



Chapter Leaders

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Kim Conrow

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Membership Chair—Laura Penn

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NICE! Coordinator—Patti Maness

Plant Sale Coordinator—Josephine Keeney

Education Chair—Merita Knapp

Ways & Means—Josephine Keeney

Webmaster—Frank Keeney

Field Trips—Theresa Thomas

Audit Committee Chair—Laura Penn

Speaker's Bureau—Gailon Hardin

Outreach Chair—Laura Penn

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Newsletter Editor—John Darling

Southwest Subcourthouse Garden

Leaders—Gailon Hardin &

Dawn Hancock

Hulen Regional Library Garden

Leaders—Theresa Thomas & Bill Hall

Molly Hollar Wildscape Garden

Leader—Molly Hollar

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North Central Texas News

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Volume 28, Number 4, May 2016

May Meeting

Thursday, May 5, 2015, 6:30 pm

Orchid Room, Deborah Briggs Moncrief Garden Center
Fort Worth Botanic Gardens

Managing for Monarchs

Randy Johnson

Horticulture Manager, Dallas Zoo

This presentation will offer common-sense information regarding the creation and management of habitat for Monarch butterflies. The beauty of this approach is that when you manage properly for Monarchs you also create prime habitat for a diverse group of pollinators and beneficial insects.



Randy Johnson is from Mesquite, Texas. He earned a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University. Randy is the past Director of Horticulture at Texas Discovery Gardens in Dallas and currently serves as the Horticulture Manager at The Dallas Zoo.

Through his personal business, Randy Johnson Organics, Randy offers on-site consultations covering native plants, eco-design, compost/compost teas and organic horticulture. Randy is the past president and current vice-president of the Dallas Chapter NPSOT and the Treasurer of the Blackland Chapter of the Native Prairies Association. He serves on the Board of the Lake Highlands Community Garden and Peckerwood Garden in Hempstead, Texas.

Visit us at

ncnpsot.org and

www.txnativeplants.org

The President's Corner Starr Krottinger

Canyon Muhly

I know that Josephine always has an article in our newsletter about a specific plant, which is so helpful and informative for those of us who are still learning our native plants. I also know that I am just a little bit goofy about grasses, and I have learned about a new (to me) grass, and since this space in the newsletter seems to be my blank canvas, I choose to use it this month to tell you about my wonderful new acquisition!

One of my responsibilities as President of this formidable group of native plant enthusiasts is to attend the quarterly meetings of the state NPSOT honchos, of whom I am a very small member. Led by state officers, chapter presidents and/or representatives from NPSOT chapters throughout the state gather once a quarter to make decisions regarding the direction of our state policies and programs. One of the best parts about going to these events is meeting people from across the state who share our passion for native plants. One of those people has been rescuing plants from a site that is about to become a parking lot — or some other inevitable sign of urban growth — and she brought several of those plants to this meeting to sell for donations to a state grant fund. I couldn't tell you what the other plants

were because once I saw the pot containing a grass, I didn't see or hear anything about the other plants. What she brought was a Canyon Muhly, and since I had never seen one before I had to have it! Let me tell you about this amazing grass.

Another name for Canyon Muhly is Edwards Plateau Muhly, which is, of course, where it is most commonly found in its natural habitat. The scientific name for my new muhly is *Muhlenbergia x involuta*. What I think is so cool about this grass is that it is a natural hybrid of *Muhlenbergia lindheimeri* and *Muhlenbergia reverchonii*, or for those who prefer common names that is Big muhly and Seep muhly. Now I know that Haslet is a long way from the Edwards Plateau, but I'm hoping since both *M. lind-*

heimeri and the *M. reverchonii* grow well in Tarrant County, I can make my Canyon muhly comfortable here. It should grow to between 3 and 6 feet, and the inflorescence is similar to that of the seep muhly. I assume it will like the sun like its parents do.

Searches on the internet and in my collection of print material at home, do not yield much more information on this grass. In fact, *Guide to Texas Grasses* does not even include it in the index, so I assume there is no mention of it in the book. I was told by Ilsa (the rescuer) that most of the seeds are sterile, which would be true to the hybrid form, but then one has to wonder how there ever got to be more! I will let you know how my new favorite grass grows in Haslet!



Plant of the Month Josephine Keeney

This beautiful plant is perennial and remains green most of the year. The leaves are divided into three lobes and are almost as pretty as the flowers.

This plant likes moisture and semi-shade, and under the right conditions can get as tall as three feet, making a very impressive mound.

The many flowers held high above the foliage resemble birds in flight and their name “Columbine” means dove in Latin.

It blooms in spring for about two months and attracts bees and butterflies, making it very desirable in the butterfly garden.

The large quantities of seed produced by golden columbine tend to produce many little plants, making the gardener very happy. It can also be propagated by clump division.

If you grow both the Red Columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis*, and the Golden Columbine, a very strange and wonderful thing can happen: They can hybridize and make wonderful combinations. I have both in my yard and I really can't decide which one I like the best.

But if you want to keep the colors pure, don't grow them both in the same garden. We only grow the golden columbine at the Fielder House butterfly garden for that reason.

Golden columbine, *Aquilegia chrysantha* Ranunculaceae (Buttercup family)



Find more native plant information at www.texasstar.org, a forum for Texas gardeners dedicated to the cultivation and propagation of Texas native plants.

Spring Plant Sale Gailon Hardin & Josephine Keeney

Hello Everyone,

Let us talk about the plant sale on May 7th at River Legacy Park in Arlington.

Here is a picture of the Elm Grove Pavilion where the sale will be held.

As you know, the plant sale is our big fundraiser. It helps us spread the word about Texas native plants and all the benefits of using them in our gardens.

This spring we have had a wonderful response from our members. There have been 21 Plant Providers who have signed up, and that is a record number.

We also have 29 plant sale helpers signed up, and that is also a record number.

Thank you all very much for your for your participation and your help. We couldn't do it without you.

So let us rev up our engines, Ladies and Gentlemen, keep those plants growing, and let us have the best sale ever!

See you all on May 7th at River Legacy Park.



Workdays

Southwest Subcourthouse on Granbury Road in Fort Worth: second Saturday and last Wednesdays of each month beginning at 9:00 am. Gailon Hardin and Dawn Hancock in charge.

Hulen Street Regional Library in Fort Worth: second and fourth Thursday of each month 9:00 am till 12:00. Theresa Thomas and Char McMorrow in charge.

Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park in Arlington: Wednesdays and fourth Saturday of each month 9:00 am –12:00. Also, Tuesdays 9:00 am – 12:00 at the greenhouse in Randol Mill Park in Arlington.

Meeting Minutes: April 8, 2016 Dawn Hancock

President Starr Krottinger called the meeting to order at 6:42 pm. Thirty-eight people were in attendance. Ray Sherrel was attending his first meeting as a new member.

President Krottinger called for corrections to the minutes of March 3, 2016, and hearing none, the minutes were accepted as published in the April newsletter.

Treasurer's Report

Gailon Hardin reported a balance of \$10,225.34.

Vice-president's Report

Reporting for Kim Conrow, President Krottinger announced that the May speaker will be Randy Johnson, whose topic will be managing for monarch butterflies.

Committee Reports Plant Sales

Josephine Keeney presented the flyer for the plant sale showing the map of the sale site at River Legacy Park, the date, and the time of the sale, and a list of plants available at the sale. Copies were made available for attendees to take and share with the public.

Gailon Hardin explained labeling of the plants and stressed the importance of the plant sale inventory sheet for paying plant propagators and as a marketing tool for future sales.

To encourage more members to undertake propagation, Josephine Keeney demonstrated the ease of propagating rock penstemon. She made available to attendees her formula for potting medium as a handout.

Hospitality

President Krottinger thanked Dave West for stepping in to help Amelia Gomez-Barroso, the chairperson of the committee, to provide refreshments for the meeting. Troy and Martha Mullens and Mary Sanford brought food for the meeting.

Education

In the absence of Education Chairperson Merita Knapp, President Krottinger restated the dates of the upcoming Native Landscaping Programs to be hosted by North Central Chapter. These are Level 1 on May 14, 2016, and Level 2 on October 1, 2016.

Unfinished Business

Redesign of Website

President Krottinger noted that the committee consisting of Webmaster Frank Keeney, Kim Conrow, Theresa Thomas, and Laura Penn were working toward a WordPress website. Frank Keeney reported that the site would be interactive, meaning that North Central Chap-

ter members other than he would be able to edit the Website, keeping information complete and timely.

New Business Publicity Chairperson

President Krottinger announced the Chapter's need for a Publicity Chairperson to advertise the events in which North Central Chapter engages. The ideal candidate would be comfortable using internet sites.

Announcements

David Coke of Candleridge Homeowners Association said that he would like help in designing a planting with Texas native plants for a small area in his neighborhood.

President Krottinger announced the Tarrant County Master Gardeners Plant Sale that will take place at the Resource Connection on Saturday April 30, 2016. Three native plant gardens in Tarrant County are partially funded by Tarrant County Master Gardeners and therefore their plants should also be purchased, knowing that the proceeds of their sale will help native plant gardens.

President Krottinger announced the new permanent meeting site and day of Executive Board meetings to members. The site is Ol'

continued on page 6

Meeting Minutes continued from page 5

South Pancake House on University Drive and the time and date will be 6:30 pm, April 26.

President Krottinger said that the National Wildlife Federation has made free for distribution Butterfly Heroes

Garden Starter packets. Here is the website: <http://www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife.aspx>.

Noting no other business before the Chapter, President Krottinger called for a motion for adjournment at 7:20 pm.

Frank Keeney made the motion to adjourn, and Steve Smith seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

President Krottinger introduced the speaker, Denis Benjamin, whose topic was "Why Should You Care About Mushrooms?"

April 16 NPSOT State Board Meeting Report Starr Krottinger

As board meetings go, this one was fairly short, adjourning at 1:00 pm, but that doesn't mean it was not productive, as several important actions were taken.

One of the important emphases of the meeting was encouraging the use of social media for attracting new members and informing existing members of upcoming events and activities. You can imagine how proud I was of our group since we are already actively using these outlets! To accent this message, a video contest is currently underway, and I recommend you go to the current state newsletter (pg 3) to get the full details. There are several NC members who should enter this contest!

The Spring Symposium was a success in spite of it being on the same weekend as SXSW! There will be a small profit realized that will be split between the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center and NPSOT. The Fall symposium

is still in the planning stage, but it will be held in the Glen Rose area. One activity that will be a part of the Fall Symposium will be the creation of a butterfly garden at a rest stop in the Hillsboro area along I35. This will be a hands-on activity from clearing to planting! Specifics of the Symposium will be announced as they are available.

Two motions were presented for passage. The first was to adopt an Image Use Policy, which is designed to keep the state organization and all the local chapters from getting into serious trouble by using images, and/or text without permission. This problem is centuries old, but it is one that is becoming increasingly important with the availability of images on the Internet. After a lengthy discussion, the motion was NOT passed so that it could be further developed. One specific area that needed to be addressed was the use of images of minors.

The second motion was to define the responsibilities (job description) of an Executive Director. There is currently NOT an Executive Director of the NPSOT, but the creation of that position is part of the Strategic Plan adopted in 2009. This motion passed. It was also noted that since most strategic plans have a 5-year shelf life, it is time to revisit the plan and update as appropriate. It will be on the agenda for the next quarterly meeting.

Membership awards for the Quarter ending April 1, were received by Houston Chapter and the new Chaparral Chapter in Midland. Houston won for the most new members, and Chaparral won for the greatest percentage increase.

Another item of interest is that a very small number of people have applied for NPSOT scholarships and grants. The scholarship amounts are \$1000, and the grant can reach \$2000, depending on need and use.

A Monarch Message: Introduction Kim Conrow

Editor's note: Kim recently told me an inspiring story, and I asked her to share it here. There are two parts; the introduction follows below, and the rest appears on the next pages. Perhaps Kim's reaction to a bad situation will inspire us to take her kind of positive action.

I live just seven miles west of I-35, the defining center of the path of Monarch migrations in Texas. I have watched the field that these plants are in for twenty years. In the fall it is alive with gayfeathers and goldenrod, in the spring with milkweeds and wildflower abundance. What more could a migrating Monarch want?

Last year the property was mowed just before the fall migration. I was heartbroken - horrified!. New owners, no doubt, doing what they thought was the right thing, unwittingly destroyed the fall nectar sources. Monarchs have depended on these sources for ages. In times past I have had up to thirty Monarchs roosting in my



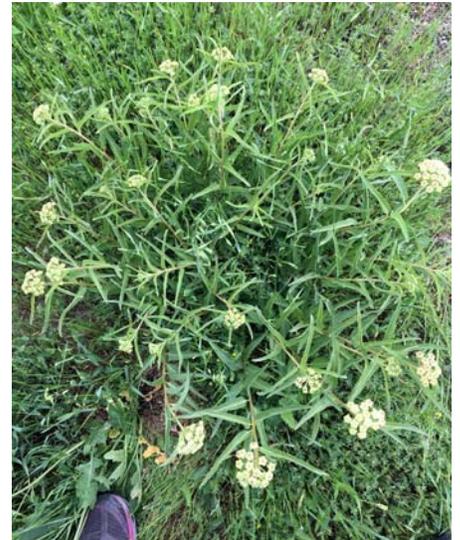
yard in a fall migration, just a half mile from this property.

As spring approached, I kept telling myself I needed to look up the new owners on the tax appraisal and entreat them to wait until the spring migration was over to mow again. OH, NO! Mid-March came and the field was one-quarter mowed. Weather delayed more mowing and I had a small window of opportunity to act. I am sometimes prone to a heavy heart about environmental things and could not act.

Two weeks passed, but on March 31, I had decided that I had to try, even if I failed, and typed out a quick note to my neighbors. The new owners, it turned out, were people who had the property right next door. I had had positive experiences with them in the past — there was a chance they would be receptive.

The note was brief. I bullet-pointed the reasons they might wish to wait to mow, and it worked!

Being involved with like-minded people gave me the courage to write that note. Texas Flora, the Native Plant Society of Texas, Texas Master Naturalists and the Prairie Association of Texas, all organizations my husband and I belong to, are full of encouraging and inspiring people. Now, in my neighborhood, the Monarchs will have a place to lay their eggs and



begin a new generation!

I have a new goal - that is to have each and every home in my neighborhood create a Monarch Waystation. I will have to risk more stress if my ideas are turned down. Some neighbors will be receptive and some won't. But I will have my Tribe made up of those who are in these inspiring groups to help me stay strong and encourage to continue to entreat and educate.

This post will be repeated on other sites because that is the nature of our modern communication. So I take a deep breath, put myself out there, and hope for the best. Changing the way people think and believe about what is beautiful and valuable is a risky business. So here's my mission: trying to save the miracle of the Monarch Migrations, not to mention the complex diversity of life in my little corner of the

A Monarch Message: The Letter Kim Conrow

Editor's note: Here is an edited version of the letter Kim wrote to her neighbors (previous page) in response to their ill-timed mowing.

March 31, 2016

Dear _____ and _____,

Congratulations on the purchase of the lot next door to you! I've been watching that property for almost 20 years. It is lovely and is one of the few unspoiled pieces of the Fort Worth Prairie in our neighborhood. It is a beautiful wildflower field!

I am speaking from my heart when writing this note to you. My memberships in the Native Plant Society of Texas, the Texas Prairie Association and Texas Master Naturalists have taught me the value of native plants. Texas should look like Texas. Protecting our native plants wherever possible helps to preserve our natural heritage both in plants and the animals those plants support. That heritage is quickly disappearing due to urbanization and land mismanagement.

We in this neighborhood have a great opportunity. How we treat these small parcels that we are blessed with will affect the quality of life now and well into the future. I'm not sure how to inform you of all of the reasons for keeping the native plants intact, so I will just make a list of things I have learned from experts in the field.

1. You may qualify for a tax abatement if your 2.5 acres of unimproved land can be certified as a prairie

2. We are in the smack dab middle of the Monarch flyway! This amazing phenomenon will disappear from the earth if the butterflies do not have larval and nectar sources for their fall and spring migrations. If you mow now you will destroy these sources. Monarchs have been depending on them in your very field for ages.

3. Mowing practices need to be synched to enhance our native plants, not destroy them. If you continue to mow frequently you will only create a field of true weeds. Bastard cabbage, sow thistles, and other unsightly and non-native plants will move in and make your beautiful field a nightmare. This field has done fine for 20 years without any mowing. The front 15 feet have the horrid weeds in them because of their history of mowing.

4. Mowing for one hour is more air polluting than driving a car for hundreds of miles. Our local air quality is damaged by unnecessarily frequent mowing.

5. If you must mow, then following a natural schedule will not do too much damage to your wildflower heaven. You could mow once a year

or twice a year. Choose to mow in early January. Or mow in late June. This will preserve the important plant sources for the monarchs. Really, it would be better not to mow at all as this is a low height, self-perpetuating field.

6. Monarchs are not the only animals that need native plants to live. Other pollinators, such as our native bees and birds need them as well. Migrating hummingbirds depend on natives too!

You can see I'm passionate about helping the lives that depend on our educated choices for land management. I've been to so many lectures and field events where owners of properties like yours are lauded for their foresight and care of things that nature and God, if you are spiritually minded, has chosen to put here.

We are at a crossroad. We can all choose to do things that will enhance the lives of our children and grandchildren or continue to do things in ways that are outdated and hurtful to the planet.

I understand if you are going to build on the property you will be taking up a huge area of the land for building. That is the way it is. But I encourage you to consider that it is unnecessary to mow the entire 2.5 acres to

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A Monarch Message continued from page 7

accommodate a home. I would further encourage you to put in native landscaping around any new home. It will cost you less because the plants don't require the water and the other inputs needed by the out-of-date and out-of-style landscaping that only came into our culture in the 1950s.

Native landscaping does not have to be as elaborate as mine. It can simply mean that you make better choices for the plants you would put in around a home anyway.

I can direct you to literature, Web sites and experts who can help you make decisions. Some of these are people from Texas Parks and

Wildlife Department and other official resources.

I want to personally visit with y'all and answer any question you have about this different way of living. Keeping in balance with nature is the future.

Warm regards,
Kim Conrow

Nine Plants John Darling

On Saturday afternoon, April 23, Jim Varnum led three of us on a short plant walk as the crowds at the Tandy Hills BioBlitz were thinning out. Two days later Jim left us, and I can't stop thinking about that little walk.

It should have been stocked with serious prairie enthusiasts, tossing obscure botanical tidbits back and forth, but it wasn't. Just Gracie and me, both well known for our inability to retain plant names, and a very tall guy we didn't know who experienced the Varnum Effect as he was pulled in by Jim's quiet enthusiasm. We were too, as always, but it was fun to watch a stranger experience the Effect for the first time.

The walk was short, but not the effort, the knowledge, and Jim's wonderful ability to engage: It was so clear that he cared about those plants, and almost at once, we did, too. You could tell by the increasing frequency of the standard question: "Hey, Jim, what's this?" And of course (no surprise) Jim showed that you don't have to cover a lot of ground to cover a lot of nature.

Somehow, all week it's felt important to remember the plants from that little walk. There were more than nine, but some (of course) have fled. We have instead the image of Jim waving as he walks away and we're saying, "Thanks a lot, see you at the next one."



Photo Phile



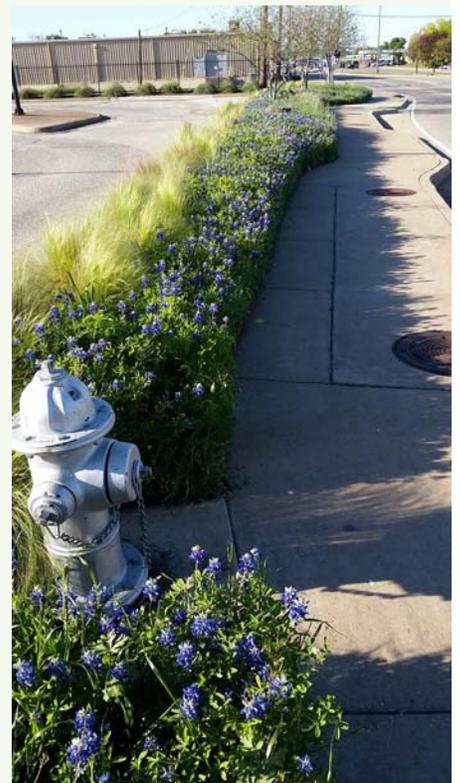
Left: Southwest Subcourt-house pruning crew, Ezekiel and Jose. These fellows paid attention to Gailon and pruned correctly. From Dawn Hancock, pale purple cone-flower in bloom.



Right: What's Happening in the Garden from Jim and Patti Maness. They've sent in *Calylophus* and *Tuberosa* milkweed. That's one of many they propagated from seed two years ago. Many flower buds but no Monarch eggs yet.



Below: What can you do with a skinny, inhospitable site around the Arlington Parks Department parking lot? Looks like you can do all right with natives.



Next Meeting

Thursday, May 5
7:00 pm
Fort Worth
Botanic Gardens

Managing
for Monarchs
Randy Johnson

Visit us on the Web
at

www.txnativeplants.org

The purpose of the Native Plant Society of Texas is to promote the conservation, research, and utilization of the native plants and plant habitats of Texas through education, outreach, and example.

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Family (2 or more)	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior (65+)	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Limited Income	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime	\$1200		

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

County: _____

Phone: _____

Chapter Affiliation: North Central Chapter

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 the newsletter is the 15th of every preceding month.

John Darling, Editor
newseditor@txnativeplants.org