



# NPSOT News

North Central Texas

Native Plant Society of Texas, North Central Chapter Newsletter  
Volume 20, Number 1, April 2008

N  
P  
S  
O  
T

## The President's Corner Hester Schwarzer

### CHANGING VISIONS

The accepted current landscape vision for most of Americans is an expanse of turf as smooth as a new green carpet edged with neatly clipped, hedges and shrubs brightened with areas of color changed out with the seasons. This is repeated from New England to California with a sameness that often hides the stunning natural beauty of our country. Must it always be?

Our vision of a proper landscape can be as varied as our unique site and personalities allow. As we plant more natives that require less water and chemical treatments we can be important agents of change in our communities. The time is ripe for this changing vision. Imagine the showcasing of appropriate native plants across our state and country. What a vision!

Yards might have the restful appeal of a forest glade or well kept meadow. This would surely invite the wildlife to come for a visit. We could begin to mitigate the damage done and save pocket habitats for the future.

The members of the North Central Texas Chapter of NPSOT are all active players on this stage. By our various activities of educational outreach we make it easier for others to grasp the big picture. 2008 is a great year to broaden the scope.

### Help Wanted

We need help from a couple of talented members, one to work on publicity, and another to fill the post of Historian.

If you're interested, contact Hester Schwarzer at 817-861-4909 or [Hwschwarzer@aol.com](mailto:Hwschwarzer@aol.com).

Visit us at  
[npsot.org](http://npsot.org) and  
[txnativeplants.org](http://txnativeplants.org)

April meeting: Thursday, April 3, 7:00 pm,  
Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Deborah Beggs Moncrief  
Garden Center, Orchid Room

Program: Pollinator Conservation. Dawn Hancock, semi-retired Fort Worth teacher and Xerces Society member will present information from the *Pollinator Conservation Handbook*.

## Plant of the Month Josephine Keeney

### **Pink evening-primrose, *Oenothera speciosa***

This lovely flower is a sprawling perennial about 18 inches tall. The seed is very fine and should be scattered on prepared smooth soil in the fall. Sometimes it is not necessary to plant the seed; the wind or birds will do the job for you.

This very easy to grow plant is drought resistant and will cover large areas with beautiful pink flowers waving in the breeze. It can be used as a ground cover in wildflower gardens and once planted it is there to stay.

A very widespread species, it can be found over a very large area of Texas. Evening primrose blooms from March through July, going dormant in summer. Considered one Texas' most beloved spring flowers together with bluebonnet and Indian paintbrush, it presents a most stunning sight along Texas highways, prairies, meadows and woodland edges.



*Editor's note: You really should visit Josephine's marvellous Web site, [www.texasstar.org](http://www.texasstar.org). It's a forum for Texas gardeners, dedicated to the cultivation and propagation of Texas native plants and wildflowers.*

## Plants Needed for Big Plant Festival

Your Native Plant Society is putting on a Plant Festival on Saturday, May 24. An important part of the festival will be an All Native – All Members Plant Sale, and we need everyone's help for that. We would rather rebate costs to members for plants we sell than obtain plants on consignment from third-party vendors. We want to rebate 40% of the plant's selling price to our members to defray their costs. For example, 4" pots on carrier trays will sell for \$2.50 and we will rebate \$1.00/pot. The plant is still a donation. Please take a few minutes, walk around your yard, and see if you have any young natives that you can spare. We have 8 weeks, so dig soon. Interested? E-mail John Bridges at [jbridgestx@verizon.net](mailto:jbridgestx@verizon.net)

## 4th Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference

May 28 - 31, 2008. Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas  
Time's getting short, so look into this fine event now. There will be field trips, workshops, lectures, and even a plant sale. There's lots more information and a registration form at [npsot.org](http://npsot.org). Just follow the link.

## The NICE! Program Gailon Hardin and Helena van Heiningen

The North Central Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) announces its spring Plants of the Season for the NICE! program: Columbine and Spiderwort. NICE! is an acronym for *Natives Instead of Common Exotics*.

The purpose of NICE! is to promote the use of native plants by raising awareness and educating the public about the benefits of growing native plants. After several years of drought conditions, the public has become more interested and serious about conserving water and improving the environment.

Participating nurseries and representatives are the following:

Redenta's, Arlington	Molly Hollar/Hester Swartz
Tim's Landscaping, FW	Helena van Heiningen
Tinker's Grove, Colleyville	John Bridges
Stuart's, Weatherford	Cisy Gray
Weatherford Gardens	Wayne Broyles
Weston Gardens, FW	Ev Woodrey/Pat Lovejoy
Pettle Pushers, Cedar Hill	Merita Knapp
Green Mama's, NR Hills	John Bridges



## NICE! Plants of the Season

### Yellow Columbine, Texas Gold Columbine, Hinckley's Yellow Columbine (*Aquilegia hinckleyana*)



**Description:** There are 3 species of native yellow columbine in Texas, however *A. hinckleyana* is most available in nurseries. Yellow columbine is a small to medium perennial plant found in mossy areas of West Texas. When not in bloom, its soft lacy foliage is 8 to 16 inches high. Each leaf has three-lobed leaflets. When flowering, it sends up airy 1 to 3 foot stalks, which open to reveal yellow to pale yellow blooms that seem to float above the foliage. The five petals are elongated into knob-tipped spurs. Like other columbines, it is a nectar source for humming-birds and butterflies

#### **Bloom period:**

March through May, with occasional blooms in the summer if grown in shade.

#### **Planting sites:**

Plant in full, dappled, or partial shade. This plant likes moist, but well-drained soil and will grow best in soil that has been amended with organic matter like compost. Allow about 12-16 inches between plants. After planting, water well and mulch. The plant will spread by self-sowing or re-seeding, but expect the parent plant to last at least several years.

#### **Watering Instructions:**

Yellow columbine should be watered once a week until well established. During a summer drought, or after a hard winter freeze, the plant will become dormant. However, it will recover when growing conditions improve. But do not over water or it may rot.

#### **Comments:**

This is an interesting and beautiful ornamental plant for a shade garden. Use yellow columbine instead of geraniums or begonias, which require more frequent watering.

### Perennial: Spiderwort (*Tradescantia* species)

**Description:** Spiderwort, *Tradescantia* species, is a genus of over 60 New World species that range from southern Canada to northern Argentina. In North Texas, both (*T. occidentalis*) and (*T. ohioensis*) spiderwort species are found. Spiderwort grows individually at first and establishes clumps. It grows one to two feet tall with long, blade-like leaves. Spiderwort may go dormant in the winter and over our long dry summers.

**Flowers:** Spiderwort blooms prolifically in the spring and sometimes in the fall with flowers that range from white, pink or purple to bright blue. Flowers have three petals and six yellow anthers. Spiderwort blooms early in the morning. During the afternoon, the flowers usually close up in the heat, but on cool and cloudy days, they may remain open all day. Each flower lasts for only one day, but each spiderwort has many flowers, assuring a long display in the garden bed.

**Planting sites:** Spiderwort can be planted in full sun to partial or dappled shade. It grows well in most types of soil, from acid to alkaline, from dry to damp. If not given supplemental water, spiderwort will go dormant during North Texas summers. When flowering is finished, spiderwort may be cut to the ground. When the fall rains begin, spiderwort will sprout new foliage and may re-bloom.

#### **Watering Instructions:**

Spiderwort should be watered well immediately after planting and then every other week during the first growing season if there is no rain. After the first growing season, spiderwort should survive with existing rainfall because it is drought tolerant.

**Comments:** Although spiderwort goes dormant in the summer, the foliage sprouts out in fall and stays green through our mild winters when almost everything else is dormant. Native spiderwort is a welcome addition to garden beds. There are many named cultivars available at your local nursery.



## New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Jan Miller



Would I know a prairie if I saw it?

You're driving down the road and once in awhile, there's an open field with some grass. Around here

most of it is an agricultural field or pasture that, due to human disturbance, has grown up in some kind of exotic, introduced grass. But every once in a rare while, you might see a remnant from prehistoric times: native prairie. If you did, how would you know?

First, rule out land that shows signs of plowing, contours from bulldozing or is a monoculture of introduced grasses. Signs of plowing or bulldozing are fairly easy to see, but monocultures might take a little practice. The exotic grasses were imported for grazing, usually Johnsongrass (Mediterranean area), King Ranch or "KR" bluestem (Asia), or Bermudagrass (Africa). Away from their usual environments, predators and pests, these grasses were able to take advantage of disturbed soil, then to out-compete native species. Learn to recognize these and other grasses; see *Resources* below.



Then, see if your field seems to have a lot of different kinds of plants, both wildflowers and grasses. High quality prairies have 200 to 300 kinds of native plants, with different grasses butting against each other in a mosaic of textures and subtle color changes. It's also helpful to look for native indicator species, especially little bluestem, a common indicator in many Texas prairie types, and for side-oats grama, the state grass of Texas.

Finally, there's no substitute



for being in the middle of a native prairie, which was once the predominant landscape of the North Texas area. Once you begin to recognize native grasses and wildflowers, you'll see the subtle differences in local prairies, from the blackland prairies in the eastern parts of North Texas to the Grand prairies to the west.

Look for the signs: Maybe you'll find one of those rare overlooked prairie remnants, a leftover of prehistoric times.



### Resources:

[www.texasprairies.org](http://www.texasprairies.org)  
(note the frequently updated blog or sign up for e-mail updates)  
Texas Extension Service's free publication *Know your Grasses* at <http://texnat.tamu.edu/cmplants/B-182/main.htm>.  
<http://www.noble.org/webapps/plantimagegallery/>  
*Grasses of the Texas Hill Country: A Field Guide* by

Brian & Shirley Loflin

*Note: Jan would like to acknowledge material for this column found at the Native Prairies Association of Texas Web site.*

An article from BBC News, "Biofuels 'are not a magic bullet': "Biofuels could play an important role in cutting greenhouse gas emissions from transport, both in Britain and globally," said Professor John Pickett from Rothamsted Research, who chaired the Royal Society's study. "But it would be disastrous if biofuel production made further inroads into biological diversity and natural ecosystems. "We must not create new environmental or social problems in our efforts to deal with climate change."

**Wildscape Update Feb 23: Molly's Privet Massacre** John Dycus



Here's a big ol' Mollyquote: For 10 years we have pulled privet in the wildscape, so this final victory is truly the ultimate birthday present for me. Huge thanks to

Danny and the Kocureks for arranging this stupendous event, and to all of you fabulous people — you Arlington Parks & Recreation fellows, too — who gave your morning to come and fight and win the privet war! This 80th birthday has got to be the best ever.



*80-year-old honoree Molly Hollar with Benjamin Kocurek, 5.*



*Julia Burgen, wildscape inspiration and former councilwoman.*



*Councilwoman Kathryn Wilemon helps Glenn Troutman, WECAN president and longtime wildscape propagation volunteer, install a super tool rack he built for the wildscape vault.*



*Martin Sanchez, APRD district supervisor.*



*John Dycus, Wildscape Update writer.*



*Bonnie Bowman, president, Tarrant Coalition for Environmental Awareness.*



*Danny Kocurek and responsible party (his mother, Peggy Quinn) conversing with privet pullers Julia Burgen and Sharon and Dick Schoech.*



*Ann Trenton, wildscape volunteer since 1996.*

## Next Meeting

Thursday, April 3

7:00 pm

Fort Worth  
Botanic Gardens

Dawn Hancock

*Pollinator Conservation*

Visit us on the Web  
at  
[www.txnativeplants.org](http://www.txnativeplants.org)

### Join the Native Plant Society of Texas!

Become a member of the Native Plant Society of Texas. Membership is open to any individual, family, or organization. Membership is renewable annually and extends for a year from the date we receive your original payment. If you wish to join, please indicate your category of membership, then clip and mail this application with the appropriate remittance to:

Native Plant Society of Texas  
PO Box 3017, Fredricksburg, TX 78624  
830-997-9272

_____ Student	\$15	_____ Couple/Family	\$40
_____ Senior Individual (65+)	\$20	_____ Group	\$50
_____ Senior Couple (one 65+)	\$30	_____ Patron	\$100
_____ Individual	\$25	_____ Benefactor	\$250
		_____ Supporting	\$500
		_____ Corporate Sponsor	\$1000
		_____ Lifetime	\$1000

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Affiliation: North Central Chapter

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## The North Central Texas NPSOT News

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

For changes of address or information about contributing to the newsletter, please contact the newsletter editor.

The deadline for submitting articles for inclusion in next month's newsletter is the 15th of every month.

John Darling, Editor  
817-274-1077  
[I darling@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jdarling@sbcglobal.net)