



# NPSOT News

North Central Texas

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter  
Volume 24, Number 5, May 2012

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## The President's Corner Nancy Laine Price, PhD

I hope that you all have read the flyer I sent out a couple of weeks ago on the invasive known as bastard cabbage, which at 2 to 5 feet tall, is aggressively crowding out our smaller native wildflowers. Here is the impressive speed of the electronic word: When I get an email about something that I think is important, I just send it out to the membership.

Sometimes, however, it's fun and instructive to seek the answers to questions in person. My dad always told me to go to the top with important questions. So when something showed up in my native flowerbed that no one could identify, I went to the top: BRIT. You may think those biologists are too busy with important work to answer your questions, but you would be wrong. I grabbed a stem of the woody weed (?) and charged over to see Dr. Brooke Byerley, botanist. She wasn't sure but she said she knew who knew: Bob O'Kennon. Sure enough, in about a minute, he identified it as *Baccharis neglecta*, Roosevelt weed or poverty weed.

Roosevelt weed is one of the first plants to invade abandoned fields, roadsides and disturbed habitats. It is extremely drought tolerant, accepting wet or dry sites, and can grow in soils high in salt. The historical references of its common names purportedly come from the fact that after the great Dust Bowl, it was planted as a fast and easy

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**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)

## May meeting

Thursday, May 3, 7:00 pm

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

Program: The May meeting of the North Central Chapter NPSOT features a special speaker! We will welcome Matt Turner, author, professor and NPSOT member from Austin. Matt will present information based on his new book, *Remarkable Plants of Texas: Uncommon Accounts of our Common Natives*. Please make a every effort to join us for this unique event. Matt will also offer his book for sale at the meeting.

## Plant of the Month Josephine Keeney

Texas betony, Scarlet betony, *Stachys coccinea*, Lamiaceae

What a flower show this plant puts on!

The lovely clear coral-red flowers cover the long stems making the plants a total mass of blooms that dazzle the eye and attract bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds to their nectar.

Texas betony's blooms open from the bottom up along the stem, making the blooms last a long time. Once the blooms are all spent, cut the stems back and the plant will put out new stems in a hurry for another round of blooms.

Being in the mint family, this plant has the typical square stems and fragrant leaves, although the scent is not like that of mint; it is a very strong and unusual scent, but very pleasant.

Texas betony is a hardy perennial that comes back year after year without special treatment, but a little compost is always good. Give it a nice spot in part shade and a little water and this plant will reward you greatly.



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.

## 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

## Nice! Nurseries — Fourth in a Series Dawn Hancock

### Stegall's Nursery

Once one knows how to find Stegall's Nursery, it is easy to find. It's located in Fort Worth at 5652 Wilson Road, which is off Dick Price Road. The road is windy, and if you are not careful you will shoot right past the small sign at the sharp bend announcing the entrance to Stegall's Nursery and Plant Farm.



Ann Knudsen, the NICE! representative for Stegall's Nursery, and I met the owner, Jim, on a showery day to talk about his nursery.



Jim's a happy guy who loves to talk about his nursery endeavors, so my solid four questions got waylaid in the conversation, but Ann and I learned a lot about art restoration and the pitfalls of the production nursery trade.

Jim was first an artist (still teaches painting twice a week), then became a nurseryman. At one time he restored old masters' paintings but gave it up because the chemicals used were dangerous carcinogens.

He has been in the nursery business twenty years and came to native plants in a sideways fashion. Jim's first incarnation as a nurseryman was in the annual trade. He raised and sold annuals to one of the larger retailers of plants. That did not last long when he learned the retailer would refuse to buy the plants grown especially for that retailer. His second incarnation was the result of a fortuitous encounter with a Monrovia nursery representative who introduced him to the head groundskeeper at Shady Valley Country Club. Jim began selling his annuals to Shady Valley and, by word of mouth, soon had 25 country club customers. Jim's third incarnation was as a perennial grower and seller. Jim and his staff of four became expert at growing perennials from tip cuttings. This allowed the nursery to sell perennials at a lower price than would have been possible had

He bought and resold perennials from other growers. Jim's current incarnation is as a native plant grower who produces natives from seed purchased from Native American Seeds. He allows that there is a learning curve because seeds require different treatments to germinate. His hope is to produce enough mature native plants that his staff can begin harvesting tips and rooting them, "something they are really good at." Native butterfly weed has captured his imagination for this project.



Besides being both a producer and a grower, Jim says that his nursery is unique in that he is always looking for the unusual among landscape-worthy native plants. Two examples of this are a red-flowered crossvine and a yellow standing cypress.

Jim thinks of himself as an ethical nurseryman, not one in the business to make money at the customer's expense. As an example, he told the story of a person who brought in a native landscape plan hoping to buy the plants from him. After looking at the plan, Jim suggested that he redesign it because it had too many plants for the allotted space, and water-needy plants were mixed in with dry-soil natives. The nursery lost that sale.

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## Nice! Nurseries — Fourth in a Series continued from page 3

A good plan for visiting Stegall's is to go often since Jim's experiments with Texas native should result in a new experience each time you go.

### *Tim's Landscaping*

The polar opposite of loquacious Jim is reticent Tim of Tim's Landscape and Garden Center on the west side of Fort Worth near Benbrook. Tim sent store manager Janet Riley to speak to me, well armed with information.



The exact location of the nursery is 7321 West Vickery. You may not know you are there until you pass it because the very large tool barn sits at the front of the property. As you drive the lane to the store, you view a lovely pond and stream. It was being visited by butterflies and dragonflies on my visit.

Me: Why did Tim's Landscape become a NICE! nursery?

Janet: Tim liked the philosophy and people involved. Tim's Landscape is a Certified Wildlife Habitat [and native plants are a required factor of that certification.] Native plants are the first words that describe the garden center.

Me: What is unique about Tim's Landscape?

Janet: Tim wants to give the customer the experience of shop-



ping in a park. Most of the time, it is quiet, with a pond and grassy areas and trees. The plants you buy are in their natural setting. Tim's Landscape specializes in native plants that you cannot buy in other types of nurseries. Tim's is a full-service nursery that offers landscape design and installation. The staff is knowledgeable and has been trained in organic methods by Lucy Harrell.



I asked about the best sellers among the native plants. They are the usual suspects that have appeared before in this series and bear repeating again: rock rose, turk's cap, blackfoot daisy, and eupatorium. Janet noted that followers of Lucy Harrell also call for skeleton-leaf goldeneye, but she is leery of it because of its growing zone. (I checked with Gailon Hardin on this because skeleton-leaf goldeneye is part of the landscape design at the demonstration garden at Southwest Sub-court house. Gailon says that,

as a plant of the TransPecos area, it is adapted to extremes of temperature. However, she found that it will not tolerate poor drainage. The plants in the higher spots there have survived while those farther down that received runoff water have died out.)

Of particular interest to me was the statement that the NICE! signage drew customers to the Texas native plants.

When asked about the choices Tim's Landscape had from their suppliers, Janet thought the spectrum had been steady over the years with some new plants offered periodically. But the nursery ran into the problem of getting some very desirable plants such as rusty blackhaw viburnum because of the difficulty in getting the plant to survive to sell beyond the one-gallon size. (So, dear reader, expect to get rusty blackhaw viburnum in a one-gallon size from your native plant nursery if you can get it at all.)

You can follow Tim's Landscape on Facebook. Many comments stated that Tim's is a treasure in Benbrook because of the plants offered.



This ends the series on NICE! nurseries. My hope is that your interest has been engaged and that you will visit a NICE! nursery to support their efforts in offering Texas native plants.

## What I Learned about Water Barrels: A Saga Dawn Hancock

Remember last summer? Surely you remember last summer. Last summer pushed me over the edge. I had been mouthing for months about building rain barrels, had gotten information from the Internet and other sources, had even seen one made. Yet I dithered. Then came last summer. The hell-strip was still hanging in there but close to the house are Texas natives (mostly east Texas plants) that needed more water, and my only water source was the municipal water supply (read dollars). So, taking advantage of the house painting going on at the time, I ripped all the nandina from the west side of the house — and good riddance to them all. This made room for five water barrels.

Tom and I then hied ourselves off to the local feed store and bought four barrels. These are the ugly blue food grade plastic type with a spring-clamped lid. Then it was off to the local home supply for



the hardware. Tom, being the handy-dandy type, had the barrels whipped together in no time. To be sure the barrels were actually going to fit the space we hauled them to the west side of the house and sure enough the four fit very comfortably with room for at least one more. And that is when the trouble began.

Across the street viewing our congratulations was the Code Compliance officer for our neighborhood. She hops from her duly identified municipal vehicle, bears down on us like an avenging angel, and says, “I saw those, and I said to myself those just cannot stand.”

I, perplexed and thinking the awful color offended her, replied, “But we are going to paint them. We don’t intend to leave them this color.”

“Oh, no. It’s not the color. You cannot have storage barrels,” the officer replies.

“Not even to catch rain water?” says I.

“What if we put them in the

back yard where they cannot be seen from the street,” says hubby.

“No, you cannot have storage barrels anywhere on your property,” came the answer. “Just to be sure, I will check with my supervisor.” After calling him, the answer was still no.

Gut check time. We have spent this money and time to make these barrels and we cannot use them? That is when I decided my best friend was going to be my city councilman, Danny Scarth.

I wrote to him via email explaining the situation and throwing in facts about water usage for horticulture and the amount of water North Central Texas could expect from rains in a good year. Plus I added statistics concerning the amount of water that can be harvested from an average-sized roof from just one-tenth of an inch of rain. And then I told him that some part of Texas is usually in a drought according to the historical record. I was on a roll.

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## What I Learned about Water Barrels continued from page 5

Good ol' Danny. He replied immediately, saying he thought that City Council had already addressed this issue to allow for collecting rain water. He must also have forwarded my email to others in the downtown governmental machinery because I also got emails from the head of Code Compliance saying yes, rain barrels are okay, but you have to have screens on the downspouts, you must use

opaque barrels (to deter algae growth), and you need a diverter.

A diverter? A diverter, it turns out, is a device that diverts (thus the name) the first flush of water from the roof and then allows the remainder to fill the barrel. This device, according to Dotty Woodson, specialist for water conservation with Texas AgriLIFE, is required for very large roofs of commercial type buildings, not homes (especially one like my 1950s subdivision tiny home).

Apparently, she got Danny's message too because she got in touch with me wanting to know what the heck was going on. She also informed me that state law allows for the harvesting of water from roofs, and the only requirement that home owners' associations can make involves the placement of the barrels. They



may say the barrels have to be within a fenced back yard.

I decided I needed to know more. Fort Worth maintains a pretty good Web site in my opinion. I accessed the codes and found that the neighborhood codes say nothing with regard to harvesting rain water. This could explain why my city code compliance officer thought that barrels of any kind were prohibited. So where were the codes on harvesting rain water? Under the plumbing codes, of course. The plumbing codes are extensive and exact, but for our simple little project all that is required is: (1) a screened gutter to catch debris; (2) a lidded barrel; (3) screening on the inlet to the barrel to keep out mosquitoes (and on the overflow spout); and (4) an opaque barrel to deter algae growth.

So, we were home free. Had all the required elements. Time to buy the last four barrels, paint them, have the roofing guy install more guttering and downspouts, and install the barrels. Done and done. During the second big rain of spring all barrels were filled, giving us four hundred gallons of water for summer. Five barrels on the west side of the house and three on the east side of the house. Self-satisfied smile.

The take-home lessons here are know your city codes for rain water harvesting and know your councilman.

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way to revegetate the severely damaged soil. But the qualities that made it useful then make it an increasing problem now. Both *B. halimifolia* and *B. neglecta* have become aggressive invaders of rangeland and disturbed sites from the Blackland Prairie to South Texas, and in other western states as well, so plant them - or any seep willow - intentionally only with great caution, if at all. They spread fast, quickly overtaking forage plants, and their deep roots use up a disproportionate amount of water. They are also very flammable. (A&M Texas Native Plants Database)

So even though it was the right bed, I still didn't want it. What an interesting tidbit of American history as well as useful botanical advice. Great advice, in person or via a picture on the internet — use it!

**Next Meeting**  
 Thursday, May 3  
 7:00 pm  
 Fort Worth  
 Botanic Gardens

**Remarkable Plants  
 of Texas**

**Matt Turner**

Visit us on the Web  
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[www.txnativeplants.org](http://www.txnativeplants.org)

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Native Plant Society of Texas  
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