



Trinity Forks Native Plant Press

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

March 2005

From the Prez....

Spring is here!

Do you sense the urgency of Spring this year? I see it all around me. Whether we humans are ready or not, Spring is really springing! Mockingbirds and doves are mating and building nests in our yard already. My **coral honeysuckle** (*Lonicera sempervirens*), **crabapple** (*Pyrus angustifolia*) and **red bud** (*Cercis canadensis*) have burst into bloom, and the **rain lilies** (*Cooperia pedunculata*) have tall new foliage as well. Several plants that form rosettes are looking quite a bit more developed than they did a month ago, including **coreopsis** (*Coreopsis lanceolata*) and **lyre-leaf sage** (*Salvia lyrata*). **Carolina Jessamine** (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) in full bloom lights up several gardens in town. **Red yuccas** (*Hesperaloe parviflora*) are putting bloom stalks up now, too. And of course, the inevitable **henbit** (*Lamium amplexicaule*) and **chickweed** (*Stellaria media*) are flourishing as well.

Mayhap that I feel spring is pressing because of having so little time to sit back and admire it unfold this year. In spite of my own shortfall, I hope that each and every one of you will make the most of your opportunities to get out and observe nature put on one of her finest shows. Speaking of opportunity—field trip coordinator **Mike Mizell** has certainly worked overtime to put together an impressive list of dates and places for us to see spring unfolding firsthand. Mike always does a good job of this, but this spring he has really gone all out. Be sure to take a good look at the calendar in this newsletter and take advantage of as many field trips as you can—every one of them is guaranteed to be educational and fun!

Another board member who is working really hard right now is **Cathy Lustgarten**, Ways and Means chair. With our spring plant sale right around the corner, she is making *lots* of lists and triple-checking them all. It's time to pot up your extras and plan your purchase list for this year's sale. Cathy has written an article this month to help inspire us all. Look for it on page two. Several others have also written articles for this newsletter. **Lon Turnbull**'s notes about last month's program on grasses by **Russell Stevens** will make you wish you were there if you missed it. Two

fascinating plant stories from **Becca Dickstein** and **Dorothy Thetford** are inside and **Owen Yost** reminds us of one of the best reasons to love native plants—native wildlife. And I bet you can't wait to read the **QUESTION POT** column! It's great!

It's a jam-packed newsletter for sure! When you've finished reading, we hope you'll come to our next meeting on **Thursday, March 24th** for a different and informative presentation about crystals in plants.

—*Cynthia Maguire* ☞



Our March Program

Did you know that plants store crystals inside themselves? You may ask, "What is the significance of this?" Come to hear **Dr. Howard J. Arnott**, Professor of Biology, Center for Electron Microscopy at UT Arlington speak to us on *Crystals in Plants*.

Biom mineralization is widespread among plants, animals and microorganisms. (Remember we have calcium and silicon salts in our bones.) Common plant minerals include calcium oxalate, calcium carbonate and silicon dioxide. Many common plants produce crystals. The list of these includes **Grape** (*Vitis mustangensis* and *V. vinifera*), **Pecan** (*Carya illinoensis*), **Rose** (*Rosa* sp.), **Mulberry** (*Morus* sp.), **Persimmon** (*Diospyros* sp.) and **Redbud** (*Cercis canadensis*).

The diversity of mineral deposit shapes and sizes, their tissue distribution and prevalence have led to a number of hypotheses regarding their functions in plants. Dr. Arnott will explain and evaluate the hypotheses regarding mineral deposits in various plant families. Come **Thursday, March 24** to be intrigued by the biochemistry and physics of the botanical world! ☞

April 9 Trinity Forks Plant Sale at Denton's Redbud Festival

What will you do at our plant sale? Tell your friends, neighbors and co-workers about the plant sale and encourage them to

come! This is a prime opportunity to educate folks about the value of native plants both in the wild and in our landscapes - food for wildlife, birds, & insects; save on water and fertilizer in our landscapes; disease resistant and low maintenance. Be prepared to help customers in selecting an appropriate species for their garden needs. Plant the seed of nature's awe in a child by helping at our Kids' Korner. This is also a great opportunity to recruit new members. Let them know about our programs and field trips. We will have plant lists available for sale, and newsletters to pass out. You won't want to miss out on the fun and excitement!

SUPPLIES NEEDED: We could use one more canopy in case of rain. If you volunteered to bring a table, please send me the dimensions, and plan to bring a plastic sheet to cover your table and protect it from wet pots.

YOUR PLANTS: Be sure each pot is clean, in good condition, and labeled with plant name and the appropriate symbols:

S	SUN
A	ANNUAL
SH	SHADE
P	PERENNIAL
PS	PART SUN/PART SHADE
B	BIENNIAL

Please remember to bring only plants native to the Denton/North Texas area. Check our website, www.npsot.org/TrinityForks, for the list of plants we know will be at the sale. Be sure to let me know what you are bringing so we can add to our list!

MORNING WORKERS: Enter the Courthouse Square at the corner of Hickory & Locust and you will be directed to our booth. The NPSOT booth will be next to the Keep Denton Beautiful booth. Please unload tables, canopies, & other **equipment at 8 a.m.**; unload **plants at 9 a.m.** Volunteers should then park in the lot behind the Wells Fargo Bank building. We'll wear our name tags so visitors know who we are. The Redbud Festival begins promptly at 10 and all unloading and set-up must be completed by then.

AFTERNOON WORKERS: We are required to stay open until 3pm. Please pick up your tables, etc. at that time or arrange for someone to come for you. Unsold plants will be donated for school wildflower or nature projects. If you know of a potential recipient project, please notify me before the day of

the Redbud Festival so we can make arrangements for dispersal of plants.

We still need a few more morning sales staff and many more in the afternoon and for take down/clean up. Thank you to all who have already done so much to get ready for our best sale ever! We are blessed to have so many energetic and dedicated members in our Trinity Forks Chapter. I'm looking forward to seeing you all at the Redbud Festival.

Ways & Means Chair, **Cathy Lustgarten** ☞
972-306-1088 / drgoodrad@comcast.net



Education Is Exciting!

Again, our thanks to Dr. **Becca Dickstein** for teaching us how to divide our tiny seedlings in preparation for transplanting. If you missed the January and February sessions of seed-planting, please don't hesitate to experiment on your own; now's the time to plant! Another thanks goes to our charter member, **Wilma Haggard**, who donated plants to our committee for the visitors' gifts in February.

In an effort for each of us to become more aware of the wildflowers that are surfacing, the Education Committee will provide a display of rosette plants for our **NAME-THAT-ROSETTE** challenge. It's not only a fun game to play, but in reality, it provides an awareness of the earliest stages of many of our wildflowers. If you learn to recognize the seedlings (of January and February games), and then learn to identify the rosettes of March, you'll most likely learn which tiny plants to leave in your flowerbed vs. discard as weeds. Come and learn with us on Thursday, March 24, 2005.

— Education Chair, **Dorothy Thetford** ☞



?? QUESTION POT ??

Look in this space each month to find answers to questions left in the Question Pot on a display table.

Q. I have small packages of wildflower seeds, and need to know how to plant.

A. Simple, simple! Broadcast or drop the seeds directly onto open soil. Do not broadcast across an area that is covered with thatch, or that is covered with **bermudagrass**. The seeds must connect with the soil. Plant prior to a forecasted rain and walk over the seeds to press them into the soil.

Q. When's the best time to transplant my beauty-berry seedling plants?

A. Now! **Beauty-berry** (*Callicarpa Americana*) develops a very substantial root, and should be transplanted as soon as the new plant emerges.

Q. I think I recognize rosettes of **black-eyed-Susans**, and would like to move them into my flowerbed.

A. Now's the time to transplant the rosettes of BES (*Rudbeckia hirta*). The sooner the better; and they do best in full sun.

Q. **Four-point evening primrose** rosettes have appeared everywhere. Should I move them?

A. Yes. Move them into your flowerbed, now. The plant (*Oenothera rhombipetala*) is in the rosette stage, but will bolt soon and provide a beautiful, small yellow flower that blooms at dusk each evening. Don't miss it!

Q. What is the tiny violet-colored flower in bloom now that is only 2-3 inches tall?

A. **Bluets** (*Houstonia pusilla*) are in full bloom, covering the ground and providing blankets of 1/4 inch blue-to-purple colored flowers. Watch where you step!

Q. A low plant with trumpet-shaped, yellow flowers is blooming in my open, sunny prairie. What is it?

A. **Fringed puccoon** (*Lithospermum incisum*) is in full bloom at this time. The small plant is only 4-6 inches tall, but provides a very frilly-edged flower.

Q. I would like to have several Avens plants to add to my shade flowerbed as a ground cover. Where may I find this plant?

A. Our chapter plant sale on April 9 should have **Avens** (*Geum canadense*), plus many others of interest. Avens provides a small white flower in the spring, and the foliage remains as a ground cover.

Prairies and Grasses

The February program was given by **Russell Stevens**, a Wildlife and Range Specialist with the **Noble Foundation** in Ardmore,

Oklahoma. This excellent presentation, accompanied with slides of 26 kinds of grasses, was full of both useful and academic information. We learned which grasses are better for erosion control, which are better for animal husbandry, which are better for wildlife, and which one's are more rugged. Some grasses are edible by only a few animals whereas other species provide forage and seed for many animals and birds. Some tall bunch grasses provide good screening from predators and wind protection for small animals and birds. Some grasses are hardier than other grasses; when conditions are good, the more hardy, that is, the high successional grasses, take over from the low successional grasses. Some

tough and hardy high successional grasses, like **Little Bluestem**, are good for landscaping because they spread very slowly.

There was a discussion on whether or not to cut grasses. The longer grasses can be cut each spring when new growth starts, if they are cut about three to four inches above the ground. Some bunch grasses that develop large clumps ought not to be planted in areas where cutting is desired. Shorter grasses, such as **Buffalograss** can also be cut only in the spring, although it can be trimmed on a regular basis without damage to the grass, if one enjoys cutting grass.

The essentialities of the grasses described in this presentation are available in the book: *Grasses of Southern Oklahoma and North Texas: A Pictorial Guide*, by Chuck Coffey and Russell Stevens. This lecture certainly opened my eyes to the large variety of grasses in this area. Thanks, Russell!

Secretary, **Lon Turnbull** ☞

"Wildflowers-of-Texas"

By Dorothy Thetford

Rosettes

January, February and March are the most challenging months of the wildflower season because one must learn to identify the emerging plant by its foliage instead of its flowers. Many of the new plants appear in a low-lying, flat, form that is commonly called a **rosette**. These are the secondary leaves of a new plant, and are normally arranged in an evenly spaced, circular design. You may find a rosette as small as a quarter or as large as twelve to fourteen inches in diameter. And, I must say that some of the rosettes are as beautiful as many of our wildflowers. There are several "winners."

The outer rim of the rosette is composed of larger and longer leaves, and each inner set of leaves decreases in size. It may be totally flat or it may be slightly elevated, depending on the fold of the leaves. For example, the native **gaura** rosette is totally flat whereas the large, hairy, spiny, creased leaves of the **thistle** may be one to two inches tall, but still in the flat stage. The rosette stage of development may last from 45 to 90 days following seed germination.

The early-blooming wildflowers are now in their rosette stage. In fact, **Texas bluebonnets** and **Mexican hat** (among others) were in rosette stage in late fall, and will be among the first plants to produce flowers this spring.

From the rosette stage, the plant will undergo a great change in appearance during growth and stem elongation. And once the plant reaches maturity, the basal leaves and/or rosette pattern may or may not be recognizable.

Rosettes are as interesting and intriguing as the mature plant, and much more challenging to identify. So, you're thinking, why bother? Well, when you learn to identify the small leaves of wildflowers in their rosette stage, it is extremely helpful when determining the best time to transplant. And, the best time to transplant is normally when the plant is very young and roots are very shallow, thus a greater likelihood of survival.

If your ranch or farm property is full of wildflowers, and you've always wanted to have some of the prairie plants moved into your landscaped

flowerbed, now's the time to make the move. If you can't identify rosettes, now's the time to learn. Stake or tag several rosettes in your flowerbed, or wherever, and watch their stages of development. Once the flower stem shoots upward and produces buds and flowers, mission accomplished. From then on, you'll be able to recognize the rosette and know when to transplant.

January, February and March are not the only months for rosettes, of course. In reality, rosettes are on-going. For every seed that germinates during the remaining months, many of them will be the rosette form. Take a close look at your flower garden, in your lawn, across your pasture, in your walking trails and especially in the voids among your native prairie clump grasses; you'll be amazed to find the beginnings of our wildflower season.

Granted, every rosette is different, every leaf structure is different, and the sizes vary, but here's a jump-start list of a few that are visible as of this writing. Rosettes listed by common names are: **wild red columbine, yellow columbine, golden groundsel, fall aster, prairie verbena, fleabane, cut-leaf daisy, phlox, avens, gulf-coast penstemon, coreopsis, Mexican hat, black-eyed Susan, Texas thistle, blue-eyed grass, anemone, violet, vervain, bergamot, and gaura.**

And the winner is . . . **Texas thistle**! With its 12-14 inch diameter span of spiny, textured, pubescent leaves, this rosette exemplifies the most magnificent kaleidoscopic pattern you'll ever see. Let me know if you agree.

Dorothy's "Wildflowers-of-Texas" photo-greeting cards are available locally at Denton's Wild Bird Center and Cupboard Natural Foods.



Lyre-leaf sage (*Salvia lyrata*): A great native plant for shady areas, also does well in sun.

By Becca Dickstein

Lyre-leaf sage is a plant that works well in our casual garden and should also work well in more formal gardens. My impression is that lyre-leaf sage is a popular plant in North Texas and in my experience, it should be. For this plant, I am indebted to two people who first told me about it, one of whom is familiar to members of the Trinity Forks chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas, **Mike Mizell**. The other is a friend, **Kate VandenBosch**, who was on the faculty at Texas A&M University for years and was a member of NPSOT in College Station, but has since moved to the upper Midwest. Thanks, Mike and Kate!

Lon and I have lyre-leaf sage in parts of our yard that get part-day sun, as well as in shade. I originally planted it on the advice of both Mike and Kate, who suggested it for shade and part-shade. When I lived up north, I was really fond of **ajuga** (bugleweed) as a ground cover, but I found out that ajuga does poorly in north Texas because of our hot summers. Kate suggested lyre-leaf sage as an ajuga substitute and it has done very well. Lon and I are pleased with the performance of this plant in our garden. It seems to make a very nice ground cover in shady areas, which fills the same gardening niche as ajuga farther north.

Lyre-leaf sage flowers in the spring, sending up a flower stalk of small pale lavender flowers that last about a week. Where we have planted it, there is a mass of lyre-leaf sages, so the flowers last about a month, with various plants sending up flowering stalks over the month period. The flower stalks are about 1 to 1½ feet high, but the leaves on the plant mostly stay quite close to the ground, thus serving as a low-growing ground cover. If you leave the flower stalks, they will turn brown and seeds will develop, and you will have many lyre-leaf seedling volunteers. If you cut the flower stalks, the plants will re-bloom over the summer and into fall, but not all at once.

One of the goals of our gardening efforts is to have green ground cover with little work, little maintenance, and little water. Lyre-leaf sage really fits into this goal. Before we planted lyre-leaf sage, we dug in a lot of cotton burr compost and green and lava sands to give a bed with a higher organic content. This was recommended by Wasowski and

Wasowski [1] (and for those trying to garden with native plants who don't have this book, I recommend it highly). Our initial two dozen or so lyre-leaf sages have thrived, self seeded, and volunteered near where they were planted. Fortunately, lyre-leaf sage is easy to dig up and transplant when it volunteers somewhere it's not wanted. What I do is take a weeding tool or a small trowel and remove the whole plant. Usually I set it in potting/bedding mix in a pot for several weeks for the roots to develop (I've found *Sunshine Mix* sold by Dennis' Farm Store to be a good all purpose bedding mix). Then I plant lyre-leaf sage where desired. Occasionally, I will move it directly to a new position in the garden, but if you try this, make sure the soil in the new position is loamy and somewhat moist. Lyre-leaf sage, when established, is drought tolerant. But remember, that no newly planted plant is drought tolerant until it has had time to establish its roots.

In our yard, lyre-leaf sage seems to do best in part-shade. In full shade, it grows more slowly than in part-shade, although importantly, it does survive there. So, we continue to plant it there. We haven't tried it in full sun. Wasowski and Wasowski [1] say that it does well in full sun and in virtually all soil types.

[1] Wasowski, S. and Wasowski, A. *Native Texas Plants*, 2nd ed. 1997. Lone Star Books, Houston, Texas. ☞

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CALENDAR

Saturday, March 19, 9:00am - 3:00pm ☞ **Visit Texas Discovery Gardens** (10 a.m. – noon, \$5/person). Take part in an Insect Safari led by Gail Manning, TDG staff entomologist. Discover a hidden world on this guided tour of the garden. Learn how to identify voracious garden predators and their prey. Eat lunch at a cafe on the Fair grounds. Afterward, **tour the Benny Simpson garden**, featuring primarily native trees and shrubs that Benny worked to introduce to north Texas. Leave from Luby's in Denton at 9:00am sharp; return by about 3:00pm. ☞

Thursday, March 24, 6:30 p.m. ☞ **TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER MEETING** at Texas Woman's University in the ACT Building. At 6:30, see Display Tables (*Name that Rosette*) and enjoy refreshments in the second floor lobby; program is at 7:00 p.m. in Room 301. The *EARLY BIRD SPECIAL* will be *Pressing Wildflowers*. **Dr. Howard Arnott** will present *Crystals in Plants*. ☞

Saturday, April 9, 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. ☞ **TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER SPRING PLANT SALE** on the Square in downtown Denton. Our spring plant sale is held in conjunction with the Redbud Festival, an environmental awareness event sponsored each year by Keep Denton Beautiful. This year we will feature a Kid's Korner for school-age children (and their parents). Make plans now to bring native plants from your garden, and invite your friends and neighbors to check us out! ☞

Mid April –Shooting Stars Galore! ☞ **Shirley Lusk** will be leading small groups to prime Shooting Star locations in Cooke County. Call her direct @940-384-1824 about joining one of her trips. ☞

Saturday, Apr 16, 8:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m. * ☞ Join NPAT (Native Prairies Association of Texas) for a tour of remnant prairies in Grayson Co. led by **Jeff Quayle**. See linear gilgai soil formations. Contact Jeff at s-quaylei@ev1.net or 817-738-1322 for details and to RSVP. Space is limited. ☞

Saturday, April 23, 2005, 9:00—12:00 ☞ **Denia Garden Workday**. The Native Plant Committee at **KEEP DENTON Beautiful** is asking for volunteers to help weed and plant, etc. Bring your gloves and gardening tools. Rain date is Feb. 26th. Contact **Cynthia Maguire** or **Owen Yost** for details. ☞

Saturday, April 23, 2005, 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.* ☞ Join NPAT for a trip to LBJ Grasslands near Decatur to see spring wildflowers. Led by **Jeff Quayle**. Space is limited. Contact Jeff at s-quaylei@ev1.net or 817-738-1322. ☞

Saturday, April 23, 2005, 12:30 p.m.—4:00 p.m. ☞ Join Denton Organic Society to tour **Judy Griffin's** beautiful Feng Shui garden of herbs and flowers in NE Ft. Worth. Judy uses herbs from her garden to formulate many herb products that she sells. She has a wealth of knowledge on using herbs for cooking/healing. Also, see how she makes tinctures, lotions, etc. Leave Denton at 12:30pm from the Cracker Barrel Restaurant. ☞

Thursday, April 28, 6:30 p.m. ☞ **TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER MEETING** at Texas Woman's University in the ACT Building. At 6:30, see Display Tables (*Name that Wildflower*) and enjoy refreshments in the second floor lobby; program is at 7:00 p.m. in Room 301. The *EARLY BIRD*

SPECIAL will be *Guidelines/requirements for collecting and pressing herbarium-quality specimens*. **Bill Lindemann**, a past president of NPSOT, will present *Big Bend National Park: A Naturalist's Dreamland*. Bill is currently writing a book on the Trans-Pecos region. His program will inspire you to go to the Fall Symposium! ☞

Saturday, April 30, 2005, 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m. * ☞ Join NPAT for a tour of 2 prairie sites in Ft. Worth led by **Jeff Quayle**. Space is limited. Contact Jeff at s-quaylei@ev1.net or 817-738-1322 for details and to RSVP. ☞

Saturday, May 7, 2005, 10:00—11:00 a.m. ☞ **Tour Wilma Haggard's** property in SE Denton. She has 35 acres of combined woodlands and meadows filled with a wide variety of beautiful wildflowers. It is officially managed for wildlife. Wilma is a charter member of our chapter and has a long history of dedication to preserving native plants. Meet at her house, 1900 S. Mayhill Road (across from the city landfill) at 10:00a.m. ☞

Saturday, May 21, 2005, 9:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m. ☞ Annual Nature Conservancy tour of **Clymer Meadow, Parkhill Prairie, and Paul Matthews Prairie** in Collin and Hunt Counties, NE of McKinney. Led by **Jim Eidson**. Contact him at 903-568-4139 or jeidson@tnc.org. ☞

Saturday, May 21, 2005, 12:30—4:00 p.m. ☞ Join Denton Organic Society for a tour of **Lucy Harrell's** yard in south Arlington. Lucy is a professional landscaper. She uses a variety native, well-adapted, and old garden favorite flowers right around her house, but out front along the extended entrance drive is a large wildflower meadow. Seeing her yard is a real treat. Leave Denton at 12:30pm from Luby's cafeteria. ☞

Thursday, May 26, 6:30 p.m. ☞ **TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER MEETING** at Texas Woman's University in the ACT Building. At 6:30, see Display Tables (*Name that Wildflower*) and enjoy refreshments in the second floor lobby. The *EARLY BIRD SPECIAL* will be *Pressing leaves of trees* in preparation for our September meeting. At 7:00 p.m. in Room 301 **Dr. George Diggs** will present *The Cross Timbers across Time--a History of Cross Timbers Forest Plants*. ☞

Saturday, June 18 ☞ **All-day** trip to beautiful Gardens at Athens, southeast of Dallas. Details will follow soon. ☞

Thursday, August 25, 6:30 p.m. ☞ **TRINITY FORKS ICE CREAM SOCIAL and BOOK SIGNING** at Texas Woman's University. **Dr. George Diggs** and **Barney Lipscomb** from BRIT will bring their new *East Texas Flora Volume I*. ☞

*On NPAT trips with Jeff Quayle, the starting times listed are the time to meet at the tour site. Ending times are estimates.

For details on any trip, contact Mike Mizell, 940-382-8551 or mmizell@webtv.net.

THE TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER MEETS THE 4TH THURSDAY OF JAN–MAY AND SEPT–OCT AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE ADMINISTRATION AND CLOCK TOWER (ACT) BUILDING AT TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY (OAKLAND AVE & ADMIN. DR.) IN DENTON, TEXAS.

Membership News

At the February 24 meeting, there were 65 persons in attendance. Many were guests were from the **Texas Master Naturalists** and the **Upper Clear Creek Wildlife Management Association**.

Two new members joined that night: **Amy Jo Hammett**, a student at Texas Woman’s University, and **Sharon Gentry** of Flower Mound. Earlier, **D.J. Taylor** of Sanger joined Trinity Forks. We’d like to welcome them all to NPSOT and look forward to their association with our chapter. Please add our new members to your current directory:

Amy Jo Hammett
3221 Brooke Street
Denton, TX 76207
940-206-5786
1amyjo@mail.twu.edu

Sharon Gentry
2750 Bob White Lane
Flower Mound, TX 75022
972-539-8332
Sharon.gentry@verizon.net

D.J. Taylor
12290 Blakely Ln.
Sanger, TX 76266
940-458-4979
djsanger@airmail.net

There have been several membership renewals this year. They include: **Glena Allen, Irene Hanson, Cynthia Maguire** and **Yvonne Reasoner**.
Membership, **Laurie Hammett** ☞



Announcements

Wanted: **homemade ice cream freezers** for the August ice cream social. Please contact **Marilyn Martin** if you have a freezer or would be willing to make a batch of ice cream. ☞

Our chapter has selected \$500 worth of free trees (part of a donation from **Schobel’s Tree Farm** in Columbus, Texas). Do you have a vehicle with a trailer hitch? If so, we need your help to transport the trees to Denton. A covered 4x8 foot trailer is also needed. Please contact any officer if you can help. ☞

Needed: a new newsletter editor! Please contact **Cynthia Maguire** if you would like to help.

Current Officers/Board Members

President & Newsletter Editor	940-594-6555
Cynthia Maguire	<i>c.maguire@charter.net</i>
Vice President for Outreach	940-382-2099
Owen Yost	<i>Yost87@charter.net</i>
Secretary	940-323-8999
Lon Turnbull	<i>lont58@aol.com</i>
Treasurer	940-382-0957
Caroline Polliard	
Education	940-382-9344
Dorothy Thetford	<i>dtbetford@mailstation.com</i>
Field Trips	940-382-8551
Mike Mizell	<i>mmizell@webtv.net</i>
Historian & Programs	817-847-1816
Harriet Horton	<i>Harriet_Horton@hotmail.com</i>
Hospitality	940-382-8014
Marilyn Martin	<i>marilyn_martin@hotmail.com</i>
Membership	940-383-3287
Laurie Hammett	<i>laurie.hammett@verizon.net</i>
Publicity	972-539-9471
Irene Hanson	<i>ICHanson@metkspan.com</i>
Ways & Means	972-306-1088
Cathy Lustgarten	<i>drgoodrad@comcast.net</i>



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

Texas natives are designed for hummingbirds

When I think of ideal hummingbird “magnets,” natives like **coral honeysuckle, desert willow, passionflower, yellow bells, hibiscus, standing cypress** and **columbine** are a few that come to mind. The shape of their flowers is a mirror-image of the front third of a hummingbird. So a hummingbird can easily get to the flower’s pollen (at the flower’s center, like a bull’s eye) and spread it around.

As we know, they’re going after the flowers’ nectar - a rich, sticky, sweet liquid that attracts lots of birds and insects. Nectar that approximates this natural liquid can be made with pure sugar. A solution of 4 or 5 parts of clean water to 1 part pure sugar, boiled and cooled, works best. Make absolutely sure the sugar is totally, 100% pure, and don’t add coloring of any kind. Food coloring has never been proven to be effective. In fact, it probably will introduce tiny bits of bacteria, which will rapidly multiply in our heat and affect your whole batch of nectar.

There are certainly other natives that attract hummingbirds, such as **lantana, salvia, verbena, ironweed, Turk’s cap** and **winecup**. A good backyard habitat is a combination of the natural and the man-made. Although hummingbirds take nectar with enthusiasm, they also need insects in their diet (they eat gnats, mites and other small insects along with nectar). But they don’t want them in the nectar. So if ants (or other bugs) are finding the nectar, a simple ant trap puts that to a stop. If bees are a problem, you might plant several of the native **penstemon** which can deter bees, according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. (The **hill country penstemon** is particularly good.) Since most hummingbird feeders are red (or some other bright color), they’ll see it from a distance. But most insects are less inclined to feed on bright flowers, particularly red ones. Since, over millennia, hummingbirds learned to get insect-free nectar from red flowers, they investigate red first.

Hummingbird “scouts” appear here in early April. They’re here in full force by late May, and migrate south in early October. To have hummingbirds in your yard all season long, you need to address their nesting and chick-rearing needs as well. Hummingbirds need trees, shrubs or vines for nest sites, plant fiber for building nests, spider webs for lashing nests onto branches, lichens and mosses for camouflage, roosting spots for resting and, of course, flowers for feeding. They also need vegetation to hide from predators.

Give them a good home this season by giving them what they want and need. Then, after spending the winter in Costa Rica (or wherever) it’s a good bet the very same hummingbirds, and maybe their friends and relatives, will find their way to the native plants in your yard next season too.

— *G. Owen Yost* ☞

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