



NCNPSOT News

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Volume 25, Number 9, October 2013

The President's Corner Theresa Kay Thomas

Greetings Members of the North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas.

About a week ago, the earth's tilt finally sent us into fall and cooler weather. That is the signal for (drum roll, please) the OCTOBER PLANT SWAP where the true nature of North Central Chapter members is revealed. For newer members, this is the fun and slightly crazy meeting at which members bring plants to swap. The plants can be raised by you, stolen from your mother, or bought at a fire sale from a nursery. Just be sure they are Texas natives and you have a little spiel on what the plant is and how it should be used in the landscape.

The plants are placed in the center of the circle of members. Then we draw numbers to determine which person will have the first chance to take a plant, and that person chooses the plant of her/his choice from the center. Pretty boring so far, right? But this is where the swap gets interesting. The second person to select a plant can take yours from you if

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Chapter Leaders

Theresa Thomas - President
kayleetl@sbcglobal.net
Starr Krottinger - Vice President (Programs)
Gailon Hardin - Treasurer
ghardin@flash.net
Martha Mullens- Secretary
Patti Maness- NICE! Coordinator
Frank Keeney - Communications
webmaster@txnativeplants.org
Gailon Hardin & Dawn Hancock - Southwest Subcourthouse Garden Leaders
Theresa Thomas & Bill Hall - Hulen Regional Library Garden Leader
Nancy Price - Hospitality Chair
Char McMorrow - Membership Chair
Dawn Hancock - Parliamentarian
Molly Hollar - Molly Hollar Wildscape Garden Leader

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.

Visit us at
ncnpsot.org and
txnativeplants.org

October meeting

Thursday, October 3, 7:00 pm
Orchid Room, Deborah Beggs Moncrief Garden Center,
Fort Worth Botanic Gardens

The Annual Plant Swap: Bring a Plant! Swap a Plant!

If you never come to another meeting, don't miss this one! This is the most fun and the most educational of all our meetings. Bring a native plant to swap with another member, but come prepared to tell us something about the plant! You will learn about your plant and all the other plants members bring to trade. This meeting can be boisterous as members vie for their favorite plant, so come prepared to laugh while you learn!

Plant of the Month Josephine Keeney

Watch your garden closely if you decide to plant this germander!

This vigorous perennial of the mint family will spread like wild-fire and cover all the bare areas in record time. This habit can be a blessing if you have areas that need erosion control, while at the same time beautifying the space.

Another good point about this plant is that if you want to remove it from your garden it is not hard at all to pull it out, although you may need to be persistent and do it more than once.

The flowers grow in long spikes and resemble those of salvia; they are white with a little touch of pink on the lower lip.

Besides being a super ground cover, American germander also provides lots of nectar for bees and butterflies that flock to the flowers.

This plant likes part shade and moisture and blooms from April to July in our area of Texas. It is very widespread, covering basically all of North America.

All things considered, I think American germander is an excellent ground cover as well as a great nectar plant.

American germander, *Teucrium canadense*



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

Meeting Minutes September 5, 2013 Martha Mullens

Theresa Thomas, President, called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm.

She asked if there were any corrections or additions to the August minutes, which had just been published in the September newsletter. There were none, so the minutes stand as approved.

Theresa called for the Treasurer's report, which was presented by Dawn Hancock because the treasurer was absent. The end-of-July balance was \$6516.33. During August, deposits included \$522.41 from the Native Landscape Certification Program, \$50.00 from the raffle, and \$100.00 from the sale of books at the Fort Worth Home and Garden Show. An expenditure of \$81.20 was made for printing of brochures, leaving a balance at the end of August of \$7107.54.

Theresa asked if there were visitors. They included Karen Hall, Marjorie Day, Jan Johnson, Michelle Green, and Michelle Schneider.

Dawn Hancock (speaking for Char McMorrow, Membership Chair who was not present) stated that we gained one new member in August, Donna R. Peterson.

Patti Maness, NICE Coordinator, gave a quick overview of NICE (Natives Instead of Common Exotics). She said there are 9 nurseries involved with NICE. The NICE plant of the season is Lindheimer's mully, which is an alternative to Pampas grass. She passed around a flier with a description and picture.

Dawn Hancock, Events Chair, asked for volunteers to set up for Ecofest in Arlington on September 21. Our group would give out fliers with a list of recommended native plants, brochures, applications for membership in NPSOT, and seed packets of native plants. She passed around a signup sheet for volunteers.

Josephine Keeney, Outreach Chair, commented on the fall plant sale at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden on October 12. This event is where our organization makes most of its money. Nancy Price pointed out that the plants are grown locally and donated by members such as Patti, Gailon, Josephine, Merita, and others.

The nominating committee spokesperson, Laura Penn, asked for volunteers for Secretary. The slate of officers will be Theresa Thomas for President, Martha Mullens for Vice President, and Gailon Hardin for Treasurer. She asked Martha Mullens, current Secretary, to say a few words about the duties required. She explained that the job amounted to taking notes for minutes that are submitted to the newsletter and Web site.

Martha also mentioned the potluck dinner in December and

asked that all members sign the sheet being passed around in order to determine the tentative number of tables to be prepared.

Theresa mentioned Native Plant Week, October 20-26, and stated there would be several presentations, such one on October 2 at the Southwest Subcourthouse, and another on October 20 at the Molly Hollar Wildscape.

Merita Knapp stated that our chapter would be sponsoring the Native Landscape Certification Program on September 29 at the Botanic Garden. So far, 22 people have signed up, and there is room for 8 more if anyone is interested.

Theresa mentioned again that there would be no speaker at the December meeting because we are having a potluck dinner, installation of officers, and an award ceremony. Nineteen members have signed up to come, two said maybe, and two declined.

Vice President Starr Krottinger introduced the speaker, Suzanne Tuttle, Manager of the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge. Suzanne gave a very informative program about prairies entitled Grassland Ecology of North Central Texas.

Starr reminded everyone of the plant swap scheduled for October. Josephine Keeney explained how it worked by putting all plants (with labels) in the middle of the room. Participants sit in a circle around the plants. They draw numbers and go in order to pick out the plant he/she wants. Some steals are permitted.

Theresa dismissed the meeting at 7:40. Then tickets were drawn for the raffle.

Nancy Price and Vickie Brady furnished the refreshments.

After the meeting, Sharon Hayes volunteered for the position of Secretary.



Fall 2013 North Central NPSOT Plant Sale Josephine Keeney

Plant sales are very important to our chapter as they help us spread the word about native plants while at the same time raising money for our chapter's many projects.

Many members participate by growing plants for the sale, while others help before, during and after the sale. Through our combined efforts we are able to have a successful event.

Texas native plants can be hard to find in the nursery trade. Our sale provides the opportunity to purchase plants that would be difficult to find, as well as the more common plants that we all know and love.

This fall we will be offering a limited supply of two new plants: Rose vervain, *Glandularia Canadensis* (nectar plant that blooms early in February) and Climbing milkweed, *Funastrum cynanchoides* (larval plant for monarchs and queens).

We usually have a great variety of native plants but we can always use more, so if anyone has plants that they would like to contribute to the sale, or if you would help in some other way, please get in touch with Gailon Hardin or Josephine Keeney, or send email to fallsale@txnativeplants.org.

Saturday, October 12, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm
Fort Worth Botanic Gardens



Rose vervain



Climbing milkweed

The President's Corner *continued from page 1*

she/he wishes. Or that person can choose from the center of the circle and you can breath easy until the third person rises to choose. Again your plant that you so had your heart set on owning is in jeopardy. If no person steals your plant from you by the end of the swap, then the plant truly is yours. Another rule is that once a plant has been stolen twice, it is out of contention for change in ownership. Heated arguments

erupt by present owners claiming that no, their plant has been swapped twice and is out of bounds for removal from your side. So sorry, the referee of plant exchanges says not and away goes your plant to the new owner. So grab that plant and get to the October Meeting early to get the best seat in the room.

October 20-26 is Native Plant Week, and each of the demonstration gardens (Molly Hollar Wildscape, Southwest Sub-

courthouse and Hulen Library) will be having different events throughout the month.

The first event is October 2. Gailon Hardin will be giving a presentation on native plants and then a tour of the Southwest Subcourthouse garden. Molly Hollar will be celebrating on October 20, and Hulen Library will have a presentation and a tour of the garden on October 24. See our Web site for further information.

See you in the garden.

Propagation 101 *Gailon Hardin*

On an unusually cool Sunday morning, Dawn Hancock brought her bounty of a #3 washtub full of *Phyla incisa* or frogfruit, the overflow by her pond, to my house. "Let's propagate these", she says. So we begin to decide what we need.

Appropriate apparel: light, loose fitting, already dirty.

Structure: covered, shaded, with north/south air flow, plus a fan.

Radio: scratch radio.

Potting medium, pots, trays, tools.

We set to work on the #3 washtub of plants. The long strands of frogfruit were sectioned below and above adjoining nodes. Only a leaf or two were kept for photosynthesis on the upper node. All remaining leaves were removed to help this small section conserve water. The lower node was "stuck" into potting soil. We stuck four sections per pot which allows for attrition of some of the plants.

With the quantity of frogfruit Dawn brought, we would have been able to make 500 plants on a commercial basis. However, we were delighted with 5 flats. Let's do the math: 18 4" pots per flat, 5 flats, \$225 for our plant sale. Priceless!

The trays will go into the greenhouse on a misting system. They may not be ready for our upcoming fall sale, but they will be ready for spring, just like to rest of us.

Why do we like frogfruit?

When one considers that most lawns serve the purpose of setting off the accompanying house, frogfruit can replace that thirsty grass lawn with a similar look, especially on small properties.

Frogfruit is low growing and spreads easily. It looks especially nice scrambling over rocks as it does around Dawn's backyard pool.

Frogfruit, contrary to its name, is the larval host plant for Phaon Crescentspot, Buckeye, and White Peacock butterflies and serves as a nectar source for many small butterflies and bees. Let's see your St. Augustine lawn do that.



Our Chapter Plans Events for Native Plant Week Dawn Hancock

Native Plant Week, from October 20 through October 26, is the week during which the chapters of the Native Plant Society of Texas put on activities to celebrate our natural heritage. Even though the dates are from October 20 through October 26, events occurring from the last of September to the last of October are in the running. North Central Chapter has three event venues, Molly Hollar Wildscape, Southwest Regional Library, and Southwest Sub-Courthouse.

This year Gailon Hardin will give a seminar on the benefits of native plants followed by a garden walk at the Southwest Sub-Court-



house garden on October 2. She will have handouts of the garden plot for guests to use as the tour takes place. To advertise the event, Commissioner Roy Brooks has allowed the use of bulletin boards within the sub-courthouse and a meeting room for the seminar.

At Molly Hollar Wildscape, a four acre native plant habitat containing five distinct areas, Josephine Keeney will conduct an informative tour from 9:00 am until 11:00 am on Thursday morning of October 24.

At Southwest Regional Library, there will be a garden walk from 9:30 am until 11:00 am on Thursday morning of October 24th. Sheila Franklin will then speak on "Butterflies in a Native Garden".

Besides valuable information about native plants, each venue will also have packets of wild flower seed to give away to their guests.



The North Central Chapter Welcomes New Members!

August 2013: Donna Peterson September 2013: Mary Sanford

Sumac: Deadly or Not Troy Mullens

One of the first questions that I hear when mentioning sumac is, "Is it Poison sumac?" That is one of the problems of common names. If you say *Toxicodendron vernix* to a botanist or naturalist they will reply, "Oh, that's Poison sumac." *Toxicodendron* is a different genus (that includes poison ivy) from *Rhus*.

Poison sumac, *Toxicodendron vernix*, is generally found in only a few counties in Southeast Texas



The sumacs that we have in North Central Texas are all in the genus *Rhus*. *Rhus* species display very early fall foliage color (often strikingly red) which acts as a "foliar fruit flag" to attract birds for seed dispersal.

Probably my favorite (by a small margin) is *Rhus glabra*, Smooth sumac, the one I grew up with in East Texas. It is a tree-shaped shrub (rarely a small tree to 10 ft) with leaves and limbs

Sumac: Deadly or Not continued from page 6

crowded toward the summit.

There are 9-23 leaflets, short-oblong to lanceolate, glabrous, glaucous beneath, sharply toothed, rachis un-winged. The flowers are in dense pyramidal panicles. It may be found in sandy or rocky soils, hillside woods, stream banks and fencerows. Smooth sumac occurs in East Texas west to the Rolling Plains and south to the Edwards Plateau. It blooms in May and has beautiful berries by July.

The seeds are a striking shade of red, sometimes shading to orange. Poison sumac has white to yellowish berries.



Anyone with known allergies to any members of the Cashew family (Anacardiaceae) should avoid all sumacs.

Another, perhaps more prolific sumac, found primarily in North Central Texas is the Prairie Flame-Leaf Sumac (*Rhus lanceolata*). It is found on limestone south to the Edwards Plateau, and is widely scattered elsewhere in Texas. *R. lanceolata* is a large shrub to 10 meters tall.

The leaflets are narrow, lance-shaped, falcate and glabrous with winged rachis.

This sumac blooms in July and August and is a good source of

nectar for bees, wasps, flies, and ants during late summer.



Sumacs prefer open habitat and are generally not found in mature forests even though they will tolerate some shade. They like well-drained soil and do well on dry sites. They are attractive in fencerows on rural roads, especially in the fall.

Another North Central Texas sumac that is generally unnoticed until fall when it turns a bright red is Skunkbush (*Rhus trilobata*). Most often it is a small bush with 3-lobed leaves that are fragrant when crushed. When leading a nature walk, I always take a survey and find about half of the people don't like the smell (skunkbush) and half like the fresh astringent aroma (I like it).

The leaves are palmately compound with three leaflets. It is sometimes listed with *Rhus aromatica* var. *serotina* as one of the sub-varieties. However, *R. trilobata* flowers before leaves appear or with the unfolding leaves. It blooms in March.

My copy of Daniel E.

Moerman's *Native American Ethnobotany* contains five pages of fine print detailing the use of all *Rhus* species by dozens of tribes for food, medicines (dozens of illnesses), and to mix with tobacco. I find it amazing that isolated tribes of the East and West coasts discovered that the same species were beneficial in treating certain ailments and illnesses. Almost all parts can be used. Young shoots were peeled and eaten raw.



The most common use noted by early pioneers was in the preparation of sumac tea or sumac lemonade. After reading dozens of articles, I am struck by the fact that there is no right or wrong way to prepare these liquids.

Some recommend harvesting the berries (seeds) in late summer while others harvest them as required through the winter. Some say crush the seeds while others say that makes them more bitter. Most say that Shining, Smooth, and Staghorn Sumacs are best.

All agree that the flavoring is in the coating of the berry (seed). A few recommend boiling them for a short time, however most say this destroys some of the best flavor and recommend soaking in cold water until the desired flavor is achieved.

Most agree that dark red to purple seeds are best, but each head should be tasted before picking and leave any on the bush that are bland. Birds will appreciate this.

The tartness is due to ascorbic acid (vitamin C). Do not worry about any sticky substance on the seeds since much flavor is there.

My recommendation would be to harvest them at their prime flavor and tartness then dry them for winter use. Winter rain will diminish their flavor.

Edible (and medicinal) sumacs of some kind grow in most regions of the United States.

Next Meeting

Thursday,
October 3
7:00 pm
Fort Worth
Botanic Gardens

The Annual Plant Swap

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

<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	\$1000

Name: _____

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City, State, Zip: _____

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Chapter Affiliation: North Central Chapter

e-mail: _____

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