

Native Plant Society of Texas
Big Bend Chapter
April 2008 Newsletter

All Aboard for El Paso -

Whoops! So far we have barely a car load for this fun trip. Yes, it's a whole day - but what a day. Treat yourself to a great garden that comes with expert interpretation, the company of other native plant folk and lunch in one of El Paso's "real" restaurants (locally owned and operated.)

Call Alice today - 837-1117 - to reserve a space - or spaces - this is a great economical way to have a day out with friends and sig. o's! Carpool will leave One Way on Saturday at 9 a.m. and will leave the Town & Country in Marfa at 9:30. The group will arrive at Ardovino's Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria near the UTEP campus at 11:30 (El Paso time). After lunch, all head to the UTEP campus, its interesting Bhutanese architecture a feature in itself, and the Museum Gardens.

Garden tour from 1 to 3 p.m. and then head home, arriving Marfa around 7:30 and Alpine around 8 p.m. Quick reminder to reimburse your driver for your share of gas!

Here's a link to the Ardovino's Web site so you can check out what you'd like for lunch. We'll be at the Cincinnati Ave. location. <http://www.ardovinospizza.com/> We'll have specific directions at One Way for the drivers.

May 3 meeting - Red Rock Ranch -

Just a few miles outside of Van Horn, Darice McVey's Red Rock Ranch offers a unique glimpse of Chihuahuan Desert geology and botany - wind carved rock, canyons and rich plant and animal life. The ranch contains one of the few sites in North America where you can view naturally exposed Precambrian Sandstone dating back billions of years. Native plants and wildlife combine with an original 1880 homestead and a working talc mine to make Red Rock Ranch a one-of-a-kind experience.

And for the tourist in each of us, there are movie sets constructed for the filming of Lonesome Dove, Dead Man's Walk and Blue Sky.

This is a half day driving tour - with stops to get out. We'll car pool, leaving Alpine at 9 a.m., back by 4 p.m. BYO sack lunch as well as water, hats, etc. and cameras.

\$20 per person members, \$25 per person non-members. There is no maximum, but the ranch has one high clearance vehicle, and we'll need other high clearance vehicles for each 5 or 6 people.

We'll have the sign up at One Way by April 21.

Gardening Opportunities -

* --Thanks to member Megan Wilde for the following which is just in time for the first booms of spring: "Here's a citizen science project that might be of interest to Master Naturalists and Native Plant Society members" http://www.windows.ucar.edu/citizen_science/budburst/index.html

From a Discovery News article about the project: "Climate scientists are now enlisting gardeners, students and any willing plant or flower lovers to watch for changing timing of spring blooms.

Project BudBurst allows people to enter their backyard spring leaf budding and bloom data into an online database that will help track the changing blooming times of specific types of plants.

Since plants are sensitive to temperature, the data will help track the advance of spring, which has been coming earlier in many places throughout North America. The project also collects historical plant data from gardeners who keep journals and have data from years past.

"This data is fed right into the National Phenology Network," said the project's coordinator, Sandra Henderson of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR)."

* -- And from Master Naturalist Leslie Hopper

"Last year, the Community Center had a small garden plot which reaped great harvests of beans, squash and curiosity. The kids loved it!

We've been working out some of the details related to expanding the garden and would like to invite anyone interested in gardening locally (especially those with interest/experience and willing to work alongside kids at the Community Center with knowledge about plants, cultivation, biology, ecology, hydrology, etc.).

The group meets (typically) on Thursdays around 5:15 at the Community Center on Gallego Avenue".

Contact Leslie with questions or for more information or to check on meeting times: office, 432-837-8393 or cell, 432-386-2530

* -- And at 7 p.m. Friday, April 4, organic gardeners Mark Foster and Debbie Tout will present a program on organic fruit and vegetable growing in the Big Bend area in the Front Street Books Reading Room (201 E. Holland).

And the next day, Saturday, 2 - 4 p.m., participants may tour the Foster-Tout garden for a helpful on-site demonstration and discussion.

Rainwater Harvesting -

From former member Mike Mecke, a list of some rainwater harvesting sites that you can go see in and near the Tri-counties. Mike also included an exhaustive list of Web sites and books and other rainwater harvesting info. If you'd like the whole list, please e-mail me and I'll send it on. For now, here's what you can see to inspire you:

- 500 Gal. Native Landscape tank at Palette Art Club, 907 W. Wadley, Midland
- 3,000 Gal. tank @ Odessa Recycle Center, 817 W. 42nd: drip system Landscape Exhibit
- 4-H Building Ward Co, Monahans. 2,500 gal. tank for landscape irrigation and educational uses
- Ft. Stockton Chamber of Commerce, Dickenson @ Main Ave. Metal tank - patio plants. Other private examples around town also - contact Garden Club.
- Grey Mule Saloon Building, Fort Stockton, TX (east side, rear). Metal tank for plants.
- Sanderson, Terrell County Fair Building, Hackberry St. @ 4th St. Garden beds.
- Alpine Library - rain barrels on front & rear of building - 110 gals each - patio plants
- Jeff Davis Underground Water District Office, Ft. Davis- rain barrel in front - porch plants
- Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, Ft. Davis, TX - two large cisterns on Visitor Center and a large commercial wildlife guzzler in pasture. Used on native plant gardens.
- 20,000 Gal. Storm water Capture System, McDonald Observatory, Ft. Davis. Fire fighting water
- Culberson County Courthouse, Van Horn, TX - 3,000 gal. tank on rear of courthouse to drip irrigate native plant garden on north side of courthouse.
- Hudspeth County Extension Office, 1 block north courthouse. Tank: drip irrigate native plant garden.
- 2,500 Gal. Tank @ TAMU Experiment Station, El Paso. I-10 @ Americas -native landscape irrigation

Newsletter contributions -

Thanks to those who already have and encouragement to those who might like to submit articles and information for the newsletter. Please send items to me at bigbendwoman@sbcglobal.net.