



The Texas Sage

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter
Vol. 12 No. 3
March 2000

President's Corner . . .

At our last monthly meeting we were enlightened by Lee Wagstaff and three of his students. They presented the Falcon Prairie Project at North Richland Middle School. It is an enclosed courtyard containing short grass and tall grass prairies, a shade garden, a west Texas garden, a pond, stream, oxbow and bogs. Many of our chapter members saw this project on the fall garden tour. Now we have seen how they actually produced this large project.

From concept to eating live worms as a fundraiser, to current science and art class uses, they sure have worked hard. Thanks to Lee and his young 'staff' for fulfilling the education portion of our NPSOT mission statement.

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On the business side...

Surveys were handed out asking for the members' recommendations on speakers, subjects, tours and projects for this year.

Volunteers were asked for assistance on the North Richland Hills garden, the Granbury Road Subcourthouse and the Veterans Park Wildscape.

The chapter also voted unanimously to create a concept plan for the Tarrant County Lynn Ross Detention Center in Fort Worth. The county will make a

donation to the club for our services. The site measures 800 x 920 feet. If the plan is accepted, we will be assisting the county on detailed design, supervision of site preparation, planting and maintenance. I am meeting members on site to pool our creativity and knowledge for the presentation of a concept plan in March. This opportunity grew out of our success at the Granbury Road Subcourthouse.

'Till next time,
keep pushing natives!

- Glenn Nerwin

Do you have extra labels on your newsletter?

This box provides an explanation of extra labels that you may have on the back of your newsletter. For those of you who only have the usual address label, thank you for renewing your subscription...you can disregard the rest of this message.

If you have a label marked '**Final Notice**', this will be the last issue of *The Texas Sage* that you will receive. Our records indicate that you have not renewed your subscription. If our records are in error, please contact Jean Marie Smith at (817) 275-7469 to set us straight.

If you have a label marked '**We have a membership package for you**', there's an envelope with lots of native plant information being reserved for you by Carolyn Kohls. Please pick up your envelope at the March or April chapter meetings. Envelopes not picked up after the April meeting will be distributed to new members as they join our chapter. If you have questions, call Carolyn at (817) 481-4618.

- Debbie Fierros

A Moonlit Garden

[The following article has been reprinted
from the February 2000 issue of The Coneflower Courier,
the newsletter of the Collin County Chapter of the NPSOT]

For many of us our days are busy and the luxury of enjoying our gardens usually does not happen until the weekend or late in the evening. All those bright colors we carefully chose recede into the dusky shadows or close up tight for the night. There are many advantages to planning a garden that can be enjoyed in the evening as well as the day. At night I can't see the weeds, so I don't feel guilty and driven to labor. In summer the heat's intensity diminishes with the setting sun. Life itself seems to slow down. Breezes are usually gentler, allowing heady scents to permeate the air. A full moon will bathe the garden in pools of light, splashing shadows along the way. When darker cycles prevail, lanterns add to the glow. Many native plants enhance the moonlit garden with their silvery gray foliage and/or white, yellow or pale hued blooms that remain open throughout the evening. The soft flutter of night moths add elegance as they dance among these flowers, ensuring future generations. Thoughts flow with the soothing sounds of a gentle waterfall or drift across the depths of still water. Breathe deep your evening.

Natives for a Moonlit Garden:

Jimsonweed - *Datura wrightii*
Spotted Beebalm – *Monarda punctata*
Coneflower - *Echinacea purpurea* 'White Swan'
Prairie Larkspur – *Delphinium virescens*
White Mistflower - *Eupatorium wrightii*
Agave – Agave spp.
White Gaura - *Gaura lindheimeri*
Milfoil - *Achillea millefolium*
Barbara's Buttons – *Marshallia caespitosa*
Artemisia – *Artemisia ludoviciana*
Engelmann Primrose – *Oenothera engelmannii*
Apache Plume – *Fallugia paradoxa*
Yellow Evening Primrose–*Oenothera missouriensis*
Cenizo – *Leucophyllum frutescens*
Dalea – *D.formosa, D.bicolor, D.frutescens, D.greggi*
Heath Aster – *Aster ericoides*
Oakleaf Hydrangea – *Hydrangea quercifolia*
Kidneywood – *Eysenhardtia texana*
Yucca – *Y. pallida, Y. arkansana, Y. gloriosa*
Mexican Plum – *Prunus mexicana*
Common Mullein – *Vebascum thapsus*
Rain Lily – *Cooperia pedunculata*
Snow-on-the-Mountain – *Euphorbia marginata*
Wild Foxglove – *Penstemon cobaea*

By Lynda Strain

Treasurer's Report

by Jean-Marie Smith

Balance (1/24/00)	\$1,684.10
Deposits (newsletter subscriptions)	\$ 220.00
Expenditures (program, newsletter, room rental, bank fees)	[\$ 141.40]

Balance (2/21/00)	\$1,762.70

Woody Plants on CDROM

An educational CD was released late last year titled *Native and Naturalized Woody Plants of Austin and the Texas Hill Country, the Electronic Version*.

The CD was produced under the auspices of Green Screens to promote public awareness and a better understanding of the central Texas flora. The CD is based on a book of the same name, that was written by Brother Daniel Lynch C.S.C., but many new features have been added to the original printed guide.

The CD is an electronic guide to 142 trees, shrubs and woody vines of central Texas. It contains over 300 full-color images and illustrations and it has an illustrated glossary that depicts the meaning of botanical terms. The plant descriptions have hyper-links to the glossary, so if you don't

remember what a term means you just click on it to see the definition. The guide is indexed by both scientific and common names. And if you've always wondered how to pronounce the scientific names...check out the audio pronunciations on the CD.

Woody Plants can be purchased for \$24.95 plus shipping, handling and tax. A mail-in order form for the CD is available on the web site at <http://www.flash.net/~waittd>. (If you don't have internet access, call me at 249-3241 and I'll be glad to print you a copy.) A portion of all proceeds from the sale of the *Woody Plants* CD goes to the Brother Daniel Lynch Scholarship fund at Saint Edward's University in Austin.

-Debbie Fierros

Why Landscape with Native Plants?

Native Plants Save Energy

Native Plants are vigorous, hardy, and can survive local weather extremes in the area to which they are native. They require no additional irrigation or fertilization, and they are more resistant to pests and diseases.

Native Plants Stay Put

Native Plants rarely become invasive in their native range. The natural balance within the plant community keeps each species in check.

Native Plants Support the Ecosystem

Native plants provide food and shelter for wildlife such as birds and butterflies. They reduce erosion and runoff, and they help to enrich the soil.

Native Plants are Interesting

Native plants are not only interesting to look at because of their diversity of shape and texture, but they are interesting to study as well. Many have played an important part in history as a source of food, medicine, textiles and dyes. Native plants are a part of our local heritage.

In Memory of Mark Whitelaw

We are saddened to learn that Mark Whitelaw, a member of our chapter, passed away on Thursday, February 17.

Mark was a landscape engineer who specialized in native Texas landscapes and was the former editor of *The Texas Sage*. Memorials in Mark's name may be sent to
Fort Worth Botanic Garden,
3220 Botanic Garden Blvd.,
Fort Worth, Texas 76107.

A surprising fact:

**A lawnmower pollutes
as much in one hour
as driving an automobile
for 350 miles!**

From *Redesigning the American Lawn* by F. Herbert Bormann, Diana Balmori, Gordon T. Geballe, Yale University Press, 1993,

Bees – Friends, not Foes

Of the some 4500 to 5000 species of bees in the United States, most of us know only two of them well: the bumblebee and the honey bee – and have come to fear the possibility of knowing too

well a third, the Africanized honey bee. This subfamily (Apoidea) of the bee-wasp-ant family (Hymenoptera) is an interesting and diverse group of insects and most important in the pollination of flowering plants. There are social bees (such as the bumblebee and the honey bee) and solitary bees; there are mining bees, carpenter bees, mason bees, leaf-cutting bees, and parasitic bees. They have one thing in common: they provide pollen, or a mixture of pollen and nectar, for their young larvae, and therefore they are equipped to transport pollen from flower to flower on their feet in special pollen sacs or in their mouths. (The parasitic bee, *Psithyrus* sp., does so indirectly; It invades the bumblebee colony and lets the bumblebee adults furnish the food – to the detriment of their own larvae.)

Since its importation from the Old World about 1683, the honey bee (*Apis mellifera*) has become the most consistent pollinator of North American crops, many of which like alfalfa are also alien species. It is estimated that 80% of our crops are pollinated by these bees – until recently when the species has declined dramatically because of mites and diseases. Native bees may eventually succeed in filling the gap as pollinators; more certain are the consequences in commercial honey production.

Other bees we may see frequently in our gardens are the large, robust carpenter bee, the small shiny green halictid or sweat bee, and if we are very observant, the tiny leaf-cutting bee.

The size of the bumblebee, the all-black carpenter bee seems clumsy as it lands to nectar on small flowers. Although this bee makes

excavations up to 12" long in tree stumps and in buildings, its damage is minimal. In its hole the bee provides individual cells for its larvae, where these young will develop and later hibernate.

Those small round holes at the edges of leaves and sometimes in flower petals are the work of the leaf-cutting bee, which is about ¼" long. After digging a hole in the ground, the female takes circles of plant material, lines her hole with these cuttings, and on a circle lays her single egg. Then she regurgitates a mixture of pollen and nectar for the young to feed on when it hatches and promptly seals off the cell with another circle of leaf.

The metallic-green halictid, or sweat bee (so called because it is believed to be attracted to human sweat) is about ½" long and is quite common in our area as it visits a multiple of different flowers but seems to prefer composites. After it flies from a flower, we may watch it return time and time again to a certain area in the ground, bare soil or a crevice between rocks, where it has made a burrow. Here it will leave an egg and a pollen-nectar ball for the young larva and then will seal off the hole with dirt.

Although all of the bees in this area can sting (stingless bees are tropical, not found north of Mexico), they will not sting unless they are being seriously molested, or if they are swarming. While people with sensitivity need to be cautious, close observation of bees is usually quite safe.

It is possible that some of our Texas native plants are pollinated by only one species of wild bee, as has been discovered about certain plants in other areas of the United States. But certainly those of us who provide flowering plants are doing our share in protecting these beneficial insects – and perhaps a plant species as well.

- Joann Karges

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Next Meeting:

Thursday, March 2nd at 7PM
 at FW Botanical Garden

Join the Native Plant Society of Texas!

As a member of the state organization, you will receive an annual subscription to the *NPSOT News*, and you will be invited to attend the NPSOT Annual Symposium.

Memberships :	___ Individual	\$20
	___ Family	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if this is a membership renewal	___ Student	\$15
	___ Sr. Citizen	\$15

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The Texas Sage
 is a monthly publication of the
 North Central Chapter of the
 Native Plant Society of Texas.

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 (817) 281-5991

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 recycled paper.