

Collin County Chapter NPSOT News



Volume 1, Issue 2

Native Plant Society of Texas

October 2008

From the President

From Here to There, a Collaborative Journey with Native Plants...

When Sally Wasowski drove up to our home in Lucas for a one hour consultation (that lasted 3 hours), I had no idea that I would soon join NPSOT, work with municipalities to promote native landscapes, and eventually serve as a chapter leader. That visit was in 1994. Nor did I envision that my "creative side" would translate into leaving the routine that was comfortable in the telecommunications world to begin the thrill ride that is inherent in self-employment.

And yes, native Texas plants have been a focus and enduring theme through these 15 years. The excitement I felt from implementing that first design sketch full of Mexican Buckeyes, Flameleaf Sumacs, and Zexmenia has lasted through to see the formation of "Friendly Natives" in Collin County, and on to the opening of a great little nursery by the same name in Fredericksburg. Sharing knowledge and always learning more about native plants is a passion that allows me to truly enjoy what I do. It's a long way to go from asking Sally "How do you spell Zexmenia" to asking a grower "Will you propagate some Texas Green Eyes for me if I have the seeds". It has been a joy to know this group of folks in the Collin County Chapter.

I hope you enjoy your journey!

MATT

Oct. 7 Program

Jason Singhurst, TPWD
(Texas Parks and Wildlife Department)
Topic: Rare Plants of Texas

Carol Feldman, NPSOT
(Native Plant Society of Texas)
Topic: NPSOT organization and Symposium

Plan to attend the Oct. 7 meeting to hear Jason Singhurst, an expert on rare and endangered plants, discuss rare plants of northcentral and northeast Texas. Carol Feldman, president of NPSOT, will speak for 5-10 minutes about the state organization and the upcoming symposium.

Jason received a B.S. in Agricultural Science and M.S. in Agricultural Science from Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas. He has conducted field-oriented research on the vegetation ecology of the West Gulf Coastal Plain for the past 14 years.

His expertise includes natural areas inventory, plant community ecology, plant taxonomy, land management, and field surveys in eastern Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Kansas. He has served as a botanist/ecologist in Texas for the past 13 years for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

He has described two plant species new to science that are endemic (restricted) to Texas. Jason has in-depth experience with vegetation mapping, aerial photo-interpretation, descriptive vegetation classification, and natural resource surveys on public and private lands. He has extensive field knowledge and experience with rare plant species in Texas.

He has published over 40 scientific publications and in 2008 co-authored a book on Rare Plants of Texas.

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Monthly Meetings

January – October at the Heard
The Heard Natural Science Museum (Laughlin
Hall)

1 Nature Place; McKinney, TX
www.heardmuseum.org (972) 562-5566

7:00 p.m. – Doors open

7:30 p.m. – Program starts

After program – Short business meeting

Oct. 7: Rare Plants of Texas

Jason Singhurst, TPWD

Nov. 8: Annual Potluck Dinner

Jim & Linda Smittle's house
798 Highland Court
Allen, TX (972) 562-7356

December: No meeting in December

January: No meeting in January, 2009

Feb. 3: Big Thicket Update

Comments from chapter members who attended
the annual state symposium.

Members and guests are always welcome to
attend our monthly meetings. There is no
admission charge.

Information is available on our web site:
<http://www.npsot.org/CollinCounty/>

Go Wild in the Big Thicket

Annual Symposium: Oct. 16-19

By Betsy Farris

NPSOT holds an annual symposium in a different
geographical location of Texas every year. This year's
event is in the Big Thicket area. Over a dozen different
experts are speaking on specific topics and 20 structured
and self-guided field trips are available.

Additional information – including registration forms are
posted on

<http://www.npsot.org/symposium2008/index.html>

These symposiums showcase a different botanical and
geographical location of Texas. Field trips allow the
opportunity to access private property, preserves or other
sensitive areas not accessible to the general public. This
year's tours include forest, prairies, deserts, marshes,
canyon land, Pitcher plant trail, Larson Creek, canoeing,
pontoon boat rides, and a mushroom foray.

Texas is so vast, there are around 10 different areas that
the symposium can be held including Blackland Prairie,
Piney Woods, Trans Pecos, Panhandle Plains, Gulf Coast,
Grass Lands, Cross Timbers to name a few. Historically at
10 year intervals the symposium is held in Denton where
NPSOT started. The symposium will be held in 2010 in
Denton to mark the 30th anniversary of NPSOT. The Collin
County chapter will be a part of planning, implementing and
staffing that symposium.

The 2008 symposium cost is \$195 and includes meals. The
event will be headquartered in Beaumont at the Holiday Inn
Beaumont Plaza (3950 I-10 South & Walden Road).
For reservations, call (409) 842-5995 or (888) 465-
4329.

Annual Potluck Dinner: Nov. 8

Plan to attend our annual potluck dinner:

Jim & Linda Smittle.
798 Highland Court
Allen, TX 75002
(972) 562-7356

6:00 p.m. – Tour of our natives

7:00 p.m. – Dinner

Bring some delicious food. Drinks, plates, & plastic ware will be provided by the chapter.

Directions from Central Expressway North 75:

Go East on Stacy Road (2786) for 3.3 miles.

When Stacy Road ends, turn right (South) onto Country Club Road (1378).

Continue on Country Club for about .6 mile, then turn right (South) onto Rock Ridge.

Continue on Rock Ridge for about .7 mile. Then go straight onto E Exchange Parkway.

Turn first right (in .2 miles) onto Highland Court.

Our house is the two story house at the end of the street on the right.

2008 OFFICERS

President: Matt Kolodzie

Vice President: Betsy Farris

Program: Bill & Fran Woodfin

Secretary: Jim Smittle

Treasurer: Betsy Farris

2009 OFFICERS

President: Bill Woodfin

wwoodfin@dfwair.net

Vice President: Rodney Thomas

rook.thomas@yahoo.com

Program: Bill & Fran Woodfin

wwoodfin@dfwair.net

Secretary: Jim Smittle

jim@smittle.com

Treasurer: Betsy Farris

visiting sisters@yahoo.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Newsletter: Linda Smittle

(linda@smittle.com)

Web Master: Dolores Williams

(quiltingpony@hotmail.com)

Questions? Contact 214-693-0103.

Our Updated Web Site

<http://www.npsot.org/CollinCounty/>

Hi. My name is Dolores Williams and I am the new webmaster for our Chapter.

I am having a lot of fun 'playing' around with the site trying to make it useful to members and visitors alike.

I post meeting information so you will always know what to expect from our speakers each month.

The chapter has just restarted publishing a newsletter and I have put it on its own web page. Check it out.

Since I am still new at working this web page, there is a chance I can make mistakes. If you notice a 'dead' page or a link that is wrong, or just wrong information, please let me know.

Dolores Williams

quiltingpony@hotmail.com

Email Notifications

If you would like to receive email notification about our meetings and items of interest or if you need to update your email address, please contact Jim Smittle at jim@smittle.com.

Notes from Chalk Hill: Trees

By Bill Woodfin

If Senators Dodd and Schumer were "stunned" when they heard Paulson's and Bernanke's assessment of the depth of the credit crisis, I was "stunned" (on an infinitely smaller scale) when I recently read that "plants actually grow faster than is recognized." Roy Strong included the observation in "Creating Small Gardens" and maintains that "a photographic record will prove the point."

I'm hoping that he is right. I might not make it to 96 which is the lifespan I thought I was going to need to see the mostly 5-20 gallon container trees that Fran and I have planted over the last 6 years reach heights that provide shade for horse and rider.

My observation has been that the chinquapin oaks are particularly slow to get going. They sit for 3 or 4 years and seem not to grow a foot. The red oaks may grow a little faster, the bur oaks faster still and the cedar elms the fastest of the hardwoods on our farm. The eastern red cedars grow at least as fast as the cedar elms.

If Strong is right (and he might be because most of our trees have had to contend with the droughts of 2005, 2006 and 2008) then I'm slacking off on some of my efforts for a healthy lifestyle. I will swim fewer laps, forget the barbells and re-patronize the bakeshops. On the other hand, perhaps I had better hew to some kind of healthy regimen because I may need another 30 years with plants to learn much about them.

Fall Plant Sale Needs Volunteers

Oct 9-12

The Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary needs volunteers for their Fall Plant Sale.

You don't have to be a plant expert to help. You just need to be friendly and willing to help as needed.

Volunteers are needed:

Thursday, Oct. 9 (9 a.m. – 5 p.m.) – Setup
Friday, Oct. 10 (4 p.m. – 7 p.m.) – Member only sale
Saturday, Oct. 11 (9 a.m. – 5 p.m.) – Sale
Sunday, Oct. 12 (1 p.m. – 5 p.m.) – Sale

If you can lend a hand, contact Schelly Corry, Heard, Education Coordinator, at 972-562-5566 x227 or scorry@heardmuseum.org.

If you cannot volunteer during those times, you can still help – by purchasing some great plants during the sale.

Native Plant Society of Texas

A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that promotes research, conservation and utilization of native plants and plant habitats of Texas through education, outreach and example.

NPSOT State Board Meetings:

NPSOT board meetings are held quarterly - in January, April, July, and October. Members are welcome to attend. The October 18 meeting will be held at the Beaumont Holiday Inn.

These are held 4 times per year: January, April, July and October. With the April meeting, there is an attempt to hold it where the upcoming symposium is to be held. This is an opportunity to have a walkthrough of the facility, logistics and other events at a high level. The October board meeting is always held during the symposium. The January and July board meetings are held in Fredericksburg, the location of the state office. All chapters are urged to have a representative at the board meetings. I urge the members of the Collin County chapter to attend a board meeting. It is very informative and is a chance to see vital NPSOT is in changing how Texas views its native plants and conveying how important it is to preserve them.

Betsy Farris

Why Natives? Why NOT?

By Rodney Thomas, 2009 Vice President

When I was first asked to write on this topic, my thoughts were, "Why **not** natives?" Then I remember all the negative points of views I would hear from my friends and family. "They are not pretty. Why do you want to grow a bunch of weeds? They look so wild and unkempt." So forth and so forth, I am sure you have heard this too. Why do some of us have this passion for natives? The reason I find come from so many different levels.

Purist. I have a passion for birding. I discovered long ago, if one wants to find the greatest diversity of birds, one must find a diverse habitat full of native plants. Bradford Pears, Red Tip Photinias and crape myrtles just do not cut it, unless you like House Sparrows. At a young age, I developed a deep appreciation of a native environment and the interactions between native plants and animals; how one cannot exist without the other. Native plants are the cornerstone of healthy ecosystem.

Conservation. In long hot Texas summers, upwards to fifty percent of our water usage is to keep our mono-turf lawns green, not to mention the fertilizer, chemicals and the use of lawn equipment. This is a semi-arid region, which does not have the water supply for our growing population to waste on ever expanding lawns. Native plant landscapes, along with rainwater harvesting and/or rain gardens could reduce water consumption by as much as fifty percent and decrease the use of chemicals and fertilizer. Native plants conserve our environment.

Nostalgia. Do you ever wonder what it would be like to see this landscape 175 years ago? To top the crest of the hill, the tallgrass prairie swaying in the breeze, painted with palate of color, stretched to the horizon, dotted with buffalo and elk. Matt White's book "*Prairie Time*" give you a sense of the Texas blackland prairie botanical heritage, lost over time. This was my inspiration for joining Native Plant Society of Texas. Native plants give us the connection to natural history now lost.

Scientific. As a pharmacist, I know twenty-five percent of our drugs come from native plants. In plowing up, cutting down or paving over, I can only wonder what drugs have been lost. The cure for cancers, HIV, MRSA/VRE, diabetes, etc. could have been growing just over the next hill, but we will never know. Native plants could save lives.

As you read this, I sure you can think of your own reasons that drives the passion for native plant that we all share. The seed of passion lies in all of us – how do we make it grow? How can we show the virtues of a "weed", to make people want to grow it in their front yard? This is our challenge, to change the question, "Why natives?" to "Why not Natives?"

Rodney Thomas

