



N P S O T

North Central Texas News

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Volume 20, Number 2, May 2008

The President's Corner Hester Schwarzer

Fear

Have you seen the fear in their eyes? Some object in nature that is unknown or misunderstood brings a shudder of alarm. I watched this happen at the butterfly exhibit at the Fort Worth Botanic gardens. A young boy entered the exhibit area where butterflies were numerous. A beautiful blue started to pause on his shirt sleeve but he drew back with a shiver and that look of fear. Bugs, snakes and spiders often bring discomfort to people of all ages but usually not a butterfly.

Many people are just as fearful of plants. If they feel rough, have stickers or cause irritation they are certain to be avoided. Others approach all of the natural world with awe and expectation. A second grade student several years ago encountered a stinging nettle while exploring a wooded corner of the playground. He was surprised by his burning skin. Rather than avoiding the plant he wanted to know about it. What caused it to irritate his skin? He managed to get a stem, take it to the library and spend time researching. A couple of days later he reported his fascinating findings to the class. He found it even made a good pot herb.

We see both these approaches to using natives in the landscape. Some are afraid to try anything beyond the dozen or so common plants they have known since childhood. Others are willing to experiment with every new, exotic wonder that they can obtain. Then, of course, you and all native plant enthusiasts are thoughtfully studying those delightful plants and critters that resided in this area of Texas before we came onto the stage.

Invite your neighbors to cast aside their apprehension and try some of the plants being carefully tended for the May plant sale. This is also a great opportunity to expand the natives in your yard.

Hester Schwarzer
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hwschwarzer@aol.com

Help Wanted

We need help from a couple of talented members, one to work on publicity, and another to fill the post of Historian.

If you're interested, contact Hester Schwarzer at 817-861-4909 or Hwschwarzer@aol.com.

Visit us at
npsot.org and
txnativeplants.org

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

Program: Native and Non-native Invasive Trees and Shrubs
by Michelle Villafranca, City of Fort Worth Forester.

Plant of the Month Josephine Keeney

Texas Bluebonnet, *Lupinus texensis*

This beautiful annual of the Fabaceae family is the most recognized Texas native wildflower. Its fame is well deserved, for in April and into May it blankets fields and roadways in gorgeous shades of blue.

Mothers with their children as well as glamour girls, engaged couples, and brides come to have their picture taken surrounded by a blanket of blooms. These classic Texas photographs bring beautiful memories to last a lifetime. People who have never seen a Bluebonnet are astounded by its beauty, and artists compete to capture the beauty of a field full of bluebonnets surrounded by mighty oaks.



The Sandyland Bluebonnet, *Lupinus subcarnosus*, became the Texas State Flower in 1901, and in 1971 the State Legislature made all other bluebonnets the State Flower.

Four additional species were included in 1971:

Texas Bluebonnet, *Lupinus texensis*

Big Bend Bluebonnet, *Lupinus havardi* (Endemic to Texas)

Dune Bluebonnet, *Lupinus plattensis*

Bajada Bluebonnet, *Lupinus concinnus*

The following are also Texas Bluebonnets:

Tailcup Lupine, *Lupinus caudatus* and *Lupinus caudatus* ssp. *argophyllus*

Orcutt's Lupine, *Lupinus concinnus* ssp. *orcuttii*

Sundial Lupine, *Lupinus perennis* and *Lupinus perennis* ssp. *gracilis*

Plant Sale Update John Bridges

We are having a pre-plant-sale meeting at 5:30 pm, May 1, before our regular NPSOT meeting in the regular room.

If you're not going to volunteer or supply plants for our plant sale, ignore the rest of this e-mail, except for remembering to purchase plants on Saturday, May 24 from 10:00 am till 2:00 pm. And tell everyone you know about our all-native plant sale.

I'm making stick-on labels for the plants, so it would be helpful to know what plants and about how many to expect. We also need your plant names for a list to post on our Web site. It's all right if some listed plants aren't quite ready by May 24 and don't make the sale. I still need to make them a label in case they do make it.

I can easily print even more labels Friday night. But I won't

have time to write up any last-minute descriptions. So if you think a plant might be ready, include it. Please try to get your plant list to me before the meeting, preferably in an e-mail or at our May meeting on paper.

If you get me your plant list and any non-Wasowski description soon, I might be able to hand you labels at our May meeting. This would make your plant check-in quicker on the day of the sale.

If the native plant you're bringing is not in the Wasowski book, I will need help with its label. Our labels are simple: common and scientific name; the time when it blooms or its fruit ripens; bloom color; perennial, biennial or annual; preferred soil types; and light requirements.

If you don't have all the information, try to get me the plant

name ASAP so I can research it and still have time to give up and ask our members for help.

This is not me confessing that I don't know everything, just me admitting that I'm slow. Hush, Gailon!

Example of plant label:

North Central Native Plant Society of Texas
www.txnativeplants.org
 Chile Pequin - *Capsicum annuum* var *aviculare*
 Fruit April to Nov, red
 Perennial
 Sand, loam, clay, caliche, limestone
 Dappled shade, part shade

It's about 30 days until the plant sale set-up. This is the last week that even carefully dug plants can recover in time for the sale.

A plant that should be in a 4-inch pot but arrives in a gallon

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Butterflies and the Grasses Jo Ann Karges



When we consider butterflies and plants, we tend to think of the flowers they come to for nectar and of their obligate larval host plants—milkweed for Monarchs, passionvine for Gulf Fritillaries, parsley, dill etc. for Black Swallow-tails. We should also think of grass, because there are two groups of butterflies that use only grass as their larval hosts.

The satyrs (Nymphalidae: Satyrinae) are woodland sprites, brownish or grayish little elves flitting among the grasses and shrubs at forest edges. Of the 12 species known in Texas only four are found in the North Central area; all have somewhat limited habitats. The one most frequently encountered is also the largest, the Common Wood Nymph (*Cercyonis pegala*). Distinguished by its large size, with a wing span up to nearly 3 inches, it has yellow

patches in the upper corner of the forewings, and in that yellow patch two sizable eyespots. It may be the only of the four satyrs that you will find nectaring on a flower, and even that would be unusual, because like all satyrs, it much prefers the delectable juices of animal scat, carrion, and rotten fruit. Considerably smaller is the Little Wood Satyr (*Megisto cymela*) which is all over a tawny brown except for the two eyespots on the forewing and two eyespots on the hindwing. Curiously those yellow and blue-black eyespots look larger from the underside when the butterfly is perched with wings closed. About the same size is the Red Satyr (*Megisto rubricata*), which is more reddish-brown in ground color and



in addition has decided red tinted areas on all wings. A single eyespot adorns the upper corner of the forewing, and another is at the base of the hindwings. While each of these three satyrs prefers open but still shady areas near trees or in

the forest, the Common Wood Nymph is found in more open areas, while the Little Wood Satyr prefers deeper shade, dancing up from the woodland trail to hide in the thicket surrounding it. The Red Satyr seems to prefer rather savannah type open areas, places thick with grass and still somewhat shaded by a scattering of trees. (A few years ago there was a Red Satyr colony

in thick blue stem along the Canyon Ridge Trail of the Fort Worth Nature Center but the species has not been seen recently anywhere in the county). Smallest of the region's satyrs is the Gemmed Satyr (*Cyllopsis gemma*), a tiny little sprite, dark brown basically but with a silvery-blue gem spot on the upper edge of the hindwing underside, visible only when the butterfly perches with wings closed. A creature of the damper, thicker forest, it flies low as though not wanting to leave the moist ground.



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To be continued next month.

Plant Sale *continued from page 2*

pot will still sell for \$2.50, the 4-inch price, so please use a pot of the proper size.

Wayne Broyles will manage receiving the plants Friday from 3:00 pm until 10:00 pm. All plants will need to have their owner's three initials on each pot along with a chapter-supplied stick-on label. Then each plant will be inventoried and put on a list that matches names with initials and tells us what to do with any left-

overs. We will also have white and black grease pencils for marking pots with their owner's initials. We want to be sure everyone who's interested gets reimbursed or gets leftovers back.

Wayne will need several people to help him check in plants on Friday, May 23. And we need help doing the same thing 8:00 am to 9:00 am on Saturday morning. Plant donations stop at 9:00 am Saturday morning.

We also need people to put up native plant sale signs before we start the sale, and we need volunteers to be salespeople from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm on Saturday.

This, being our first recent plant sale if not our first ever, will be the hardest, so we really do need your help. Contact me at jbridgestx@verizon.net, and thanks in advance for giving your time—and your plants.

New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Jan Miller



Development of the IDI industrial warehouse facility (immediately north and east of the park) began unexpectedly on Tuesday, March 26.

Unfortunately, all the trees on the north park boundary were removed. Fortunately, someone was watching. A very special thanks to the sharp-eyed neighbor of the prairie who called to report equipment on site. By the time volunteers arrived late that afternoon, the trees were gone. Word spread quickly. Thanks to contacts by Bonnie Bowman, Julia Burgen, city councilwoman Sheri Capehart and county commissioner Marti van Ravenswaay, protective measures are being taken.

Arlington Parks Department and other city offices are taking action to prevent damage. Temporary boundary fencing is being installed, expectations for protecting the boundary and the park have been communicated to the contractor and greater vigilance by several on-site city departments has been requested. Meetings with city officials are underway to view details of the development's landscape plan and to observe the protective measures on site. That's a lot of work and it's greatly appreciated! Thanks to everyone!

Why is adjacent development a risk to the prairie?

- Disturbed soil gives those invasive exotics an open door opportunity to colonize and then invade, fragmenting the prairie.
- During construction, careful attention is needed to assure that stormwater is routed outside the prairie so that it doesn't cause erosion, introduce chemical changes from construction materials, and create more disturbed soil.

With the prairie soon to be surrounded by impervious surface, water patterns will change.

- Errant truck drivers may see another open field to drive through for a short cut, to dump a load of debris, and more. Compression and disturbance of the prairie soil is extremely harmful, causing irreparable damage to soil structure and function, especially that unique blackland characteristic: the gilgais!
- Loss of the boundary trees means the hawks have fewer roosts and observation points and the food and cover from the old hackberries. That grand



prickly ash/Hercules club will be missed by migrating songbirds.

- And even though the neighboring fields weren't native prairie, they expanded the prairie's footprint for species like dickcissels, hawks and coyotes. With possibly limited access and space, will they now move elsewhere?

Update on the Temporary Concrete Batch Plant air quality permit application pending at TCEQ: The location on the permit is the Blackland Prairie Park. Because of several local requests, plus timely requests from Representatives Pierson and Burnam, a public meeting will be held. Before that takes place, a second notice and opportunity for public comment are

required. During this time additional requests for a public hearing or meeting can be made. (Many thanks to Becky Redman in Senator Kim Brimer's office for this update.) However, one rumor has it that this permit application may be dropped and a new application will be made for another spot near this site. Please report any signs posting notice of application for a temporary air quality permit so that we can check it out.

Monitoring the prairie throughout the construction period is needed, so please report *any* activity on the prairie (vehicles, construction debris, digging, etc.). And don't forget this is a good excuse to go out to watch for...and enjoy...the wildflowers.

Activities:

Sunday, May 4, Spring wildflower tours — double header!

10:00 am – noon at Southwest Nature Preserve.

1:00 – 3:00 pm at NYA Blackland Prairie Park.

Join Master Naturalist Jim Varnum for annual spring wildflower tours at two really different sites that showcase our special place on the margin of the Eastern Crosstimbers and Blackland Prairies.

Anytime: trek out to NYABP to enjoy the wildflowers!

Contact: jgmiller5594@sbcglobal.net

4th Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference

May 28 - 31, 2008. Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas

Time's getting short, so look into this fine event now. There will be field trips, workshops, lectures, and even a plant sale. There's lots more information and a registration form at npsot.org. Just follow the link.

Wildscape Update John Dycus



We don't know enough yet. Time to learn some more.

Beginning in April, each first-Saturday volunteer opportunity

in the wildscape will include a new learning experience.

After a couple of hours of work — spring blooms! birdsong! butterflies! you call this work? — and a short break for water and refueling, volunteers will be rewarded with a 20-minute presentation (with handouts) followed by a 10-minute question period.

Each month will offer instruction to increase native gardening expertise.

In June, Suzanne Tuttle will lead wildscape volunteers in

discovering more about wildscape plants. Another month's learning experience will feature Heather Dowell, Arlington Parks and Recreation Department forester, demonstrating planting and caring for native trees.

Additional sessions will focus on attracting birds and butterflies, water conservation in landscapes, native plant propagation, native landscape maintenance, controlling invasive exotics and composting.

The concept launches at 9:00 am April 5 with a demonstration of assembling an inexpensive container for rainwater harvesting. Before the first Saturday in May, a calendar for 2008 volunteer/learning opportunity days will be added to the wildscape Web site, www.thewildscape.org.



Next Meeting

Thursday, May 4
7:00 pm
Fort Worth
Botanic Gardens

Michelle Villafranca

*Native and Nonnative
Invasive Trees
and Shrubs*

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		_____ Group	\$50
_____ (65+)	\$20	_____ Patron	\$100
_____ Senior Couple		_____ Benefactor	\$250
_____ (one 65+)	\$30	_____ Supporting	\$500
_____ Individual	\$25	_____ Corporate Sponsor	\$1000
		_____ Lifetime	\$1000

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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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