

# 2010 NPSOT Wildscape Workshop Garden Tours

## Overview

This year's garden tour for the NPSOT Wildscape Workshop will feature three beautiful and diverse properties, one each to the North, East and West sides of the town of Fredericksburg. Each of the owners has taken a different path on three varying sized landscapes to express their vision of what pleases their eye and moves their spirit. All have used a well chosen mixture of native and adaptive plants as well as extensive rockwork.

Workshop attendees will have the opportunity, not only to observe first hand, but also to ask questions of the owners about how they have developed the sustainability practices for their particular gardens, grasses and trees. All three landscapes have been made highly attractive to a variety of small animals, birds, butterflies, bees and insect beneficials with considerable effort to provide them food, water, shelter and space. The concept here is also that the landscape or wildscape, once established, will sustain itself without an irrigation system and with minimal watering. Plant selection has created gardens where something is always blooming...a butterfly and hummingbird magnet. Texas natives are drought tolerant and somewhat resistant to deer (and in some cases dogs).

## The Hillside Gardens

This landscape has been carved into the face of a steep hill with beautiful stone hardscaped terraces which frame the colorful fall blooming plant beds, as well as the owner's stone hilltop residence. In the back of the house off the patio a raised bed behind the patio wall screens the hill which continues up behind the house. Gatherings of Texas mountain laurel, Russian sage, rosemary, native lantana, Gregg's mistflower and *Salvia greggii* provide a year-round evergreen background for the patio as well as a fall blooming paradise for many butterflies and hummingbirds. In answer to the drainage from the hill above, a large French drain is situated on the right side of the house to carry the water around and off the main property. Anchoring the landscape to the front right are several very beautiful giant Red Oaks.

## Deep in the Hidden Wildscape

The next property is a hidden wildscape starting at the road and moving back through the dappled shade trees in front of, around and behind the owners' beautiful stone residence. A dry creek bed carries the natural water flow from the front to the side of the house and then into a large rain pond. The rain pond also catches rainwater from adjacent properties and recharges the underground water flow which feeds a seep in a draw at the back of the property. The entrance to the main wildscape area is through a cedar fence gate leading to the back area which has been fenced at the lot line. Without deer there are dozens of native plant species—trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses and wildflowers. Near the rain garden is an enclosed vegetable garden with drip irrigation. Further back is the draw with the seasonal seep surrounded by shade plants, trees and vines on its banks. Nearby is the 'tree nursery', an area under the protection and shade of cedar trees, where birds continually drop seeds giving life to native seedlings like redbud, possumhaw holly, rusty blackhaw viburnum and black cherry. Closer to the house is the owner's work area where an extensive collection of plants has been propagated that waits to go into the landscape.

## Amongst The Giant Post Oaks

As one approaches the last property the first thing seen from the road are the giant Post Oak trees spotted throughout the open grass meadows around the beautiful single story stone house. There is also a large tank (water feature) in front of the house toward the road which attracts all sorts of birds... especially Redwing Blackbirds (which nest in the cat-tails), Herons/Egrets, etc. and also black dogs. The owners have planted understory trees, mostly of desert varieties (willows / acacias), and other young native oak species. Circling the residence is a myriad of "spiny stuff" in eight "dry beds" devoted to cactus, agaves, succulents, etc. The dry creek bed behind the main residence is functional...with Texas native plantings on either side. The east end plantings are also primarily Texas natives. And last, the north side plantings on the front side of the house are for shade/partial sun and include a lush blanket of buffalo grass.