



From the Prez....

# Trinity Forks Native Plant Press:

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

April 2004

## April Showers

**A**pril showers bring May flowers is an old saying that I remember from my childhood. While I can't attest to its provenance, I have seen a fair share of "May flowers," especially in North Texas. Even though I haven't seen them yet, the **dotted blue-eyed grass** are blooming nicely and the *Penstemon cobaea* and *Coreopsis lanceolata* are beginning to show buds. I look forward to my return and enjoying the beauty of the Texas springtime.

As I write this column, I am looking out my brother's living room window into the shrub steppe region of Eastern Washington that many people often mistake as a desert. The soil type is a very dry "blow sand" like a fine talcum powder. The predominant visual features are rolling, open fields and hills filled with several species of **sage** and/or **rabbit brush**. Right now the fields are filled with pink *Phlox speciosa* and yellow **balsamroot** (*Balsamorhiza careyana*). The dainty five-petaled, blue-flowered *Triteleia grandiflora* exhibits a single 12" stalk and thin lily-like leaves. Later in the season **Munro's Globe Mallow** (*Sphaeralcea munroana*) will set the area ablaze with a suprisingly bright orange. And speaking of blazing colors--- the rain clouds have generated another spectacular sunset that is so common to this dusty area.

Remember our chapter meeting is always on the 4th Thursday of the month (which is April 22nd this month). We will have another informative program, question/answer session, wildflower display, opportunities for fieldtrips, and perhaps even a raffle. These are just a few examples of the benefits you receive as a member of the Trinity Forks Chapter of

NPSOT. Please tell your friends and neighbors about the benefits of native plants and invite them to attend our Chapter meetings. As a special treat, visitors this month will receive a *free Burr Oak tree*.

—Garrett Brown ☞



## Our April Program

**D**elia Warren will present "Creating School Gardens" at our meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup> in Room 110 of the UNT EESAT building at 7 p.m. A native of the San Francisco Bay area, Ms. Warren grew up with a great appreciation of the outdoors. She studied Natural Resource Management and earned a BA in Fine Arts and Illustration from California College of Arts and Crafts. Ms. Warren has worked for 15 years as an illustrator, currently for the Star Telegram in Fort Worth. She also paints Texas native landscapes. She has lived in Texas for 12 years during which she has revived and/or planted native plant gardens at each of her homes.

When her son entered Alice Carlson Elementary in the third grade, she noticed a wonderful garden that was looking a bit neglected. When she volunteered to pull weeds, they got all excited and on the spot dubbed her the Chairperson for the OLE (Outdoor Learning Environment). Since then her knowledge of native gardening has bloomed, as well as the experience of learning all that is required to run a volunteer-based school garden. Her future plans are to continue pursuing interests in Native plants, conservation and wildlife support, and designing more gardens. She is also interested in botanical illustrating.

—Harriet Horton ☞



## Digging into our Roots

*A Memorial Tribute to*

### Gertrude Gibson

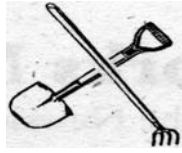
(Excerpts from an address following Gertrude's death on February 22, 2004)

*She was a blithe spirit.*

*She was a no-nonsense realist who brooked no foolishness.*

*She was a dreamer of castles-in-the-air impossibilities.*

*She was a builder of those impossible dreams into full and lasting realities.*



**G**ertrude's mind and heart were wonders to know, and it was my great privilege to have known them for seventy years.

From the time she joined the staff of the Dean of Women at the College of Industrial Arts, **Gertrude Gibson** gave without pause.

The era of building the University Gardens and the Little Chapel-in-the-Woods was a very special time in her life, and she was ever a serious supporter of these anchors of beauty on [the Texas Woman's University] campus. When you visit the area today, you will discover a historical marker at the entrance to the Gardens and Chapel. That marker recognizes the building of the rock gardens and native botanical areas established during the 1930's and notes the native stone paths and walls, and the construction of the Little Chapel in 1938. It notes also the restoration of the Gardens during the 1970's. The marker was erected in 1982 at the instigation and insistence of Gertrude Gibson.

But wait! This was but one facet of a much larger notion and program from the fertile mind of our Gertrude. It all started one lovely fall day in the late 1970's when Gertrude brought a gentleman from the Texas Hill Country to my office—Mr. Carroll Abbot. Together, Gertrude and Carroll had notions of saving and restoring the lovely wildflowers that were quickly disappearing along Texas roadways. From this were born the Texas Wildflower Program at TWU, new courses in floriculture (taught by Mr. Abbott) and, ultimately, the Native Plant Society of Texas.

The first Wildflower Day was observed in April 1980 and it involved lectures, photo displays, specimen plant displays, flower art, various displays by businesses and national companies, and

a plant-in at the University Gardens. A jolly time was had by all! At that time the J.C. Penney Co. was promoting a line of bedding and draperies designed with wildflowers. Gertrude persuaded them to bring an entire bedroom for display during our Wildflower weekend. Not too long afterward, Penney's moved their world headquarters to this area. Gertrude's role would not surprise me-- although her modesty would never allow us to know.

From all this, the next step was the establishment of Texas Wildflower Day. The Gibson/Abbott minds worked overtime! TWU students delivered a potted cactus treasure to each member of the Texas Legislature and Executive staff. Wildflower Day was established by statute for the weekend closest to Texas' San Jacinto Day.

The Native Plant Society of Texas has grown to be a statewide institution with 1,850 members and a reputation for serious research and action in behalf of our native treasures. It is a wondrous legacy for the Lone Star State and its people – a legacy from the fertile mind and determined spirit of our Gertrude, who knew to dream the dream and assemble the dedicated experts and personalities who would work with her to its realization. NPSOT's monthly bulletin is today a prestigious publication dedicated to expanding general knowledge of the State's native flora and informing its readers of processes for their restoration and preservation. Today as we drive our highways or visit our prairies, we commune with beauty to which each of us is an heir. And the glories we enjoy are a legacy from a hard-boiled journalist and a blithe spirit who loved beauty and loved Texas.

Gertrude's legacy will ever be remembered and revered. The impossible dreams built by that blithe spirit will be a part of her school, her state, and of our inheritance from her forever.

It is my belief and faith that Gertrude's love for the beauty of her Texas endures and that she will continue to watch over it and that it will continue to flourish and prosper under her benevolent attention. And so, to you, Gertrude, a "Thank You" from all of us with all our love for all your love.

—Dr. Mary Evelyn Blagg-Huey   
an Honorary Lifetime Member of NPSOT



## "Wildflowers-of-Texas"

by Dorothy Thetford

When I say, "Watch where you step!" I mean just that. Every step.

As an ending to my recent wildflower program to a room full of businessmen, a.k.a. the Nocona Rotary Club, I made this same comment. It is simple but extremely important when you consider 5, 15, or 30 people fieldtripping through a private prairie, public park or county roadside. Most of us are unable to identify the early wildflower foliage before blooms appear, and therefore feel no obligation to step decisively. But if your host suggests that you follow a certain path, do so willingly in hopes of damaging the fewest number of upcoming plants.

Case in reverse...following the Nocona program, my host toured me through 200+ acres of beautiful, rough and primitive property. While hiking through the snake infested territory, I rarely had to mention, "Watch where you step;" however, my host kept repeating my comment for fear of stepping on a wildflower in my presence. It was quite humorous for that particular setting, but he had honestly comprehended my intended message.

Enjoy our spring fieldtrips, but watch where you step!

*Dorothy's "Wildflowers-of-Texas" greeting cards are available locally at Cupboard Natural Foods and Voertman's.*



## Calendar of Events

THE TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER MEETS THE 4<sup>TH</sup> 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.

**Sat/Sun, Apr 17 & 18, 2004. North Texas Ecology: Embracing Our Natural Heritage.** Spend a weekend exploring the history and ecology of the Ft. Worth prairie. The event is sponsored by the **Botanical**

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**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.*

**Research Institute of Texas** and will include a wildflower study. It is open to everyone, especially families and educators. Contact Kathy Scott at BRIT ([k.scott@brit.org](mailto:k.scott@brit.org)) or check the website ([www.brit.org/education](http://www.brit.org/education)). ☞

**Thurs, Apr 22, 7:00 p.m. ☞ TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER MEETING** at UNT EESAT Building, Room 110. ☞

**Do you have news or events to share?** Send it to **Cynthia Maguire** at [c.maguire@charter.net](mailto:c.maguire@charter.net). or call her at 940/594-6555. ☞

## Current Officers/Board Members

President <b>Garrett Brown</b>	940-482-7950 <a href="mailto:garrett.brown@att.net">garrett.brown@att.net</a>
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Vice Pres. ( <i>open</i> )	
Programs/ <b>Harriet Horton</b>	817-847-1816 <a href="mailto:Harriet_Horton@hotmail.com">Harriet_Horton@hotmail.com</a>
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Newsletter <b>Cynthia Maguire</b>	940-594-6555 <a href="mailto:c.maguire@charter.net">c.maguire@charter.net</a>



## Pot Herbs

Have you thought about the different types and uses of native plant herbs? There are some that are called "Pot Herbs" because they must be cooked in water (used like spinach). It is a good rule to change the water in which you cook them at least twice during the cooking. Always pick young plants to use. Do *not* use Pot Herbs as fresh greens. Here is a list of native plant Pot Herbs and the season in which you can use them: Spring: **Bellwort** (shoots), **Water Lotus** (young leaf), **March Marigold** (leaf), **Milkweed** (shoots), **Ostrich Fern** (young plant), **Skunk Cabbage** (leaf), **Solomon's Seal** (shoots). In Spring and Summer: **Goose Foot** (shoots), **Large-leaf Aster** and **Nettles** (leaves) can be used; **Nettles** can also be used in Fall.

Obviously, to cook these plants in water, you boil them. Where and how will you cook them? Of course, you might use a cooking range and pots and pans in your kitchen. However, there are other places and methods of cooking. Consider these: Foods may be roasted or fried on rocks, with reflected heat or with heat under the rock. (Be careful that you do not use a rock type that will crack or shatter when heated.) Foods may be roasted by wrapping them in non-toxic leaves and buried under a fire, or in sand

under a fire. Foods can be baked by rolling them in clay or mud and cooking them in hot coals. Breads can be baked in ashes, by making balls of dough, and covering them with flour, then putting the balls in ashes, on a hot rock or iron plate. Foods can be baked in a reflector oven, made of rocks, bark, etc. A hole can be dug in the ground, lined with rocks and a fire built in the hole. Later the ashes are removed and the food, covered by a pot and lid, leaves, clay or mud, put in and covered with leaves, sand, and/or soil to retain and reflect the heat. The same method can be used to steam food, by doing the same except that the hole then is covered with dirt; after that, holes are put down through the dirt cover and water is poured in and the holes are then covered to hold in the steam. Water may be boiled in a concave rock, or bark dish, by putting heated rocks into the water, until it boils. A canvas or leather bag "pot" does not burn when watery foods are cooked because the water soaks the pot and prevents burning. Food can be put on a stick and dried or roasted over a fire or a bed of coals.

—Harriet Horton ☞




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