



# NC P S O T

# North Central Texas News

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter  
Volume 25, Number 11, December 2013



## Chapter Leaders

Theresa Thomas - President  
[kayleetl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kayleetl@sbcglobal.net)  
Starr Krottinger - Vice President  
(Programs)  
Gailon Hardin - Treasurer  
[ghardin@flash.net](mailto:ghardin@flash.net)  
Martha Mullens- Secretary  
Patti Maness- NICE! Coordinator  
Frank Keeney - Communications  
[webmaster@txnativeplants.org](mailto: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](http://ncnpsot.org) and  
[txnativeplants.org](http://txnativeplants.org)

## December meeting

Thursday, December 5, 6:30 pm

Next door to the Orchid Room, Deborah Beggs Moncrief  
Garden Center, Fort Worth Botanic Gardens

Our December meeting is a time to celebrate us.  
Bring something for the potluck dinner and enjoy  
good food and good times.

## Plant of the Month Josephine Keeney

What a magnet for all kinds of pollinators, white mistflower is!

Just at a time when most flowering plants are going to rest for the winter, this plant explodes into gorgeous bloom that covers the entire plant.

Bloom time is late October to early November, making it the latest bloomer in the garden and a most delightful sight late in the season.

The scent is intoxicating on warm days, attracting all the flying creatures in the neighborhood with the promise of sweet nectar. I have seen bees, moths, butterflies and all kinds of bugs on white mistflower, some looking for nectar and some looking for a quick lunch. It is a lot of fun to watch them in action.

This plant is a deciduous perennial woody shrub that can reach 6 feet in height, but I prefer to cut it back by half in the dormant season to encourage heavy bloom.

*Ageratina havanensis* is native to the Texas Hill Country as well as Mexico, Cuba and the Bahamas. It prefers a sunny location but can live in partial shade although it will not bloom as heavily there. It is cold and heat tolerant, not picky about soil types, and can take drought fairly well.

White mistflower is very easily propagated by softwood cuttings in the spring, or semihardwood cuttings in the summer.

Needless to say I think this plant deserves to have a prominent place in every garden so more people — and especially all the pollinators can enjoy it.

### White mistflower, *Ageratina havanensis* Asteraceae (Aster family)



Find more native plant information at [www.texasstar.org](http://www.texasstar.org), a forum for Texas gardeners dedicated to the cultivation and propagation of Texas native plants.

## Meeting Minutes November 7, 2013 Martha Mullens

President Theresa Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. She asked visitors to introduce themselves. Otto Witt, Karla Niffin, and Alan Winter responded. Alan also announced that he was joining.

Gailon Hardin, Treasurer, reported a balance of \$6308.34 and stated that NCNPSOT made a profit of \$1600 from the fall plant sale on October 12 at the Botanic Gardens.

Patti Maness reported that the NICE! winter season plant is Mexican feathergrass. She gave a brief description, and Josephine Keeney mentioned that she had propagated the plant from seeds by the method that Patti and Gailon had related in an earlier meeting.

Patti also stated that the participating nurseries would receive a list of the 2014 NICE! plants so they could purchase them for the season.

Dawn Hancock, Events Chairperson, announced that the Stamp club in Grapevine has invited NCNPSOT to set up a table at their Exposition on November 9-10. The plant being featured on the upcoming stamp is the bluebonnet.

Merita Knapp reported that two classes have been scheduled in the spring for the Native Landscape Certification Program which NCNPSOT sponsors. A level 1 class will be held March 15 and a level 2 class will be held April 29 at the Botanic Gardens.

Theresa stated that the December meeting will be a potluck dinner and will be held next door instead of in the usual room. She also stated that setup time would be from 5:30 to 6:30 and the dinner will be at 6:30 pm. She asked Martha Mullens to give some details, which she did. Martha also passed around a sign-up sheet so members could designate what type of food each would be bringing.

Starr Krottinger, Vice President and head of the nominating committee, presented the slate of officers for next year. They are: President, Theresa Thomas, Vice President, Martha Mullens, Secretary, Sharon Hayes, and Treasurer, Gailon Hardin. After ascertaining that the necessary number of members was present to elect, a vote was taken and the slate of officers was elected by a show of hands.

Starr introduced the speaker, Bill Collins, who has been involved in some aspect of the study of trees and forestry for over 30 years. His PowerPoint presentation entitled "A Tree by Any Other Name" was very informative and enhanced by handouts and samples of actual plant material.

At 8:00 Theresa adjourned the meeting and the raffle was conducted.

Merita Knapp brought the snacks and Nancy Price furnished the drinks.

## North Central Chapter at the 2013 Mid-Cities Stamp Show? Dawn Hancock

So how does a chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas end up at a stamp show? No, this is not a lead in to a "So two men walk into a bar" joke. First, the host club of the show, Mid-Cities Stamp Club, chooses to use a field of bluebonnets on the cachet issued for the Mid-Cities EXPO 2013. (For those as uninformed as I, a cachet is an envelope.) General Chairman Stanley Christmas looks for a suitable organization to invite to the show to highlight said cachet and finds, lo and behold, the North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas, and Mr. Christmas contacts that chapter's president. Theresa Thomas says to me, "Dawn, you take care of this." And that is how we end up at a stamp show.



The venue for EXPO 2013 was Grapevine Convention Center. I can report that the city of Grapevine has gotten the message on using Texas native plants in the landscape. I saw loads of autumn sage and Mexican feather grass around the convention center when I arrived.

I was warmly greeted and treated as an honored guest by these iterations of native plant people. While we are passionate

about Texas native plants, these folks are passionate about stamps.

Several people stopped at the NPSOT table. Some had their children in tow. One was a Boy Scout Master, and we chatted about the new Sustainability badge. What could be more sustainable for the ecosystem than Texas native plants?

I sold two copies of *Native Texas Plants: Landscaping Region by Region* and I gave away wildflower seeds. Stanley Christmas suggested I set up a contribution jar, and our chapter gained a little cash for our coffers from that.

When I left on Sunday, I knew a little more about stamps and the stamp show attendees knew a little more about Texas native plants.

## Texas Native Plant Week at Three Locations Dawn Hancock

The official start of Texas Native Plant Week is the third week in October, but celebrations began early at the native plant garden at Southwest Sub-Courthouse.

Visitors to Louisiana may have encountered the concept of lagniappe, giving just a little more to your visitor. Gailon Hardin and Dawn Hancock wanted to give any attendees for Texas Native Plant Week celebration lagniappe, a short presentation on why using the plants they would find in the courthouse garden is a good idea for their own landscapes. Great idea but the community room would not be available during the official Texas Native Plant Week.

What to do? Second great idea: Give the presentation when the room was available, which turned out to be October 3. Fourteen attendees were given Gailon's short PowerPoint presentation, "Tarrant County SWSC Native Plant Demonstration Garden," followed by a walk through the garden led by Dawn, who answered questions about the plants asked by the participants.



Because of the efforts of dedicated volunteers of Tarrant County Master Gardeners, Cross Timbers Master Naturalists, and North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas and a gift of rain from Mother Nature, the garden was in tip-top form. Pitcher sage, autumn sage, rock rose, liatris, and zexmenia were just a few of the plants in full bloom. Coming

into bloom were the grasses, and they still had their lovely seed heads when Dawn and Gailon repeated the adventure for employees of Southwest Sub-Courthouse on October 22.

The remaining venues for Texas Native Plant Week, Molly Hollar Wildscape and the Southwest Regional Library, had their events on October 24.

Over at the library, refreshments were available for 22 guests to sip and nibble while Sheila Franklin gave a talk on "Butterflies in a Native Garden." Guests strolled the trail of this recently renovated garden to see first-hand those plants described in Sheila's talk and left with a seed packet of fall-blooming wildflower seed mix.

At Molly Hollar Wildscape, Josephine Keeney set out her table of goodies to entrap regular visitors to this heavily used native plant ecosystem. Josephine reports that all but one visitor concentrated on the walk. That lucky individual got a really good walking talk on the plants of the wildscape. Next year we will put on our thinking caps to determine how to engage even more of the public.



## NICE! Plant of the Season

Mexican feathergrass, *Nassella tenuissima*: Small-medium perennial grass with airy foliage

### Description:

Mexican feathergrass is native to west Texas, New Mexico and Mexico. It is a small-to-medium sized fountain-like bunchgrass, growing 1-2 feet tall, with flower spikes adding up to an additional foot in height. It has finely textured light green leaves that are tightly furled inward giving them a graceful, filamentous look.

### Flowers and Seeds:

Mexican feathergrass flowers in late spring with 6-12 inch silvery-white to very light green spikelet flower clusters or panicles that stand above the leaves. The flowers have slender awns that are 2-3 inches long. The panicles ripen to golden brown in the summer and into fall.

### Planting sites:

Mexican feathergrass thrives in full sun and can tolerate partial shade. It does well in most soil types, but it must have good drainage.

### Watering Instructions:

Like many Texas natives, Mexican feathergrass may need supplemental water during its first growing season. After it is established, it will thrive with existing rainfall. It is drought tolerant, although it can go dormant during an extended drought. It cannot tolerate excessive moisture.



### Comments:

Mexican feathergrass is used in landscapes because of its airy delicate foliage that sways gently in the breeze. Its soft leaves provide contrast to more rigid

plant down from its new growth in the spring, so don't cut it back until new spring growth appears. Mexican feathergrass leaves may be used by birds for nesting material. It is deer resistant.



Look for the NICE! Plant of the Season signs and information sheets on your next visit to a participating North Central Texas nursery. Thank you for using native plants in your landscapes.

North Central Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas meetings are the first Thursday in February through June and August through December at the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Deborah Beggs Moncrief Garden Center, Orchid Room, 6:30 pm.

Plant of the Season, sponsored by the North Central Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas Operation NICE! (Natives Instead of Common Exotics!) – Winter 2013

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leaves of other plants and garden hardscape. Because of its small size, Mexican feathergrass can be grown in containers. It can be propagated by seed, collected in summer by combing through the plant. After three seasons of growth, Mexican feathergrass leaves persist throughout the winter. Even though it is mostly dormant, cutting it can slow the

**Next Meeting**  
**Thursday,**  
**December 5**  
**7:00 pm**  
**Fort Worth**  
**Botanic Gardens**

**The Annual Potluck**

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Family (2 or more)	\$50
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<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$500
		<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime	\$1000

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 the newsletter is the 15th of every preceding month.

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