



N P S O T

**North Central Texas
News**

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Volume 24, Number 2, February 2012

The President's Corner Nancy Laine Price, PhD

Whoever heard of pleasant weather for the Fort Worth stock show? After the blazing indices of last summer, we'll take it. This weather makes all of us gardeners scamper after seed catalogues and long to get out there with some mulch and a trowel.

Our next program will be Doug Montgomery, an engineer turned Master Gardener, who will tell us about his work as Mr. Doug with the kids in the garden at Fitzgerald Elementary. We'll also hear news about our members in the Alice Carlson Elementary, the various community gardens, BRIT, and programs involving children. Josephine Keeney will once again present her plant of the month at meetings.

On January 21, the North Central chapter will provide lunch for the state meeting of NPSOT at the Botanical Garden. Hope you will come to the meeting and make everyone feel welcome.

At the February meeting you will be able to order the new PERMANENT name badges from Bill Hall. Lots of events and projects going on; our members are busy with so many opportunities. Come out and find one to further our mission, educating everyone about native plants.

Chapter Leaders

- Nancy Price - President
nprice@uta.edu
- Lynn Hayes - Vice President
(Programs)
- Gailon Hardin - Treasurer
ghardin@flash.net
- Theresa Thomas - Secretary
- Gailon Hardin - NICE! Coordinator
ghardin@flash.net
- Frank Keeney - Communications
webmaster@txnativeplants.org
- Gailon Hardin - Southwest
Subcourthouse Garden Leader
- Evaline Woodrey - Hulen Regional
Library Garden Leader
ewoodrey@sbcglobal.net
- Patty Maness - Hospitality & Field
Trips
- Dawn Hancock - Parliamentarian
- Molly Hollar - Molly Hollar
Wildscape Garden Leader
molly@thewildscape.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.

Visit us at
ncnpsot.org and
txnativeplants.org

February meeting

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

Program: The garden at Fitzgerald Elementary School in Arlington. Presented by Doug Montgomery, a retired civil engineer and Master Gardener who has become a popular teacher, friend, and advisor in the garden. Doug will share with us the importance of teaching the young to appreciate the balance of nature.

Plant of the Month Josephine Keeney

Woolly or Scarlet fruit passionflower, *Passiflora foetida*, Passifloraceae

This is a very vigorous perennial vine that goes dormant and dies to the ground in winter but it can survive temperatures as low as 20 degrees or lower (it survived the winter of 2010).

The runners can get very long: Ours reached 40 feet and covered most of the larval garden fence and gates at the Fielder House garden. The leaves are thick and covered with fine hairs, hence the name. They are very much enjoyed by caterpillars of the Gulf fritillary butterfly. They provide abundant food because the plants grow so rapidly.

This vine also has a tendency to sucker as all passionflowers do. Ours is in part shade and seems to be very happy there with a good weekly watering.

The flowers are not large but they are very beautiful in shades of pink and lavender. They open early in the morning and close in the afternoon but in hot weather they may close before noon.

The seed pods are a wonderful feature of woolly passionflower. They are surrounded by green bracts that form a protective cage around them, making the seed pod very beautiful when it ripens and turns a bright red.



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

Native Plant Workdays

Southwest Subcourthouse on Granbury Road in Fort Worth 2nd Saturday and last Wednesday of each month beginning at 9:00 am. Gailon Hardin in charge

Hulen Street Regional Library in Fort Worth 3rd Wednesday of each month beginning at 9:00 am. Evaline Woodrey in charge

Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park in Arlington Wednesdays and the first Saturday of each month beginning at 9:00 am (winter hours)

Tuesdays at the greenhouse in Randol Mill Park in Arlington beginning at 9:00 am

Minutes of the Board Meeting January 12, 2012

Meeting was held in the home of President Nancy Price.

Members present: Nancy Price, Gailon Hardin, Dawn Hancock, Bill Hall, Star Krottinger, Frank and Josephine Keeney and Theresa Thomas.

New Business

Gailon Hardin, Treasurer, said she would have budget information available at the February Meeting.

Name Badges

Bill Hall presented 5 types of name badges for the Board to consider. He advised that the best price he could find was \$9.00 per badge. The Board selected one of the designs, and each member ordered and paid for their badge. We will have them by the February meeting. Bill will present the selected badge design to the members and will be taking orders for badges. Orders will be on a "cash only" basis



Programs

Starr Krottinger, Program Chairperson, presented the list of programs she has put together for 2012. See the following:

February - Doug Montgomery
 March - Sam Keischnick, Daleas of the area
 April - Becca Swadek, Plants of the Glades
 May - Matt Turner, Remarkable Plants of Texas
 June - TBD
 July - No meeting
 August - Will McClatchey, Ethnobotany
 September - TBD
 October - Plant Swap
 November - Barney Lipscomb, Poisonous Plants
 December - Holiday Potluck and program TBD

Other

The chapter will be provide lunch for State NPSOT Meeting on 1/21/12. Everyone is encouraged to come from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Nancy Price and Carol Loney will have an informative display on native plants on display from 2/4 till 4/2 at Alice Carlson Gardening.

Butterflies in the Garden will be held 3/7 to 4/8

Plant Sale will be on the 3rd Saturday in April

TCMA May Meeting - the chapter is paying expenses (\$200.00) for the speaker, Matt Turner.

Monthly Business Meeting Minutes will be in the newsletter. Deadline to get them to John Darling is the 15th of the month.

Board will be recommending to the members that the Chapter donate \$1000.00 to the BRIT Internship Program.

Meeting adjourned.
 Respectively submitted,
 Theresa Kay Thomas,
 Secretary

NICE! Nurseries — Third in a Series Dawn Hancock

Redenta's Garden

Driving east from Green Oaks Boulevard down Arkansas Lane, you will soon find Redenta's Garden on the north side of the street. Redenta's has participated in the NICE! program since it began in our chapter. Molly Hollar, the NICE! nursery representative for Redenta's, and I met owner Ruth Kinler on a hot summer day for a talk. We sat together beside the herb house and in the shade of a large oak, one of many that dot the grounds of the nursery.



I started the conversation with my usual opener: What prompted you to become a NICE! Nursery?

Ruth: Because I believe every landscape in North Texas needs to be mostly native and well-adapted plants. This year (2011) is the biggest reason that rings true. The NICE! plants that have been thriving in the drought are the plants that we have always carried.

Ruth added that her first summer here was 1980 (the year of at least 100 degrees for 42 consecutive days), which was followed in 1983 by the coldest winter on record. Following the recommendations of a local gardening book, she had planted such plants as pittisporum



and wax leaf ligustrum, all of which died. That is when she learned about the types of plants that should not be commonly used in our landscapes. The bones of the landscape should be natives, and the ill-adapted exotics should occupy "your little corners."

Molly: People want to plant what's pretty.

Ruth: The most difficult thing is that native plants don't present well in a container.

Therefore, Redenta's uses signage to highlight Texas native plants so employees can explain to customers the difference between the plant in the pot and in the landscape. "At each store there is at least one person who is knowledgeable" about Texas natives and how the plants perform in the landscape.

Molly said that many landscape managers do not have experience in caring for Texas native plants, and Ruth added that, "in Austin, natives are a whole lot easier to sell than here because natives are used in commercial landscaping." She did note that she had seen natives being used for the landscaping at a new subcourthouse on the Jacksboro Highway. Way to go, County Commissioners!

I asked about the palette of Texas natives and if she had seen an increase in the number and variety of Texas natives being offered to retail nurseries from wholesale growers.

Ruth: Not more and more natives. It's been fairly consistent. There might have been the odd little grower who could get us one or two or three native plants that we can't get now, but in general the supply has pretty well remained the same. (Note to members: This means our plant sales are super important in getting unusual Texas natives into the hands of the public. Think *Clematis pitcheri* (purple clematis) or *Echinacea augustifolia* (Black Samson).



Ruth also reiterated the problem production nurseries have with some desirable Texas native plants such as Rusty blackhaw viburnum. (I noted this issue in a previous article.) Of the 81 one-gallon plants she bought, a third died. This is no way to make a profit.

I asked Ruth why she thought the palette had not improved.

Ruth: There still is a lot of education that needs to go on. I think people will have to be hit over the head.

continued on page 5

NICE! Nurseries continued from page 5



And then she added a statement that focused my attention: “You guys have got to get into the press more. You have to make people want it. We retail people can’t necessarily do that. When was the last time one of you pushed a story to the Dallas Morning News? The enews letter once a week has articles on gardening. If a story is well done and runs in the Dallas paper we see increased traffic in the store.

Are we hiding our candle under a bushel basket?

When asked about the best sellers, *Salvia greggii* topped the list again. Turk’s cap and Texas native grasses were also in demand.

Me: What is unique about Redenta’s?

Ruth: Redenta’s carries a wide selection of plants including those that customers cannot find elsewhere, lots of herbs, and people who work here know their plants, love gardening, and share that love. Also, Redenta’s is an organic nursery.

Their staff has been with the nursery from two to five years. Finally, Redenta’s has a wonderful Web site touting products, services, and a bit of education on

plants. Check it out at <http://www.redentas.com/>

Stuart Nursery

You have to go to Weatherford to visit Stuart Nursery. Drive west on I-20, then exit onto Highway 180. Just a little way down is the eight-acre Stuart Nursery on the right. You can’t miss it. According to Judy Cain, with whom I met, Stuart Nursery began in the middle 1950s. I think it was Judy’s parents who bought the nursery from the Stuarts in the 1970s. Judy and her husband Tommy worked in the nursery and bought it in the late 1970s or early 1980s. Another partner, Paul Simpson, bought into the nursery also. That is a long history line, people: 60 years for that little establishment.



When I asked Judy what prompted them to become a NICE! Nursery, she replied that it was a “desire to promote native plants, and I

strongly believe more people should plant more of them. We wanted to pass that information on any way we can. It was an easy decision. We carry everything that y’all talk about.”



Me: How long have you guys been a NICE! Nursery?

Judy: Gosh, I don’t know. Three or four years maybe, ever since Cissy asked us to. (Cissy Gray is the NICE! Nursery representative for Stuart Nursery.)

I asked Judy if there was increase in the volume of sales for native plants or were their customers asking for the same plants available to them from the big box stores.

Judy: We have more people coming in asking for native plants

continued on page 6

NICE! Nurseries continued from page 5



certainly than we used to, so it's catching on.

Me: What is unique about Stuart Nursery?

Judy: It's a fact that we carry and promote native plants for one thing. We really try to carry different plants from everybody else. We try to provide personal service, and we have a really knowledgeable staff. Our people have been here a really long time, 9 or 10 years.

I had wandered the nursery before the interview and mentioned to Judy that I saw an array of water plants displayed in a pond. Judy replied that they were providing water for wildlife and butterflies.

Me: I think people would enjoy a garden that brings in wildlife.

Judy: I was at the meeting in Denton and was so impressed with Douglas Tallamy and what he had to say about gardens providing a food source for wildlife, including insects.

With that, I had to tell Judy about my chili pequin plants. You, dear reader, now get to hear that story of native plants and bugs. One morning during my stroll of the front garden, I found two large bright yellow-green caterpillars

with white dots along either side of their midline munching away on the chili pequin. I called hubby Tom to enjoy the sight and told him that I was going to leave them alone; the plants would recover. They ate every leaf on the plant save one and then went on their merry life cycle way. Not more than two weeks later the chili pequin was fully leafed out again. Then shortly thereafter Tom called me out to the Turk's cap. "Is that a hummingbird?" he asked. No, it was a sphinx moth. I hope it was the adult of the caterpillar, but even if not it makes a good story.



Now, back to Stuart Nursery. During my walk-about, I saw a host of magnificent agaves and yuccas. Judy says they are her thing. Everyone else at the nursery tolerates them because she loves them, and they were spectacular.

Me: Is the palette of native plants getting broader from the growers?

Judy: It is going downhill as far as growers. For instance, Tawakoni (a production grower) used to grow a lot more natives. They're getting a little harder to find. Pat Needham (a small grower) had a little place out toward Mineral Wells. He grew a lot of native plants, but he retired, so that was a source we lost. It's hard to find

people who grow native plants. I don't think they tout themselves. After a year like this I hope we'll get more growers. We do get a lot of things from Native Texas Nursery down toward Austin, and they always have a good supply.

Me: I'm going to buy one of your plants before I leave here, the big red sage.

Judy: We had to fight to get those.

Me: What are your best selling Texas native plants?

Judy: *Salvia greggii*, because it blooms so nicely and is so very pretty. And then various trees, probably the red oaks. We try to promote the native trees.

At the end of the interview, this from Judy: "We are glad to be a part of NICE! and hope it makes a difference.

Take a look at the Web site <http://www.stuartslandscaping.com/> then mosey on out west to Weatherford.



Next Meeting

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

*Fitzgerald Elementary
School garden*

Doug Montgomery

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 | \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Couple/Family | \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Individual (65+) | \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Group | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Couple (one 65+) | \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$250 |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$500 |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Sponsor | \$1000 |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime | \$1000 |

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
817-274-1077
ldarling@sbcglobal.net