

Trinity Forks Native Plant Press:

the Newsletter of the Trinity Forks Chapter,
Native Plant Society of Texas

October 2003

From the Prez...

Our Trinity Forks Year

The Trinity Forks Chapter year is almost complete. Our year began in January when the mornings were frosty and the trees were bare. We started the year by celebrating our chapter's thirteenth birthday. NPSOT state president **Sue Wiseman** was our speaker and got us off to a good start. The year unfolded with winter's tiniest wildflowers, **bluets, violets**, and the jewel colored leaves of **wild geraniums**, and edged toward spring. By the time of our annual plant sale in early March, the **redbuds** were blooming. Spring followed with **winecups, Indian paintbrushes, pink evening primroses** and all the beautiful wildflowers that Texas is famous for. By our May meeting, we had enjoyed field trips, helped with school gardens and continued to share our knowledge and love of native plants with others. The **Black-eyed Susans** were starting to bloom and signal the time for a summer break. When we met again in September, **goldenrod, prairie agalinis** and **eryngo** were announcing the approaching fall season. Now in October, when the countryside is splashed with golden wildflowers and autumn color, our chapter will have our last meeting and another great program. We will finish the year with our fall plant sale and a field trip to Cross Timbers Park.

Through out the year, it has been my pleasure to serve as president of the Trinity Forks Chapter. Once again I would like to thank the board members and all chapter members for their support. We have had many accomplishments this year while learning about and promoting native plants. Next year Garrett Brown will serve as our president. With his enthusiasm and leadership and everyone's support and participation, it will be another great year for our chapter.

—Marilyn Blanton ☞



Our October Program

On Thursday, October 23 at 7 p.m. our speaker will be **Mr. Barney Lipscomb**, Leonhardt Chair of Texas Botany and co-author, *Illustrated Flora of North Central Texas*; from the Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth. His presentation is entitled "*HOW PLANTS GET THEIR NAMES: ON NAMES AND NAMING!*" Names, even with their deficiencies, are indispensable guides to the order of any realm. Names are abbreviated histories, they have dimension in time. They are the beginning points of classification, the designations by which things are known. But where do Latin names and common names come from and what do they mean? "*How Plants Get Their Names*" explores this history of Latin and common names and their origins. This will be a fun and informative program with lots of visual examples.

—Dorothy Theford ☞



Fall Native Plant Sale

In conjunction with the Denton Council of Garden Clubs, the Trinity Forks Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas will conduct a Native Plant Sale in the Denton Civic Center on Saturday, November 1, 2003 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. This event will provide a unique opportunity to further the goals of NPSOT including community outreach, education, membership expansion and fund raising. This is one of the best opportunities for reaching potential new members and helping people understand the benefits to native plants. In addition to assistance during the sale, we need help setting up on Friday from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm and donations of potted plants. Past years sales have generated nearly \$1000 and provided needed funds to keep our chapter operating throughout the year. These funds are used for educational materials/ scholarships, community events, newsletter and other day-to-day operations. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Garrett.Brown@att.net.

—Garrett Brown ☞



"Wildflowers-of-Texas"

by Dorothy Thetford

Heath Aster (*Aster ericoides*)

While we're gloating over our beautiful **Maximilian sunflowers** (*Helianthus maximiliani*), other native wildflowers are vying for our attention, namely, the fall-blooming asters. One in particular is the **heath aster** (*Aster ericoides*) from the *Asteraceae* family. It is also commonly known as **prairie aster** and **wreath aster**. Ditches and open prairies are bursting into bloom with patches of these tightly-clustered, small, white flowers.

The plant is a stout, semi-woody, 2-to-3 foot tall perennial of several erect or reclining stems. Those stems that are reclining are usually top-heavy with multi-branchlets and multi-blooms. The lower stem leaves are linear or oblong, sessile without pedicel, petiole, or stalk) and entire (smooth margins). They usually dry and fall off before flowering time. The branchlet leaves on the upper stem are much smaller in size, averaging 1/2 inch long and only 1/8 inch wide.

Individual flowers are comprised of 15 to 18 white ray flowers that encircle 3 to 5 yellowish gold, tubular-shaped, five-lobed disk flowers. One plant is host to literally hundreds of white flowers that are normally only 1/4 to 1/2 inch diameter. As flowers mature, the disk flowers gradually turn to a light brown color. These dried disk flowers and seeds can be collected and planted in your full-sun flowerbed to attract pollinators to your wildscape.

A. ericoides is widespread in Texas. It is found in open grasslands and prairies in full bloom from late September through October in the North Central Texas area. Don't miss it!



Schoolyard Habitats

Teachers, educators, administrators and/or parents interested in developing native plant gardens for educational purposes are encouraged to contact the Trinity Forks Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas. These gardens could focus on studying the interactions between various native plants and animals such as birds, butterflies, bees, dragonflies, frogs, or toads. Educators who register an educational native plant garden with the Chapter will receive planning assistance, plant lists, educational suggestions and FREE plants. A number of local schools have already registered and received plants and assistance. With the cooler weather, now is the best time to plant. To register or obtain additional information, please contact **Dorothy Thetford** or **Garrett Brown**. ❀

Contract Growing of Native Plants

We're interested in having native plants grown for our Redbud Days Plant Sale next spring. Discussions with a local grower are centered around the ability to grow these plants and what, if any, difficulties may come up in obtaining starting materials (seeds, cuttings, root stock, etc.). Whenever possible, we want to use materials that trace back to local wild stock. We are estimating that we will be able to accept about 100 plants on a consignment basis. The numbers of each species will be determined by growing success but should be split roughly equally among the species listed below. The plants will be labeled with the common and scientific names and the grower's logo so that we can identify them and keep them segregated in the unfortunate event that they do not sell during the sale. We are hoping to expand this effort in future years as we gain experience in measuring the demand for these plants. If you are able to assist with finding local materials, please contact **Garrett Brown** at Garrett.Brown@att.net.

NPSOT Plant Request List

- 1) Rusty Blackhaw *Viburnum rufidulum*)
- 2) Caroline Buckthorn (*Rhamnus caroliniana*)
- 3) Scarlet Buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*)
- 4) American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*)
- 5) Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
- 6) Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- 7) Winecups (*Callirhoe involucrata*)
- 8) Texas Bluebells (*Eustoma russellianum* or *grandiflorum*)
- 9) Rough Leaf Dogwood (*Cornus drummondii*)
- 10) Red Yucca (*Hesperaloe parviflora*)
- 11) Possumhaw (*Ilex decidua*)
- 12) Burr Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)
- 13) Spring Obedient Plant (*Physostegia angustifolia*)
- 14) Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon meadia*)



Make plans now to bring a visitor to the October Trinity Forks meeting Thursday, 10/23. You'll both receive a free rain lily!

Digging into our Roots

Cross Timbers Park

Last November the Trinity Forks Chapter set up a booth at the dedication of the City of Denton's new Cross Timbers Park. NPSOT membership information, native plant books and potted native grasses were displayed. Members answered questions about NPSOT and native plants and gave away bluebonnet seedlings.

Long before the park was dedicated and officially opened to the public, our members had been involved identifying plants and working on the trails. Since the dedication, members have led groups through the park and continued to work with the City of Denton providing pictures and interpretive text for park signs.

This November our chapter's last activity of the year will be a field trip to Cross Timbers Park. The park is a remnant of the Eastern Cross Timbers forest along Fletchers Branch of Hickory Creek. Please join us for an autumn walk through the woods.

—Marilyn Blanton 🌿



Election Time is Near!

The officers for 2004 will be elected at our October meeting. Nominations are being accepted at this time. Nominations will also be taken from the floor at the meeting. The currently proposed officers for 2004 are

President.....**Garrett Brown**
 Vice President.....open
 Secretary.....open
 Treasurer.....**Caroline Polliard**
 Proposed board appointments include--
 Membership.....open
 Ways and Means.....open
 Programs and Education....**Dorothy Thetford**
 Historian.....open
 Field Trips.....**Mike Mizell**
 Publicity.....**Irene Hanson**
 Newsletter Editor.....**Cynthia Maguire**

If you are interested in serving as an officer or board member, please contact Marilyn Blanton or Garrett Brown.



Calendar of Events

THE TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER MEETS THE 4TH THURSDAY OF JAN–MAY AND SEPT–OCT AT 7 P.M. IN ROOM 110 OF THE UNT EESAT BUILDING (AVE C & HICKORY) IN DENTON, TEXAS.

Thurs, Oct 23, 7:00 p.m. ☘ TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER MEETING at UNT EESAT Building, Room 110. **Mr. Barney Lipscomb** from BRIT will present “HOW PLANTS GET THEIR NAMES: ON NAMES AND NAMING!” Names are abbreviated histories and the beginning points of classification, the designations by which things are known. But where do Latin names and common names come from and what do they mean? We will explore the history of Latin and common names and their origins. Bring a visitor and you'll both get a free plant! ☘

Sat, Nov 1, 8 a.m. til 4 p.m. ☘ Fall Plant Sale at the Denton Civic Center. We will be participating in a Fall Plant Sale sponsored by the Denton Council of Garden Clubs. We will set up Friday evening from 4 to 7 p.m. The sale begins at 9 a.m. Saturday. Get your plants ready now and come join in the fun! This is a great way to gain some good exposure for our chapter, and spread the word about native plants to a broad audience at the same time. ☘

Sat, Nov 8, 2:00 p.m. ☘ A Walk Through The Woods at Cross Timbers Park. Park your car and meet on Waterside Place, the side street on the west side of the park just off of Hickory Creek Road by the Ryan Ranch addition. We will tour the park and have refreshments. ☘

Fri-Sun, Nov 15-17. ☘ Embracing our Natural Heritage: Trinity River Ecology. This is an in-and-outdoor educational experience for nature lovers of most ages. Explore the biodiversity of one of our most vital natural resources, the Trinity River. Learn about river ecology at the University of North Texas, then experience it first-hand while canoeing and camping at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge during this two-day event for educators, families and all interested adults. It is co-sponsored by BRIT, UNT and the Fort Worth Nature Center. For more information, surf on over to www.brit.org and click on the “events” button at the bottom of the page, or contact **Kathy Scott** at 817.332-4441, X37 or kscott@brit.org. ☘

Do you have news or events to share? Send it to **Cynthia Maguire** at c.maguire@charter.net. or call her at 940/594-6555. ☘

The Bois D'Arc Tree

Thud! Another horse apple just fell from the tree. The curious, five inch, green ball settles amid many others already cluttering the ground under the **bois d'arc**. The tree is an old somewhat shaggy one that grows south of the house where it has stood long before the house. I'm rather fond of the old tree despite its unruly growth habit.

The tree's scientific name is *Maclura pomifera*. It was named in honor of William Maclura (1763-1840), an early American geologist and the founder of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. The species name, *pomifera*, means fruit-bearing. There are a number of descriptive vernacular names relating to its fruit, wood and uses. It is most commonly called a **horse apple** or **bodark tree**. Bodark comes from the French name bois d'arc. Still others know it as a **hedge apple**, **Osage orange**, **bow wood**, **yellow wood** or, in Spanish, **naranjo chino**.

The name horse apple refers to the fruit. The lime green bumpy balls, whose texture is coarser but similar to a navel orange, develop from inconspicuous greenish flowers that bloom in the spring. Both male and female flowers bloom at the leaf bases but on separate trees. It is the female flowers that fuse together to form the green fruit. In the beginning stages, the clusters are covered with long hairs that disappear as they mature. The seeds in the milky flesh of the fruit are eaten by squirrels and bobwhite quail. Horses also relish the fruit although fruit lodged in a horse's esophagus can cause death. Horse apple has long been used to repel cockroaches.

Hedge apple refers to the tree's use as a hedge. Because the trees are fast growing and have stout thorns, they have been widely cultivated for impenetrable hedges and fencerows, particularly before the introduction of barbed wire.

Bois d'arc means wood of the bow. The wood was prized by the Osage and Caddo Indians for making hunting bows and war clubs. The bows were valued as a trade item and contributed to the tree's reputation that preceded its scientific description. As early as 1804, the bois d'arc, mainly called Osage apple at the time, had captured the interest of Americans. Peter Custis of the Freeman

and Custis Expedition of the Red River in 1806, wrote the first published account of the tree. However, he is not credited with its discovery.

The wood is very durable and resistant to rot. In the past, the heavy, hard wood was used for house piers, fence post and wagon hubs. U.S. Army Captain Randolph Marcy stated in his 1859 instruction book, *The Prairie Traveler*, "Wheels made of the bois-d'arc, or Osage orange-wood, are the best for the plains, as they shrink but little, and seldom want repairing."

The wood is orange to yellow, hence the name yellow wood. The root bark was used in the past to make a yellow dye. The tree's bark, which contains tannin, has been used for tanning leather.

The bois d'arc is a member of the moraceae or mulberry family. Its exact native range is difficult to determine because it has been widely planted and naturalized. The native range is believed to be in twelve counties in north central and north east Texas. It normally grows to forty feet with a short trunk and irregular crown. It is often found along creeks and reaches its largest size in the Red River and Trinity River valleys of north Texas. It's said to grow best in blackland prairie, but my tree with its wide spreading top and arching branches, is growing in sand.

I think of the bois d'arc as a "country" tree. It's not a refined tree but it is certainly an interesting one. Not everyone is fond of the tree. Some consider it to be too messy. Its dense foliage and shallow root system make it difficult to grow much beneath it. Howard Garrett even says the "trees should be removed to favor more desirable plants." One of our members, **Dr. Camellia Maier**, has chosen *Maclura pomifera* for use in her botanical research work at Texas Woman's University.

Beauty is truly in the eyes of the beholder! My bois d'arc is not a particularly spectacular one but it offers a peaceful scene. If I were an artist, I would paint it in the fall when the leaves turn clear yellow and the ground underneath it is covered with chartreuse fruit.

√Marilyn Blanton ☞



At Our September Meeting. . .

It's official! We had more people attend the September program on Pollinator Partnerships than any other program (more than the 60 in Sept 2000) for which we have records, according to Membership VP **Garrett Brown**. From the sign-in sheet we have confirmed attendance of 61 people (32 members and 29 visitors). The number who actually attend is usually lower than the number of those who sign in at the meeting. Six members used their name tags, but did not sign in last month.

Our year-to-date attendance for 2003 has already exceeded the total attendance for 2000. We have a good chance of exceeding the overall attendance for 2002 and 2001 as well. Let's go out there and get more visitors in October!

Kudos to all of those who invited visitors in September! Special praise is due to **Brenda Swirczynski** for a wonderful presentation, "Pollination Partnerships," and to **Dorothy Thetford**, our Program Chair, for arranging the program. Great job!

—Garrett Brown ☞



September New Members & Renewals

New Memberships:

Rachel & Kyle Biggerstaff

3817 Ranchman Blvd

Denton, TX 76210

(940) 535-1300

Biggerstaff@academicplanet.com

Christine & Curtis Stogsdill

2103 Riney Road

Denton, TX 76207

(940) 565-9294

christinestogsdill@msn.com

Brigid Corbett

1904 Malone

Denton, TX 76201

(940) 384-0084

brigidc@yahoo.com

Membership Renewals

Joyce Palmer

Yvonne Reasoner



Current Officers/Board Members

President **Marilyn Blanton** 940-464-7775

marilyn@postoakplace.com

Vice Pres. **Dorothy Thetford** 940-382-9344

Programs/Education *dthetford@mymailstation.com*

Secretary **Beth Clark** 940-382-0588

elizabeth.clark26@verizon.net

Treasurer **Caroline Polliard** 940-382-0957

Membership **Garrett Brown** 940-482-7950

and Ways & Means *garrett.brown@att.net*

Historian **Kathy Scott** 940-321-2412

txkgscott@hotmail.com

Hospitality **Marilyn Martin** 940-382-8014

marilyn_martin@hotmail.com

Field Trips **Mike Mizell** 940-382-8551

mmizell@webtv.net

Publicity **Irene Hanson** 972-539-9471

ICHanson@metlspan.com

Newsletter **Cynthia Maguire** 940-594-6555

c.maguire@charter.net



.....
Join the Native Plant Society of Texas—Trinity Forks Chapter. If you wish to join (or renew) indicate your category of membership, then clip and mail this application with the appropriate remittance to:
NPSOT, P.O. Box 891, Georgetown, TX 78627.

Name: _____ () Individual \$20 () Benefactor \$100 () Family \$25

Address: _____ () Group \$35 () Senior \$15 () Patron \$50

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____ () Corporation \$1000 () Student \$15

Phone: _____ Email: _____

The purpose of the Native Plant Society of Texas is to promote the conservation, research and utilization of the native plants and plant habitats of Texas, through education, outreach and example.

Congratulations to Our Members in the News!

Trinity Forks Chapter is fortunate to have a number of our members involved in education on many levels.

Kathy Scott has become the Education Program Manager for BRIT—a position that will allow her to share her love of native plants with people from many backgrounds.

Also, **Cynthia Maguire** recently completed an M.S. in Chemistry at Texas Woman's University and has now joined the TWU faculty as a lecturer in the Chemistry and Physics Department.

Beth Clark recently received an Award of Achievement from the Garden Writers Association (GWA) for her story, "Tomatoes in

the Driver's Seat," published in *The Christian Science Monitor*. The award was presented at the GWA's national symposium in Chicago. Beth is a visiting assistant professor of mass communications at Texas Woman's University and is a freelance writer for the *Dallas Morning News* and other publications, and a former editor of Neil Sperry's GARDENS Magazine. The GWA group also toured native plantings in Chicago, including Mayor Richard Daley's "urban prairie," a rooftop garden of native plants in downtown Chicago.

Our congratulations to all three members!

—Marilyn Blanton



Native Plant Society of Texas
Trinity Forks Chapter
P.O. Box 425491
Denton, Texas 76204