

Native Plant Society of Texas
Big Bend Chapter
January 2009 Newsletter
2009 Programs

January 24 - Arbor Day Celebration

10 a.m. - 12 noon. Alpine Montessori School, 103 W. Del Rio, Alpine.

In the Trans-Pecos, late fall and winter are the traditional times to plant trees. So prepare with Oscar Mestas, Regional Urban Forester with the Texas Forest Service, and his two-part program for Alpine's Arbor Day.

The first hour will be for adults. We'll look at common misconceptions about how trees grow, how to plant a tree and discuss species appropriate to our region.

The second hour we will be joined by the Montessori school children for a hands-on show-and-tell program which will wrap up with planting a tree on the school grounds.

February 12 - Climate and the Big Bend

Hear Cathy Hoyt, Director of the Chihuahuan Desert Research Center, explain our weather and how it changes and has changed over the years. And we'll see what's in store for the future. Learn to understand and enjoy our crazy weather and how it impacts our gardens. 7 p.m., Room 300 Lawrence Hall on the Sul Ross Campus, Alpine.

March 28 - Landscaping with the Desert

10 a.m. - 12 noon, Capri Events Center Hwy 90 west in Marfa, across from the Thunderbird Hotel. Landscape Architect Christy Ten Eyck, of Phoenix and Austin will walk us through the design process on site. The Capri showcases some great examples of eco-design, including a creative rainwater collection system, a vertical plant-wall and an impressive array of native plants.

April 17 - Mountain States, a glass of wine and thou -

5:30 p.m. at One Way with Dan Goodspeed from Mountain States (the fabulous native nursery from which local plant purveyors get our native plants) doing a brief talk on new native plant introductions to the retail market for 2009.

Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served and a large selection of new native plants will be available for purchase. Bring questions and your check book!

May 16 - Use Your Land - but Keep It Wild!

10 a.m. - 12 noon, O'Donnell/Herrman residence. Laurie Meadows, soil conservation technician with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, talks about controlling invasives in your landscape.

Members Margaret O'Donnell and Rick Herrman have recently build a house in the middle of 20 acres of Marfa Plateau grassland in the Mano Prieto subdivision between Fort Davis and Marfa.

Find out what they've done to successfully encourage the grasses in their landscape and what more they have to do.

Discussions will include recognizing and managing invasive species as well as developing a conservation plan for your home that will preserve the native environment.

June 27 - Thorny Issues and Spiny Perspectives

10 a.m. -12 noon. Sul Ross Lecture Hall TBD:

There are many "spiny" issues when it comes to cactus conservation and Dr. Martin Terry will share with us the current international thinking about them. He is freshly returned from the June

2009 international scientific Congress in Prague, Czech Republic, entitled "Spiny Perspectives" where he was a keynote speaker. Dr. Terry is also one of the founders of the Cactus Conservation Institute. Formed in 2004 and dedicated to the study and preservation of vulnerable cacti in their natural range - starting with peyote and star cactus. (see <http://www.cactusconservation.org>)

NO MEETINGS JULY AND AUGUST

September 12 - Botanizing on the Miller Ranch, Valentine

L.C. Hinckley was a renowned botanist and chairman of the Department of Biology at Sul Ross for many years. Between 1941 and 1947 he studied the vegetation of the Clay Espy Miller Ranch in the Sierra Vieja Mountain Range and produced a plant list.

Hinckley has been honored by having many West Texas plant species named for him. The Mountain Range that parallels the Rio Grande has four deeply eroded canyons and on the north and east contains pinion juniper woodlands and good grasslands where the western sides consist largely of desert scrub. There is a permanent stream in ZH Canyon with riparian vegetation.

Patty Manning will guide our field trip and teach plant identification using the Hinckley report as a tool.

The cutoff from Hwy. 90 to the ranch road is $\frac{3}{4}$ mile past Valentine, just before the Prada building. We will carpool for 11 miles on dirt road, following the fence over two cattle guards and through the Chilicote Gate. Bring a lunch to eat after we climb to the spring. Carpool from Alpine, Marfa and Fort Davis, times TBA.

October 17 - Combining Natives and Exotics in the Landscape

10 a.m. - 12 noon. New Marathon Gardens, E. South 1st Street, Marathon TX

Whether public spaces or private places, gardens have many elements in common - each is like a dwelling with a series of spaces devoted to specific purposes and enclosed to varying degrees and in various ways by "floors", "walls" and "ceilings".

Landscape Architect, Pollyanne Melton, will lead a tour of the Gage Gardens, discussing how the design of that semi-public, semi-exotic garden relates to our own native plant gardens.

We'll also take a look at the vegetable gardens being developed by the Gage and the Fabulous Burro Bar and discuss their contribution to the Marathon landscape. Lunch will follow at the Burro.

November 13 - Wine Making from Cactus Fruit, Agarita Berries and, yes, Grapes

5:30 - 7 p.m. A Social and More! Luz de Estrella wine maker Pat Johnson welcomes us to the Luz de Estrella Winery near Marfa. Pat will explain how to make wine out of just about any fruit.

There'll be wine tasting and light food.

The Winery is located on the south side of Hwy. 90, about half-way between the Marfa Lights Viewing Area and Marfa.

NO DECEMBER MEETING

While every effort is made to adhere to announced schedules, meetings are subject to change.

VOLUNTEER - It's time for election of new officers in the Big Bend Chapter. Leading the chapter is fun. You learn a lot and meet a lot of people. And it's important work, especially as we endeavor to preserve the plants, animals, water and environment that makes the Big Bend the unique place it is. Step up! Step out! Call Polly Melton and volunteer. We'll have an election when we have a new slate of officers.

Use your special gifts to make our chapter even better!