



A good thing in a very, very small package. Look closely at this month's featured plant on page 2.



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.

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NCNPSOT News

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Volume 22, Number 2, March 2010

The President's Corner Dawn Hancock

Greetings, members of the North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas.

What a difference this last February has been from February 2009. Looking over my February 2009 column, apparently bees were buzzing and birds were beginning to nest. This year birds and bees are still shaking off the record snows. I hope you have dug out and assessed damage to your natives.

On my property, yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) broke a little, one American elm (*Ulmus americana*) limb came down, and the pine boughs are looking a little scary (they are over the power lines to the house). However, my neighbors had several live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*) that were just blasted by the weight of the snow. Mother Nature can be really mean sometimes.

On the other hand, Texas is officially out of drought. That means we can all go out and buy those gorgeous exotic plants, right? If Texas is out of drought, then these plants that need more water should be okay, right? Wrong. All of us really old Texans like me know that this is a pleasant interlude between perennial drought conditions. Since some of your neighbors may now have to replant, a friendly suggestion might be to replace that Bradford pear with, perhaps, our native Mexican plum (*Prunus mexicana*). The blossoms are very fragrant and birds love the fruit.

Refer your neighbors to our Web site (www.txnativeplants.org), which has a list of plants for both a sunny and a shady border. Or you could give them a hard copy of our beginners list of native Texas plants which is conve-

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March meeting

Thursday, March 4, 7:00 pm
Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Deborah Beggs Moncrief
Garden Center, Orchid Room

Program: What is a Master Naturalist? Marilyn Sallee,
Cross Timbers Master Naturalist.

Plant of the Month Josephine Keeney

Prairie nymph, *Herbertia lahue*, Iridaceae



makes a miniature clump of narrow foliage to only 2 inches tall. The dark blue-lavender flowers are composed of three large oblong petals surrounding a contrasting white eye.



This adorable flower of the Iris family graces the prairie with its lovely colors from early to mid May.

The grass-like leaves grow from a small bulb and are very inconspicuous except when in bloom.

This is a lovely sight if you are lucky enough to encounter a patch of them.

From the Wildflower Center Web site: Easy-to-grow, this shortgrass plant with exotic-looking flowers

Water: Medium

Light Requirement: Part Shade

Soil Moisture: Dry

Soil Description:

Sandy, Sandy Loam, Medium Loam, Clay Loam, Clay

Forms a carpet

Wildlife Use: Nectar used by bees

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

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niently divided into all kinds of categories that will help them choose good plants for their needs.

If you are in either a neighborhood association or a homeowner's association, call the president of

the association to suggest a program about saving money on water bills through native plantings. Our chapter has several members who could present such a program.

So, in retrospect, our record snowstorm may be the toe in the doorway to introduce Texas native plants to people unaware of their landscaping value. Happy proselytizing.

Return of the Greenhouse

Gailon Hardin reports that her hoop house fell down completely on February 12. However, on a sunny day almost a week later, it popped back up. A few pieces were broken, but all the plants are safe for the April 10 NPSOT plant sale. By the way, don't miss the next workday at the Southwest Subcourthouse on Wednesday, February 24, starting at 9:30 am.



Butterflies Joann Karges

The Red Admiral

It was the Admirable butterfly until sometime in the 19th century, when somehow in England and then in North America, it became the Red Admiral.

While its patterns of white and black, and that one red-orange diagonal band across each forewing and one orange-red band at the edge of the each hindwing, are distinctive and easily identifiable, the “red” is hardly predominant.

This is a fairly common butterfly in our area, spending the winter here and breeding through the spring and sometimes early summer, and then again becoming fairly common in the fall. To some extent It is a migratory species, large flocks migrating from one region to another (though not in any way comparable to the Monarch.)

The butterfly is known throughout North America, even in some of the coldest regions, and across most of Europe into North Africa.

While it comes readily to many flowers for nectar, especially perhaps to white ones, it will also seek nutrients from other sources: excrement, sap, rotting fruit, and even carrion.

It is more specialized when it comes to the larval host plant, for it chooses only members of the stinging nettle family,

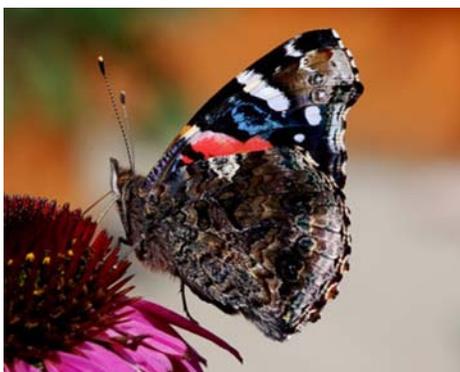


they release toxins which cause an intense burning sensation; this type of effect is known as contact urticaria.”

Enjoy the butterfly—and avoid its host plant.

Urticaceae, in this area *Urtica chamaedryoides*, definitely not one to have in your butterfly garden.

While the young larvae consume the leaves with impunity and the adult bears no toxins or other effects of its prickly food, the plant evolved these urticating hairs to defend itself from just such herbivores. To explain how it affects humans, I quote George Diggs et al. in the *Illustrated Flora of North Central Texas*: “If touched, glass-like hairs on the foliage of this species break off in the skin and act like hypodermic needles;



Let It Snow!



The recent record-breaking snowfall transformed our landscape in ways many of us never could have imagined. The snow caused great destruction while revealing a stark new beauty in familiar places.



Thanks to everyone who sent in their winter scenes: Dawn Hancock, Gailon Hardin, Josephine Keeney, Merita Knapp, Diane Parotta, and Rosalie Rogers. There wasn't room for everything, but all of them are appreciated.



Southwest Regional Library Garden Devanie Fergus

The garden at the Southwest Regional Library off Hulen was designed by Jim Leavy, a professional landscaper and member of the Native Plant Society. It was installed in 1997 with over 400 perennial plants being used. This garden is unique in the fact that a partnership was formed with TCMGA and our own Evaline Woodrey has facilitated care for this garden since that time.



The garden is designed with a circular path and an off shoot which leads to a sheltered alcove with a bench. The circular bed is planted with Lindheimers muhly, blackfoot daisies, guara, and

purple coneflower. The outside ring contains possumhaw holly, Mexican plum, redbud, cenizo, Eve's necklace, lantana, pavonia, coralberry and *Salvia greggii*.

This tranquil island setting provides an opportunity to influence visitors to consider using native

plants to reduce water usage and provide habitat for birds and wildlife. The garden is also home to a Global GPS Cache Hunt site which is an interesting way to bring non-gardeners to this setting.

It also provides a calm and tranquil island of beauty in the middle of the hurly-burly and noisy Hulen Mall area. A place to sit and have lunch or read a book checked out from the nearby library. At three in the afternoon it is flooded with a river of school children flowing briefly down the paths from school to library, adding their energy to the wildscape garden.

We tidy the garden on the third Wednesday of every month at 9:00 am. We'd love to have you come join us!

NICE! Plant of the Season: Eve's Necklace

Description: Eve's Necklace (*Sophora affinis*, now re-classified to *Styphnolobium affine*), also called Texas Sophora, is native to North Texas and regions south. This understory tree is relatively fast growing, usually reaching 15 to 25 feet tall. Its canopy can reach 20 feet wide at maturity. It has alternate pinnately compound leaves 8 inches long, with many individual leaflets, giving the foliage a delicate appearance. The leaves are deep green on top and somewhat paler on the bottom. Eve's Necklace is deciduous, losing its leaves in the winter.



Flowers and Fruit: Eve's Necklace has intensely fragrant spring flowers that bloom for approximately 2 weeks, usually in April. Its white-with-pink blossoms resemble those of pea or wisteria; all are in the legume family. Eve's Necklace takes its name from the showy seed pods that form in the fall and remain on the plant during the winter months after the leaves have fallen from the plant. The black pods are 3 to 6 inches long, resembling beads on a string.

Planting sites: Eve's Necklace can be planted in dappled shade to part shade to full sun. It takes well to pruning after it is established, which can be used to shape the tree as desired.

Watering Instructions: Eve's Necklace will need supplemental water during the first growing season; after it is established, it will thrive with existing rainfall. It is drought tolerant.

Comments: Eve's Necklace is an outstanding addition as an ornamental tree to North Texas gardens. Its fragrant spring flowers are followed by the development of attractive seed pods in the fall,



providing an interesting visual texture in the winter garden. Although considered an understory tree, it is a good size for smaller gardens where large trees might overwhelm the yard. Consider using it as an alternative to tall crepe myrtles.

Next Meeting

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

What is a
Master Naturalist?
Marilyn Sallee

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at
www.txnativeplants.org

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<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Couple/Family	\$40
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For changes of address or information about contributing to the newsletter, please contact the newsletter editor.

The deadline for submitting articles for inclusion the newsletter is the 15th of every preceding month.

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