



The Native Texas News

Publication of the Fredericksburg Chapter
Native Plant Society of Texas
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Volume 12, Issue 3

Upcoming Events:

- **June 30th at 7pm, Fbg. NPSOT Monthly Meeting: "Mushrooms of Texas"**
- **July 6th: Pioneer Garden Workday**
- **July 27th: Carter Smith, Exec. Dir. of TPWD speaks in Kerrville at TMN meeting**
- **July 28th at 7pm, Fbg. NPSOT Monthly Meeting: Program TBD**
- **August 21-23, Fbg. NPSOT Booth at the Gillespie County Fair**

June Program : "Mushrooms of Texas"

David Lewis, an avid mycologist from Newton County in East Texas, will give a presentation on "Mushrooms of Texas" on June 30 at the Gillespie County Historical Society Building, 312 West San Antonio Street in Fredericksburg beginning at 7:00PM. The program will be part of the regular monthly meeting of the Fredericksburg Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. The free program is open to the public.

Lewis, who spent his career as a chemist, has bachelor and masters degrees from Lamar University in Beaumont. Lewis' thesis was based on a study of East Texas mushrooms. He is a research associate with the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, where his 5,000 collections of fungi are housed. Lewis, an honorary staff member of the Tracy Herbarium at Texas A&M University, is currently serving as president of the Gulf States Mycological Society. Lewis has authored several papers on mushrooms and discovered many new species,



Photo by Sky Taylor

three of which have been named for him.

Lewis will give a general overview on mycology, common mushrooms and tips on how to identify major genera. As some mushrooms are tasty delicacies, while others can be deadly poisonous, Lewis' presentation will be useful in understanding the differences and cautions necessary to avoid serious harm.

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Wildflower Arranging Workshop Brings Smiles to Attendees

A big thanks to Maggie Livings for leading this wonderful workshop that taught attendees how to showcase native wildflowers in artful ways. They'll never need to buy those bouquets of carnations again. Also, kudos go to Pat McCormick for organizing the second in our series of Members Only classes.



Wildflower bouquets bring smiles to Phyllis Muska and Joyce Studer.



Carol Seminara, Lynn Sample, and Ann Little work intently on their wildflower creations.

Wildscapes Workshop Planning Well Underway by Peggy Benson

Committee members are busy making plans for the fourth annual Wildscapes Workshop and would like for you to know about it. Hopefully, you will plan to attend the event. Due to all of the changes in our economy and the water needs due to severe drought, this year's Workshop topics will address these issues.

Our first speaker will talk about how we can create a more sustainable landscape which will save money without sacrificing beauty. The second speaker will help us learn which native plants can be eaten or used for medicinal applications. The third speaker will bring us information about plants that attract pollinators to our yard and the ways that they are essential to us in addition to the bees that give us honey. The fourth speaker will encourage us to "Grow-It-Yourself" by showing us how we can mix edible plants into our landscape along with other plants or by putting some edibles in pots in a creative way and placing them on our patio. All topics are intended to help attendees become more aware of their surroundings and to teach them ways that they can become better stewards of their environment.

In addition to the presentations, there will be native and other drought tolerant plants for sale, books relating to the topics, a raffle/drawing benefit, and an exhibit area featuring additional information about the topics, with some handouts available. To top the day off, three beautifully landscaped gardens will be available for attendees to tour, demonstrating some of the techniques discussed at the Workshop. All of this, plus lunch and snacks, will be

**Saturday, September 12, 2009 - Save the Date
for the 4th Annual Wildscapes Workshop!**

included in the registration fee of \$30 for NPSOT members and \$35 for non-NPSOT members.

More information will be available at our meetings or by calling 830-997-9960. Soon, the information will be on the NPSOT website for you to read and to register for the event. Also, any of the following committee members would be happy to answer your questions about the Workshop schedule. Members are Mike Magnum, Carol Seminara, Pat McCormick, Jane Crone, Kathy Lyles, Karen Tanner, Julie Roseberry, Linda Metzler, Pat McConnell, Ward Miller, Beverly Allen, Lynn Sample, Jackie Huecksteadt, Lonnie Childs, John Benson, Bill Lindemann, and Peggy Benson.

The Wildscapes Workshop is NPSOT's main fundraising effort each year, netting approximately \$3000. This money allows the chapter to help beautify areas in the community and to do things within our chapter that might not otherwise be possible. We are counting on you to support this effort by passing the information about the Workshop to others, and, of course, we hope you will plan to take advantage of this opportunity and attend.

Peggy Benson
Wildscapes Workshop Chair

TPWD Leader to Speak in Kerrville

On Monday, July 27th, Carter Smith, Executive Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, will speak at a presentation in Kerrville hosted by the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists. Mr. Smith, who has been Executive Director of TPWD since December, 2007, will be discussing the progress being made at TPWD and provide an update on accomplishments in the recent session of the Texas Legislature. And finally he will talk about what is dear to his heart – conservation.

Carter Smith developed his passion for wildlife and the outdoors while roaming his family farm and ranch land interests in Gonzales, Williamson, and Edwards Counties. He has a Wildlife Management degree from Texas Tech University and a Master's degree in Conservation Biology from Yale University. His professional career began with TPWD as a management intern in 1992. Prior to his selection as TPWD Executive Director, Smith was with The Nature Conservancy of Texas, serving as State Director, where he led a team that protected nearly 250,000 acres while he was Director.

Who: Carter Smith
Executive Director of TPWD

When: Monday, July 27th at 7pm

Where: Upper Guadalupe River
Authority Lecture Hall
125 Lehmann Drive, Kerrville

**Sponsored by the Hill Country Chapter
of the Texas Master Naturalists**

The meeting is open to the public, so please plan on attending. This is an excellent opportunity to learn what the future holds for our state parks. See adjacent box for all the details. Mark your calendars!

Environmental Art Program Kicks-off

The Environmental Art Program began holding its first classes of the summer on June 15th under the guidance of Laura Ronstadt and Kent Rylander. According to Kent and Laura, "the focus of the program is to explore ways to direct children's artistic activities so as to enrich their experience with nature, specifically wildflowers." In the classes, children will develop skills at photographing and sketching wildflowers, modifying images using computer software, making prints, paper-making incorporating pressed wildflowers, and wildflower identification.

Volunteers Needed!

We are still looking for volunteers that would like to help with Sessions #2 and #3. The sessions run for 2 weeks - with classes lasting about 1.5 hours each day. You don't have to be at every class, and can volunteer for one day or multiple days on specific dates only. We know that you will have a fun time that will be enriching for both the children and you!

The remaining 2009 Summer Class schedule is as follows:

Session #2 Wk. of July 13th & 20th: Mon. - Fri. 1:00 - 3:00

Session #3 Wk. of August 3rd & 10th: Mon. - Fri. 1:00 - 3:00

All Classes are held at the Boys and Girls Club.



Photos from our 2008 pilot program.



Environmental Art!

If you have questions or to volunteer, contact Beverly Allen

997.8767

bevallen@austin.rr.com.

Recycle Those Black Pots!

Forever wondering what to do with those black plastic pots in which your nursery bought plants are grown? Well, some of them (generally it's the thin, flimsy ones) are actually recyclable, because they are made from high density polyethylene. Simply, turn those pots over and check to see if the bottom is imprinted with the "2 in a triangle" symbol which indicates that they are in fact recyclable. Throw them in your recycle bin, and take them to the City of Fredericksburg recycling center at 302 E. Ufer. Be a good eco-gardener!

Thanks to Kathy Lyles for this great tip.



Native Plant Quiz:

Source: "Remarkable Plants of Texas" by Matt Turner
Name the plant.

- 1) Native Americans prized me for their bows. I made good hedge rows before barbed wire. I'm the apple of any horse's eye.
- 2) My Spanish name referred to my "little sour" berries, but a little sugar makes me into a fine pie or jelly. I also make a fine yellow dye.
- 3) Texas bromeliads.

Answers: (1) Orange Osage; (2) Spanish or Ball Moss

Raffle, Raffle, Raffle! The Raffle Is On!

Please bring potted plants, books, and plant related gifts to donate to our monthly raffle.



Fredericksburg Chapter Meetings

Our Meetings are Free and Open to the Public

7:00 pm, The Last Tuesday Of The Month (January-October)

Gillespie County Historical Society Building

312 West San Antonio Street, Fredericksburg

Requiem for Oak Trees or How I Learned to Live with the Wilt

by Lonnie Childs



Photo by Ronald Billings

As I sit in my office viewing my desiccated landscape and pastures, pondering if I've actually passed on to the portion of Hell reserved for errant gardeners and would-be naturalists, I'll take a moment to honor the fallen - Live Oaks, Post Oaks, and yes, even some grand old Junipers who have succumbed to drought and pestilence over the past ten years. Between my current small ranch and the previous larger ones, I could not begin to count the many sylvan deaths I've experienced. In this last two year phase of our seemingly recurring drought, I can account for eight scraggly Live Oaks lost to Oak Wilt and six grand Post Oaks who expired quickly due to that ghastly affliction known as Hypoxylon Canker.

The demise of a motte of large Live Oaks across the river from me, no doubt centuries old, pained me even more, though they were not under my stewardship. I imagine that they had some stories to tell of the history that had transpired under their shade-bearing limbs. Since they've been cut, I drive by and the lingering memory in my mind's eye of their stately form is confused by the now blank spot in the landscape. Driving around the county and viewing areas heavily stricken by the wilt, with masses of gray, dead limbs, doesn't exactly cheer you up any either. The death phase of natural cycles always proves to be the most difficult to appreciate.

When we first experienced large losses of Post Oaks in 2000, my wife was nearly brought to tears. I sucked it up and played stoic, until I could better understand the phenomenon that confronted us. We had bought land to immerse ourselves in its beauty, and pestilence was robbing it from us without comprehension, or so it seemed. Through time, by reading, listening, and observing, I've come to the conclusion that Mother Nature is simply righting the imbalance that man created.

By most written accounts, prior to the arrival of Europeans, larger areas of grasslands blanketed our natural landscape with fewer trees. Stands of Post Oaks did inhabit the deep soils of the river and creek valleys - the location of Fredericksburg was partially chosen due to the abundance of Post Oaks for building cabins. Occasional groves of Live Oaks dotted the savannah, some growing to stately proportions. However, recurring wild fires restricted many trees, including Junipers, to riparian areas or rocky canyons. Grasses ruled the landscape, until we arrived and began to alter the landscape through the suppression of wild fires and overgrazing due to poor livestock management practices. Slowly

over the last century and a half, the terrain evolved from savannahs to scrubby brush-lands with a greater abundance of trees. We created a landscape rich in opportunity for tree fungi. They no longer had to travel great distances to propagate and thrive - their sylvan hosts were now everywhere! Oh, how *Ceratocystis fagacearum* (i.e. Oak Wilt fungi), must have rejoiced at the arrival of Europeans!

Back to my suppressed tears. By arriving at a better understanding of this natural cycle that is larger than my selfish need for natural beauty, my feigned stoicism, at least became reasoned stoicism. Oak Wilt and Canker serve Mother Nature as tools in cleaning the landscape. Over the years, I've progressed from being a tree-hugger to a grass-kisser, so now I imagine, perhaps naively, that there will now be more light and water for the grasses and forbs that have lost out in the last century - one habitat's loss is another habitat's gain.

Is there anything that we can or should do to combat the death of our trees? I've learned the hard and sometimes expensive way that you can never win a head to head battle with the grand old dame, but occasionally you add influence to Mother Nature's ways. I have trenched and done some pre-emptive treatment of Live Oaks in an effort to save the beautiful trees that surround and shade my house. Only the passage of time will reveal if the intravenous chemotherapy merits the expense and effort - kind of like the early days of treating cancer when we knew so little. But these are mostly just defensive measures anyway, and at best can have only limited success. Recognize that the natural cycles of Mother Nature hover as tsunamis to our miniscule efforts.

The best approach seems to be to accept your losses and move on to influencing the rejuvenation that always occurs after devastation to the landscape occurs. Probably if we do nothing, the smaller brushy species like Persimmon, Mesquite, or Juniper will succeed initially. You see this in much of the western US where species like Gambel's Oak have thrived after large scale fires removed the stands of evergreen forest. Methods like prescribed burning and re-seeding will promote the return of native grasslands, which could be reasonable and sustainable, depending on the landscape. Another feasible option is limited re-forestation through the planting of a more diverse selection of native trees such as Cedar Elm, species of the White Oak family (Chinquapins, Lacey, Mexican White, etc), and various under-story species. Whatever your approach, aiding Mother Nature in rejuvenating the land inspires and rejuvenates your own soul, and helps to heal the pain of feeling victim while your grand old friends pass from the landscape.

One other point, consult and utilize all the great resources that exist around us to aid you in your efforts. The Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) that we featured in our last newsletter is a great place to start. Buena Suerte.

Volunteer at the Pioneer Garden

Our Gillespie County Native Garden at the Pioneer Museum serves to showcase native plants to the thousands of visitors who annually visit the museum. However, it puts the burden on our NPSOT chapter to maintain the garden in tip top shape, which proves to be quite a challenge in this summer heat! Please consider joining Bill Lindemann and others for our monthly workdays, and/or help out with our need for extra watering this summer (see our ad below for "Summer Employment").



Pioneer Garden workdays are held the first Monday of each month, unless otherwise notified.

Work begins at 8:30am and lasts until about 10am. Enter through the gate on Milam St.

The next workday will be Monday, July 6th.

Classifieds - Help Wanted!!

Are you bored and looking for new and exciting opportunities to engage in meaningful, interesting work? Become a career volunteer! A dynamic, local non-profit organization engaged in the promotion and preservation of native plants and their habitats offers the following volunteer opportunities for your self advancement:

Hospitality Chairperson - Looking for individual(s) to take charge of arranging for coffee/beverages at the monthly chapter meetings. You don't have to buy the coffee, just help serve it! Need not be a coffee drinker. Instructions available.

Seed Ball Workshop Leader - Need an instructor type to lead the Seed Ball workshop to be held on August 4th in the home of Lynne and Pat Paul. This is a hands-on instructional workshop to train members in the construction of seed balls for propagating wildflowers. You'll be training an army of "Johnny Native Seeds"! Directions and materials will be supplied. Seedy types may apply.

NPSOT Booth Organizer - Seeking an organizer type to arrange for the setup and staffing of the our booth at the Gillespie County Fair on August 21st-23rd. Chapter will supply friendly and energetic shift workers to staff the booth. Excellent training available. Free admission to the Fair!

Summer Employment - Several workers required to help keep our Pioneer Garden watered during this drought period. Part-time, morning rotating shifts available. No experience required - we train you! Contact Bill Lindemann at 990-8917 for more info. or to volunteer.

All positions include the following benefits - fun, fellowship, and appreciation from your NPSOT chapter. References not required!

For more information or to apply, please contact Jane Crone at 990-9823.

Membership Baton Passes

The chapter would like to express thanks to Alice Hester for her past Board membership and for the new ground that she broke as Membership chairperson. Thanks Alice!

Please welcome Lynne Paul who will take over from Alice as a new member of our Board of Directors and who will also assume her responsibility for the membership function. Thanks Lynne for volunteering!

Your Fredericksburg NPSOT Chapter is a strong and active chapter thanks to the volunteer time that our members give!

Mark Your Calendars for the Gillespie County Fair on August 21-23!

Volunteer for a 2 hour shift to staff our NPSOT booth. It's great fun!

Look for a sign-up sheet at the July NPSOT meeting or for more information on-line.

Lost and Found

A gold hoop earring was found at the Corley residence after the May picnic. If you are missing an earring, contact Sharon Corley at 830) 669-2146.

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