year 2006 Officers and Committee Chairs

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**February meeting: Thursday, November 1, 7:00 pm,
Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Deborah Beggs Moncrief
Garden Center, Orchid Room**

**Leann Rosenthal, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist and
NPSOT member, will be our speaker. Leann will tell us how
to certify our yards as a wildlife habitat.**

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list is very exciting. I would love to have a two-sided list of local native nurseries.

(NICE is coming)

We need someone to head our Education Committee. We hope to add a couple of other speakers and form a speaker's bureau that can supply native plant speakers to the area's different garden clubs and events. This is yet another fantastic way to get the word out about natives. Can you help?

(NICE is coming to North Central Texas nurseries.)

The recommended list of native plants has been modified a little. All of the plants remain, but now it has a disclaimer in the key for Live Oaks, Shumard Red Oaks and Texas Red Oaks. It reads "Extremely susceptible to Oak Wilt Disease, if you have them cherish them; if not, pick another tree." Taking them off the list would have been wrong. Like the Post Oak, you should protect them by not over-watering them or using high nitrogen fertilizer around them. Both practices overly stress these trees, making them susceptible to a huge assortment of insects and diseases. I should say the same thing about all native plants. Now I have.

I'm thrilled that we have Frank and Josephine

Keeney's "Native Plants of Texas" search engine listed on our recommended list of native plants. (npot.org) Instead of me describing it to you, how about you checking it out and telling me what you think about it.

N.I.C.E. stands for Natives Instead of Common Exotics. NICE is a program for which we sponsor a sign and information for... better yet, come to our first meeting of the year on February 1 and have Helena and Gailon give us an update. They have plans for it to start up in March. I feel like a kid waiting for Christmas.

Y'all asked for our meetings to cover more basic information about native plants, and we heard you! How about having 7 of 10 monthly meetings on "Botany 101 for Natives." Hester has planned programs every month on a family of natives. This might be the first time anyone has ever done this before. So if you want to learn more about your English ivy, sorry. If you want to learn more about Texas native plants, bring your notepad. See you February 1st.

John Bridges

PS: N.I.C.E. is coming!



NPSOT member Gailon Hardin's front yard. The photo was taken on November 7, 2006. The lantanas have stopped blooming, but they are providing food for the birds. The Mexican feathergrass and Lindheimer's muhly will provide seeds for the birds during winter.

Would you take a few pictures of your yard this spring in an electronic format? We want to put together a virtual garden tour. We have the right plant list, the right book on plants and where to purchase the right plants. All we are missing is pictures of your yard. We need real pictures of real yards to show people at our garden shows, seminars, and meetings what members have done with their native plants. We could also like to publish pictures with each edition of our newsletter. Please help.

On the Cover

This month's native is chile pequin, also known as chile petin and bird pepper, *Capsicum annuum var. aviculare*

Our very own native chile pepper that the birds are crazy about. Since birds do not have saliva glands, they do not detect the heat. Some people with strong palettes eat these peppers, but not me. They're too hot for my taste. The plant can be 2 to 5 feet tall and should be spaced 2 to 3 feet apart. It blooms constantly and supplies peppers for an army of birds. The shrub has soft thin leaves and green branches, and in North Central Texas it dies back to the ground after the first hard frost. It will take

shade but with full sun and a little water, it will get dense. Mulch heavily to keep the plant from seeding more than you might like.

Propagation: easy. Just drop an entire pod into the soil or potting medium and you will have an abundance of seedlings pop up. If you decide to separate the seeds from the pods, wear rubber gloves. They will burn your fingers — and please keep your fingers out of your eyes. Bon appetite, mockingbirds and brave humans.

In the photo behind the chile pepper is white *Salvia greggii* and Mexican bush sage.

Ann Onamus

SW Subcourthouse



Weather permitting, we need your help Saturday, February 10th starting at 10:00 am at the SW Subcourthouse, 6551 Granbury Road, 3 miles south of Interstate 20. The subcourthouse is a 10,000 square foot native plant demonstration garden with lots of pruning to do in winter. Please bring hat, water, gloves, pruners, loppers, electric

hedgers with at least 150' of cord, or battery-operated hedgers. Also bring a garden rake and Pat Lovejoy will teach you how to “comb” the native grasses. There will be several desert willows to dig and we love to share our natives. For more information, please call 817-475-0923.

Thanks, Gailon Hardin

The Molly Hollar Wildscape John Dycus

The recent Arlington Parks & Recreation Department wildscape grant came at a time when it was truly needed. The multifaceted German statesman intellect Johann Wolfgang Goethe had a word for such occurrences: providence. “The moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves, too,” he wrote, his eyes agleam with prosaic fire. “All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. ... Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now.”

Recall from world literature class that Goethe was quite the contemplative stud. Prescient, too. Repeatedly when the Molly Hollar Wildscape, to cite a Texas example, faces difficulty, unforeseen resources arise to meet the need.

This matching grant for nearly \$10,000 will restore the pool ruined by vandals and redo the meadow of buffalo grass that was drowned by a leak in the irrigation system. Loosening the grip of a suffocating drought, life-giving rain in December assured the survival of the nearly 1,000 native plants that volunteers planted this fall.

A matching \$3,000 grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife gave birth to the wildscape, followed by several generous grants from U.S. Fish and Wildlife, another from the EPA and two smaller ones from the Native Plant Society of Texas. Then Northrop Grumman chose the wildscape from nine projects as the beneficiary of its Good Turn Day. About 150 people, including management and other NG workers, held a fund raiser and labored with zeal to build a pavilion, three bridges, five kiosks, 10 benches and directional signs. They put native plants in the

ground, removed privet, mulched trails — in all, adding more than \$100,000 worth of improvements.

So many have generously come forth to assist. From the beginning, John Snowden at Bluestem Nursery has donated all the native grasses, volunteered long hours for privet removal and vigorously supported the native plant sales. Volunteers have dug plants from their own yards and rescued plants in the bulldozer’s path. They propagated plants from locally gathered seed at their own homes until Arlington Parks & Rec offered its greenhouse. Now the volunteers grow enough plants to propagate the wildscape and have some left over to sell. Proceeds went into the match for the grant just awarded.

Volunteers have increased remarkably over the years to now include ACCers, NPSOT members, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Boy Scouts, Rotarians, WECAN, Tarrant County Juvenile Services, Girl Scouts, Brownies, Cub Scouts, Montessori Academy students, teachers and parents, and community stewards (just park visitors wanting to help).

This copious good fortune has expanded the wildscape from its original half-acre 12 years ago to nearly four acres today. Magical, powerful providence, indeed.

WINTER SCHEDULE IN THE WILDSCAPE:

FIRST SATURDAYS: Jan. 6, Feb. 3, March 3

TUESDAYS: 9 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m.

We will be cutting back, mulching and possibly planting some evergreen plants, so bring gloves, pruners and shovels. Coffee, water and snacks will be provided, as usual.

Next Meeting

Thursday, February 1
7:00 pm
Fort Worth
Botanic Gardens

Leeann Rosenthal
Backyard Wildlife
Habitat Certification

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
		_____ Corporate Sponsor	\$1000
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Name: _____

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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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