



*It's the NICE! plant of the season on page 4.*



# NPSOT News

North Central Texas

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter  
Volume 21, Number 3, April 2009

## The President's Corner Dawn Hancock

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Greetings, members of the North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. Our chapter is two months into the 2009 year and we have already met hundreds of homeowners and shared information about the value of native Texas plants at home and garden shows. The first was Neil Sperry's All Texas Home and Garden Show in Arlington. The second was Your Home and Garden Show at Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum. John Bridges was our fearless leader for these shows, and my thanks go out to him and members who always put forth the effort to staff these shows. We have the opportunity to reach more interested folks at the Native Plant Sale at the Botanical Garden March 28, at Tandy Hill Prairie Fest on April 25 and at the Buffalo Boogie on May 9. Volunteers will be needed, and I will be calling on you to do your part.

Sandra Johnson has dynamic programs planned for our chapter. You will not want to miss the April 2 meeting with Cathy Lustgarten. Cathy, president of the Trinity Forks Chapter in Denton, has a bold and ambitious plan for reshaping suburban landscapes called Natives to Neighborhoods or N2N. I'm itching to tell you more about it, but then, you would not come to the April 2 meeting

If you really like getting into the dirt our demonstration gardens require a lot of work this time of the year. Become part of Gailon Hardin's crew at the Southwestern Subcourthouse or Evaline Woodrey's crew at Hulen Street Regional Library or Molly Hollar's crew at the Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veteran's Park. Spring is cleanup, whack back, mulch and compost time at the gardens. Lots of stuff to do and it seems like it all has to be done at once. So show up, work, gossip, and lose weight, and beautify the world.

## April meeting

Thursday, April 2, 7:00 pm  
Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Deborah Beggs Moncrief  
Garden Center, Orchid Room

Program: Cathy Lustgarten, President of the Trinity Forks NPSOT Chapter in Denton, will present N2N - Neighbors to Natives (see above).

Visit us at  
[npsot.org](http://npsot.org) and  
[txnativeplants.org](http://txnativeplants.org)

## Minutes of the February Board Meeting, Feb 5 2009

The meeting was called to order by President Dawn Hancock

Persons in attendance: Evaline Woodrey, Dagman Higgins, Dawn Hancock, Merita Knapp, John Bridges, Sandy Johnson, Alice Moffitt, Ann Knudson and Molly Hollar.

Dawn presented the NPSOT "Mission Statement" and members discussed our chapter's role in fulfilling that mission. At present members are involved in home and garden shows, one day events, plant sales, public gardens, and science fairs as modes of outreach to the public. Letters have been sent out for science fairs. The newsletter does a good job of communication and educating our members.

In order to better fulfill and expand our goals in the future it was suggested that we:

- Forward more information to John Darling (by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month) about the speakers, items for newsletters and include minutes from previous meetings.
- Increase outreach to government agencies including code compliance and developers (use of exotics).
- Encourage more members to be involved. It is noted that we are just a volunteer organization.
- Form Committees. Sandy Balch will have committee sign-up lists on the table at the meeting .
- Send newsletters to people who have dropped membership.
- Establish an awards committee.
- Offer more propagation classes.
- Send follow-up emails when people come to meetings and invite to next function.
- It was suggested that the chapter own a laptop for use by the speaker's bureau and for accounting purposes.
- Dawn encouraged email suggestions for increasing membership.

Meeting was adjourned. Recorded by Alice Moffitt.



**Thank you  
to all the home & garden show  
volunteers!**



### Is It Weedy? Dawn Hancock

Folks, if you live in Fort Worth and are maintaining a native garden, fear not. The code compliance cops are not going to mow down your gardens. John Hancock, Acting Code Compliance Assistant Director of the Code Compliance Division for weed control for Fort Worth informed the North Central Chapter about what the City of Fort Worth considers to be a weedy property.

Guess what? John Hancock is a closet native plant guy and big on organic gardening. In his presentation, Mr. Hancock gave examples of what a weedy property looks like and what a property that has plenty of plants over 6 inches but is well kept looks like. Mr. Hancock presented the ordinances for high weeds and grass. Here is the kicker: The grasses and weeds have to exceed an

**average** of 12 inches in height to be considered a nuisance. So keep that specimen Lindheimer's muhly without fear that is too tall to meet the ordinance. Also, if you have a planned garden and can show it, your property is not weedy. So xeriscape and use wildflowers to your heart's content; just be sure your garden is well kept and planned.

## Butterflies Joann Karges

### Day-Flying Moths II

In the previous issue we talked about some of the most common day-flying moths, the “foresters,” members of the Noctuidae or “owlet” family. Less distracting perhaps but often seen nectaring on flowers is the geometrid White-tipped Black (*Melanchroia chephise*), which flutters about, lands briefly with wings outspread, and then is off to another flower. With a wing-span of about 4 cm (about 1.5 inches), this moth is black except for the white tips on the forewings and its bright orange thorax. Throughout the warm seasons, the moth visits lantana, composites, and many other flowers. The larval host plants are in the euphorbia family.

Still smaller but even more frequently seen is the Yellow-collared Scape Moth (*Cisseps fulvicollis*), member of the lichen moths in the Arctiidae (Tiger Moth) family.



*Yellow-collared scape moth*

When it lands to nectar, its narrow black wings, the forewings folded over the somewhat translucent hindwings, it might be mistaken for a wasp, but its very visible orange “collar” (yellow in some parts of the country) and the long waving antennae give it away.

The body is about 12 mm (½”) long, the wings outspread 29 mm to 37 mm (about 1” to 1½”). While



it comes to many flowers, it may have a preference for the golden-yellow ones like goldenrod.

Still smaller but the most conspicuous is a gorgeous little moth, only about 12 mm long, its bright wings held close to its body when not in flight. This is the Ailanthus Webworm Moth, so called because its food plant is the Ailanthus (tree of heaven), where the little larvae live communally in a web of the leaves. The base orange of the wings is adorned with four rows of small creamy spots of different sizes, each rimmed in black. One finds this little moth often on small white flowers or just resting on a leaf. Interestingly, the Ailanthus tree is not native, and yet the little moth is fairly common in this area. Two other members of the plant family Simaroubaceae

that are native and are used by the moth as larval hosts are: *Castela texana*, or thornbush, and *Holocantha stewartii* which grow in coastal areas, the Rio Grande Valley, and the Trans-Pecos and are seldom used horticulturally.

As you look for butterflies in the gardens, look for these small creatures, too.



*Ailanthus webworm moth*

## NICE! Plant of the Season Marilyn Blanton and Kathy Saucier

**Winecup: a perennial splash of spring color**

**Trailing winecup (*Callirhoe involucreata*)**

**Standing winecup (*Callirhoe pedata*, formerly *Callirhoe digitata*)**



*Trailing winecup*

Two winecup species are native to Texas and surrounding states. Their striking color makes them easy to recognize and most of us have enjoyed them in TxDOT plantings along our highways. These easy-to-grow perennials have very similar flowers and enlarged roots. The most noticeable difference between them is their growth habits. Trailing winecup grows to about one foot high and has sprawling stems that can grow as long as three feet, while standing winecup is an erect plant that grows one to two feet tall.

There are other differences between the species; trailing winecup is distinguished by a three bract-like structure under the bracts known as an involucre. It may go dormant in the hottest part of the summer but returns to overwinter as a rosette with attractive dark green lobed leaves. Standing winecup has more delicate foliage and is not evergreen.

Both species bloom in the spring, mainly in April and May. Depending on conditions,

they may bloom as early as late February and last into June. The flowers are two inch reddish-purple (magenta) cups. They have five petals surrounding a fused column of stamens characteristic of flowers in the Mallow family. They are pollinated by bees and develop an interesting seed capsule.

Winecups grow in full sun to partial shade. They are adaptable to a wide range of soils but need a well drained site.

New plants should be watered until they are established. After that, they should survive with existing rainfall and are drought tolerant.

Both species are proficient bloomers and add magnificent color to a landscape. They are complemented by other natives such as black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) and fragrant phlox (*Phlox pilosa*). Standing winecup could replace bleeding heart or hardy geraniums in a border. Trailing winecup does well at the top of a retaining wall or along a curb; it may be used instead of ice plant, ajuga or the trailing form either lantana or verbena. Winecups attract butterflies and serve as the larval host plant for the gray hairstreak butterfly. Give winecups room to spread and enjoy them for many years to come.

Look for the Natives Instead of Common Exotics! (NICE!) Plant of the Season signs and information sheets on your next visit to a participating North Texas nursery. Participating nurseries include Redenta's Garden

in Arlington, Tim's Landscape and Garden Center in Benbrook, Stuart Nursery and Weatherford Gardens in Weatherford, Weston Gardens in Bloom in Fort Worth, Petal Pushers Garden Emporium in Cedar Hill, Green Mama's Organic Garden Center in North Richland Hills, and Blooming Colors Nursery and Landscaping in Grapevine. And thank you for supporting native plants by using them in your landscapes.

*Marilyn Blanton is a certified Master Naturalist and past president of Trinity Forks-NPSOT. Kathy Saucier, a certified Wildscape Instructor, is a 2008 recipient of the NPSOT Fellows Award. Both are members of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT), where they serve as local co-chairs of the NICE! program for Trinity Forks Chapter.*

*North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas meets on the 1st Thursday of the month (except January and July) at the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Fort Worth. Meetings are free and all are welcome. For more details visit [www.npsot.org/northcentraltexas](http://www.npsot.org/northcentraltexas).*



*Standing winecup*

## Tandy Hills Prairie Trash Bash Dawn Hancock



I have a confession to make. Fridays after school, the high school science department that I work with goes to No Frills Grill for a beer and to wind down after a sometimes frustrating week. Last Friday, I stuffed on nachos and chips and dips...bad, bad, bad if you are a Weight Watcher. Well, today I did major penance at the Tandy Hills Prairie. I worked from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm hauling trash out of the Tandy Hills prairie, cutting back Japanese privet and mesquite, and hauling out the downed branches and trunks.

Here is a little history of Tandy Hills Prairie. It is a native prairie, never put under the plow. It is a remnant of our past, part of vast prairies adorned with native grasses such as big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian grass and, in the more moist regions, switchgrass. In the spring time the prairie blooms with native wildflowers such as the delicately blue prairie celestials, pink basketflower, yellow flax, and purple coneflower among many, many others.

Unfortunately for this beautiful remnant, people in the '60s and '70s saw a prime site for illegal dumping of construction materials, tires, and other trash. The city of Fort Worth could not in good conscience do what Mother Nature

did in the past to maintain a prairie: burn it. Thus, over time, this gem was abused by off-road vehicles, dumpers, and the encroachment of invasive exotic Japanese privet, mesquite, and Ashe juniper. But Saturday, February 21, saw a glimmer of hope.

A small army of volunteers showed up to remove trash and brush. Under the guidance of Michelle Villafranca of the Parks Department, and a Native Plant Society of Texas member, we were



briefly introduced to the prairie and what needed to be done. She needed all hands on deck. These hands belonged to Friends of Tandy Hills Nature Area Don Young and his wife Debora who organized this cleanup, set up the sign-in table, and provided the trash bash volunteers with hot coffee, cocoa, and sweet treats. For our work, Friends of Tandy Hills supplied the herbicide applied to the cut stumps of mesquite and privet. Other hands

belonged to volunteers from The Friends of Tandy Hills Nature Area, Dawn Hancock, Ann Alderfer, and Carolyn Kohls from the North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. Gigi Goesling and the Sheriff's department brought in community service folks. Fort Worth Parks Department personnel also were there to lend a hand.

So under the expert leadership of Don Young and Jim Marshall, we all got to work. Now here I begin guesstimating but I think I am pretty close to our results. Twenty tires were removed. All had to be pulled up hill from the lower reaches of the prairie. Fifty to seventy-five bags each weighing between 50 and 100 pounds of asphalt shingles were removed. (There are still plenty left for the next trash bash.) They also had to be wheelbarrowed up those same hills. Seven large dump truck loads of mesquite and privet were hauled up the hills and away. After 6 hours of work I was weary but satisfied. My beer and nachos were burned up, and Tandy Hills Prairie looked a little better. Join in for the future skirmishes in the war on trash and invasives and definitely come out to celebrate our prairie heritage on April 25 during Prairie Fest.

*Photos by Don Young*



## New York Avenue Prairie Jan Miller



Thanks to Janet Dickey and Wes Miller who braved the week-end cold and late change of workday location from NYABP to Tandy Hills. The

opportunity to participate in the inaugural Tandy Hills Brush Bash was too good to pass up. Tandy Hills is a rare remnant prairie, one of only six in North Central Texas of more than 100 acres and with a plant list of 500+ species. Neighbors and supporters have tried to protect the site from illegal dumping and off-road vehicles, but until a restoration master plan was approved in 2008, trees and invasive species were making steady inroads. Now, city crews and volunteers have cleared about 3 acres of mid-slope prairie. What a great sight! More workdays are planned at Tandy Hills, at least during winter months. The NYABP workday has been re-scheduled for Saturday, March 28 (see details below).

Despite temperatures regularly swinging 60+ degrees about once a week, the plants at NYABP are gearing up for spring. See Wes Miller's photo below of an early Indian plantain



*Greening up: Signs of spring on the prairie, especially in the recently mowed strips.*

(*Arnoglossum plantagineum*) making its way through dried grasses. Those sure-fire local harbingers of Texas spring, trout lilies (*Erythronium* sp.), have been



*This just in: New fence along south side of park should deter illegal driving and dumping.*

reported in bloom at several prairies across our area, including Tandy Hills. But another close-by and reliable population at Stella Rowan Prairie (on the Tarrant Resource Connection campus in south Fort Worth) has been, according to Jim Varnum, "extirpated" by construction of water lines for nearby gas drilling. There's still time to catch a fieldtrip to see them; find a full list at [http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/CTMN\\_Fieldtrip\\_List/](http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/CTMN_Fieldtrip_List/)

NYABP was mowed by APRD last week using the "candystriping" technique, which leaves margins and alternating strips unmowed, providing winter cover for small rodents, birds and insects. Should be very interesting to see the effect this will have on this year's growth. Many thanks to APRD's maintenance staff for giving this new technique a try.

Also at NYABP, final plans for the boundary fence between NYABP and the warehouse development are in place and fence construction should begin soon. The developer has substituted a mix of grasses and wildflowers from a very reputable supplier in place of hydromulched Bermuda grass from their original plans. Another thanks to APRD planners for working with the developer on this improvement.

### Calendar:

**Saturday, March 28**

**Workday at New York Avenue Prairie**

9:00 am – noon

Please come, especially if you're interested in the plant monitoring project. We'll also cut small trees and brush; bring loppers and hand saws. Gloves, boots (or sturdy-soled shoes), long sleeves and pants are recommended. Water will be provided, but please bring your own container. RSVP to [jgmiller5594@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jgmiller5594@sbcglobal.net), for late info on weather, etc.



## Wildscape Update John Dycus



On a cold, windy morning the 20 virtuous volunteers came, all gloved and coated and armed for the fight against Satan's weed, and by noon February 28 not a sprig of privet

remained on the steep creek banks at the wildscape.

Wildscape VP Danny Kocurek led the charge, wading into the creek in his rubber boots and before that organizing the affair, the second privet-pulling party in honor of wildscape namesake Molly Hollar's birthday. For good measure lots of the similarly invasive Japanese honeysuckle was uprooted too, then the party moved to Mijo's where Nicholas and Benjamin Kocurek brought out, in Molly's assessment, a very cool decorated chocolate cake.

Molly couldn't have been happier if they'd given her a car. Jim Kunde's recent death is a great loss to all who knew him, especially the wildscape volunteers and members of Cross Timbers Master Naturalists.

"Jim was a very special person, never short on smiles and funny stories that kept us all laughing," Molly said. Volunteers

will plant a tree in his memory at the wildscape and another in the Village Creek linear park where Jim and Diana walked to enjoy the birds and other wildlife. The Village Creek tree will be planted near a memorial bench in a spot selected by Diana and their children.

### Snippets

Committee members of Keep Denton Beautiful visited the wildscape on February 6 to tap the wisdom of Molly and Ann Knudsen. They compared notes regarding a small post oak woodland project in Denton.

Thanks to help from the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department, wildscape maintenance is staying on schedule. Mid-February is the best time to trim dead foliage, and it usually takes the volunteers weeks to cover the four acres with hand clippers. But APRD workers wielding long power cutters got the job done in a couple of hours. Martin Sanchez, Greg Wilson and Frank Rivera cut the biggest privet and also provided and moved the soil for the berm planted with low-water-use native plants this summer.

Naturalist and occasional worm fancier John Darling reprised his stand-up compost presentation, mulch ado about something, at the March 7 mini-class. To the usual heady acclaim, he emphasized the value of transforming organic waste into compost, the gardener's black gold.

Redenta's Garden has completed the pump installation and boulder work

### First Saturday mini-class schedule:

May "The Necessity of Insect Pollinators" with Dawn Hancock

June "Wildscaping Your Own Backyard" with Leeann Rosenthal

July (second Saturday), "Soil Critters" with Ann Mayo

August "Working with Children" with Hester Schwarzer

Sept (second Saturday), "Saving Our Post Oak Woodlands" with Steve Chaney

in the creek and pond areas. A \$1,000 gift certificate to Whiz Q Stone, given by generous wildscape volunteers to Molly in honor of her birthday last year, bought beautiful stone steps to prevent trampling of the aquatic plants there. Then Redenta's owners Ruth and Dick Kinler and their son, Michael, provided their crews to do this professional work at no profit. The area is even more beautiful now than before it was vandalized. Replanting will complete the restoration of this magical spot.

Left, a good crowd hard at work in the big front bed on the February Saturday workday. Below, Gailon Hardin presented a great mini-class on conserving water with native plants. (The audience was completely receptive.)



## Next Meeting

Thursday, April 2  
7:00 pm  
Fort Worth  
Botanic Gardens

Cathy Lustgarten:

N2N: Neighbors to  
Natives

Visit us on the Web  
at  
[www.txnativeplants.org](http://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
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## The North Central Texas NPSOT News

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