



Trinity Forks Native Plant Press

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

May 2006

from the Prez

Happy trails

Spring has almost gone around the corner and Summer is upon us. Vacation thoughts loom large and our gardens take on the bright hues of red, purple and orange that say, “*Summer!*” in a special way. Each year I enjoy watching nature’s cycle unfold in my back yard. Even more, I enjoy watching others get pleasure from it, too. One special way to reach out to others is to invite them to our gardens and share some time together visiting and admiring God’s handiwork. Have a friend over and share your excitement for native plants and gardening—it’s a sure-fire opportunity to persuade them to *Grow Native!*

I took my own advice this week and learned that my friend, **Melissa Bodnar**, was originally drawn to Texas because of our native wildflowers. She had never seen such plants as **rock rose** (*Pavonia lasiopetalus*) and **Turk’s cap** (*Malvastrum drummondii*), **cedar sage** (*Salvia roemeriana*), **Mexican feathergrass** (*Stipa tenuissima*) and **fleabane** (*Erigeron* sp.) collected in a home landscape before. We were both excited to view my garden through her newcomer’s eyes.

Looking forward a bit, there’s another occasion coming up to share a garden with friends.

Thursday August 24th will be our second annual **Ice Cream Social**. If you missed it last year, don’t make the same mistake twice!! We had good fun and games (*remember the water balloons?*), great ice cream, and a lovely stroll through the Benny Simpson Memorial Garden on the TWU campus. Consider this your personal invitation to join in the fun this year. Bring a freezer of home-made ice cream if you have one, or a few cookies if you don’t. By all means, bring the family. This event is for kids of all ages!

On a personal note, a different kind of new life has happened at our house this spring. My husband, **Patrick**, received a long-awaited kidney transplant in March. Many of you have sent cards, called and prayed for us during a difficult recovery period. His new kidney is now awake and working and he is feeling stronger every day. We look forward to freedom from daily dialysis treatments and more time to spend pursuing an abundant life because of this blessing—including a week in the Big Bend region this summer. Thank you one and all for your prayers and support!

As we continue working our way “*from the ground-up*” this month, we’ve still got our hands in the dirt. **Dr. Al Knauf** will be our guide for the next step on our journey. See the front page article for details.

Between now and August I wish you all a restful break from daily chores, an opportunity to enjoy nature, and safe travel.

Cynthia Maguire, President ☪



May Program

Soil Science for Plant Lovers will be our topic as we take a close look at dirt with **Dr. Al Knauf**. He will help us consider how a little knowledge can assist in growing our favorite natives. Dr. Knauf has presented other programs to us in the past and we’re fortunate that he is able to come again this May. He provides good information and good entertainment, too.

An A&M graduate with a Ph.D. in woody plant physiology, Dr. Knauf has taught the beloved Texas Wildflowers course at Texas Woman’s University for many years. He is also busy consulting on various plant-related issues around the globe.

Ya’ll come on **Thursday, May 25th** and bring a friend. It’s another great way to encourage them to *Grow Native!* Meet us on the 2nd floor of the TWU ACT Bldg. at 6:30 p.m. for refreshments.

Four-Point Evening Primrose (*Oenothera rhombipetala*)

Each of us has voiced concern about the lack of wildflowers this spring, but in reality, they're arriving a bit later than normal, and possibly fewer in number due to the lack of timely rain.

The **cut-leaf daisy** (*Engelmannia peristenia*) has filled our roadsides during the past couple of weeks, following the **showy primrose** (*Oenothera speciosa*), **prairie** or **rose verbena** (*Glandularia canadensis*), **Indian blanket** (*Gaillardia pulchella*), and **fragrant phlox** (*Phlox pilosa*). However, one of the newest kids on the block began blooming this week, and is commonly called **four-point evening primrose**, botanically named *Oenothera rhombipetala*.

This latest bloomer is a brighter, lighter yellow color and is often camouflaged among the cut-leaf daisies. Both plants are about the same height, two to three feet tall, with flowers on the upper stems, and normally found in sandy disturbed soils.

The 3/4 to 1-inch diameter flowers of the evening primrose are on a six to ten-inch tall spike, tightly packed and arranged vertically with almost no branching from the stem. By the time the buds mature and flowers begin blooming from the bottom of the spike, the flower spike develops a cone shape or pyramidal design.

Four diamond-shaped, yellow petals open into a slightly cupped flower late in the afternoon attracting the night moth pollinators with its evening fragrance.

A four-point evening primrose plant may be single or multi-stemmed. From the lower woody stem grows a profusion of narrowly lanceolate leaves that are two to four inches long and one inch wide at their broadest point. However, the spiralling leaves become denser and smaller on the upper stem, none of them having a petiole (leaf stalk).

Being a biennial (completing its life cycle in two years, normally blooming only the second year), it is extremely important that this plant not be mowed before the seeds are mature.

Four-point evening primrose blooms in North Central Texas in mid to late May-June which means that this is prime time to check out the roadsides and enjoy its beauty.

Dorothy Thetford
"Wildflowers-of-Texas"

*Dorothy's wildflower photo cards are available locally
at Cupboard Natural Foods & Cafe.*



Call for items for 2006 Annual Report

Composing the Annual Report for Trinity Forks Chapter is no easy task. The first step is actually the hardest: data must be collected. More on that in a moment! Once the information is in hand, it needs organizing and typesetting into a "one page wonder," so-called because there is a one page limit and it is a wonder anyone ever gets it all to fit on one page!

Realizing the importance of a complete record, last winter **Dorothy Thetford** organized our chapter report into a format that is closely aligned with the NPSOT mission statement in order to better display the fruit of our labors. She was ably assisted by **Shirley Lusk**, **Cathy Lustgarten**, **Caroline Polliard**, **Kathy Saucier** and others in this task. Now, all we need do is follow their format. If you've not seen the revised report, printed copies will be available at the sign-in table this month.

Now back to step one: this is where **YOU** come in! Please compile your personal activities on behalf of the Trinity Forks Chapter for this calendar year and send to **Cynthia Maguire** via email (c.maguire@charter.net) or mail (**2412 Shenandoah Trail, Denton TX 76210**). Here are the types of items we want to include in our annual report.

- Educational outreach—through chapter programs and via the educational committee, professional and other forums, fieldtrips, programs members present to other groups, and projects in which members participate or advise the public
- Outreach to the community via donations, example setting, and publicity
- Ways and Means
- Membership

There is much more data that comes from what individuals and small groups or committees do. (You can see the types of activities by reading the 2005 Annual Report). Ideally members regularly report their activities throughout the year. Historically, members of Trinity Forks have put this off until the last moment, causing the chapter leader(s) to spend much energy in August trying to get it together at the last moment. We estimate as much as 100 hours goes into calling, asking, arranging and formatting data. **Your participation and help reporting NOW will ease the task then.**

The executive committee of NPSOT bases their decision as to which chapter will receive the "Chapter of the Year" award on the annual chapter reports each fall. The chapter reports are also used by the state office to compile data on what we all accomplish as a whole. Good reporting and editing creates a good annual report. Let's make our 2006 report our best—and most complete—ever. Who knows? It may lead to an unprecedented fourth "Chapter of the Year" award for Trinity Forks!

Harriet Horton, Historian ☞
Cynthia Maguire, President ☞



Operation NICE!

Plant of the Season

for

Summer 2006:

Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus drummondii*)

A plant well-suited for a shade garden

by Becca Dickstein

For Summer 2006, the Trinity Forks Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas' Natives Instead of Common Exotics (NICE!) program is highlighting **Turk's Cap** (*Malvaviscus drummondii*) for use in North Texas gardens and landscapes.

Turk's Cap is a shrubby perennial that will reach 2-4 feet by the end of the summer: taller in areas where it receives some sun, shorter when it is in full shade. In spring, stems with heart-shaped leaves emerge from the base. The leaves are soft and velvety on the underside. Turk's Cap starts to bloom in late spring and continues until frost. The name "Turk's Cap" comes from the bright red flowers that resemble a Turkish fez. The flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies. In the fall, Turk's Cap produces little pumpkin-shaped red seedpods that contain a number of viable seed, eaten by a variety of birds. In our area, Turk's Cap dies completely to the ground with the first freeze and remains dormant until the spring. Turk's Cap's bloom period extends from late May/early June until frost.

Turk's Cap is a plant for full, dappled, or partial shade. This plant likes well-drained soil and will grow best in soil that has been

amended with organic matter like compost. Allow 3-5 feet between plants. After planting, water well and mulch. Turk's Cap should be watered once every other week until established. After it is established, Turk's Cap only needs supplemental watering during a prolonged drought; Turk's Cap is a tough as well as beautiful Texas native. The plant will spread slowly – its roots spread horizontally – and can be dug up and divided after several years. Do not over water or it may rot.



This is an interesting and beautiful ornamental plant for a shade garden, including deep shade. Consider using Turk's Cap in areas where

you might plant azaleas or other shrubs. Remember that Turk's Cap needs much less soil preparation than azaleas do.

Look for the NICE! Plant of the Season signs and information sheets on your next visit to a participating North Texas nursery. And thank you for supporting native plants by using them in your landscapes.

Dr. Becca Dickstein is a member of the Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas, and the Biological Sciences faculty at the University of North Texas.

Photo credit: Cindy Murdoch

Natives Instead of Common Exotics!
Trinity Forks Plants of the Season for 2006

Spring – Yellow Columbine

(Aquilegia chrysantha/ binckleyana/ longissima)

Summer – Turk’s Cap

(Malvastrum arboreum var. drummondii)

Fall – American Beautyberry

(Callicarpa Americana)

Winter – Sideoats Grama (state grass]

(Bouteloua curtipendula)

Coming in 2007

Spring - Coral Honeysuckle

(Lonicera sempervirens)

Summer - Mexican Hat

(Ratibida columnaris)

Fall – Gayfeather

(Liatris mucronata)

Winter – Possumhaw Holly

(Ilex decidua)

Introducing our NICE! Committee members:

Marilyn Blanton & Kathy Saucier, co-coordinators

Mark Chapin - Mary Curry - Becca Dickstein - Fonda Fox

Laurie Hammett - Harriet Horton - Shirley Lusk

Elizabeth McMath - Mike Mizell - Patrick Peterson – Patti Pierce - Jeremy Voss

Look for the NICE! Plant of the Month signs and information sheets
 on your next visit to a participating North Texas nursery.

Current participating nurseries include:

Decatur Garden Center–Decatur

Four Seasons Nursery–Denton

Green Mama’s–North Richland Hills

Huggin’s Nursery–Flower Mound

Lantana Nursery–Bartonville

Meador’s Nursery–Denton

Painted Flower Farm–Denton

Shades of Green Nursery–Frisco.

Be sure to tell them thanks!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We welcome one new member who has joined the Trinity Forks Chapter since April 20, 2006:

Marti Wall

In the same period, renewals have been received from:

Sharon Gentry - Amy Jo Hammett - Jane Davis Lucas - Karen & Jeff Mangum - Mike Mizell - Lyle & Patricia Nordstrom - Jean Ellen Rogers

Seventy-two members and guests were present at our April meeting.

Laurie Hammett, Membership ☞

CALENDAR

Sat, May 20, 9:45 a.m. ☞ Tour Don & Marilee Kenney's Painted Flower Farm and see various methods used to propagate a variety of plants. Meet at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant (on I-35 Service Road north of Hwy 380). Or join us at the Farm at 10:00 a.m. – 3801 Lariat Rd., Denton – West of I35E, 1 block N of 380 – turn right on Marshall Road – farm @ corner of Lariat & Marshall Rds. ☞

Thu, May 25, 6:30 p.m. ☞ TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER MEETING at Texas Woman's University in the ACT Building. At 6:30, see Display Tables and enjoy refreshments in the second floor lobby; program begins at 7:00 p.m. in Room 301. **Dr. Al Knauf**, a woody plant physiologist from Texas A&M will present *Soil Science for Plant Lovers*. ☞

Sat, Jun 3, 8 a.m. to Noon – Tour Tierra Verde Golf Course operated by Arlington Parks Dept. Committed to environmental excellence, it was developed under Audubon guidelines. Much of its 256 acres are preserved in a natural state, so expect an abundance of wildlife and wildflowers. Leave Denton at 8:00am from Luby's Cafeteria on I-35 just south of Loop 288. Return around noon. ☞

Thu., Aug 24, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. ☞ TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER ICE CREAM SOCIAL at Texas Woman's University. Ya'll bring the kids and come have a ball! Homemade ice cream, and fun and games for all. ☞

Thu, Sep 28, 6:30 p.m. ☞ TRINITY FORKS CHAPTER MEETING at Texas Woman's University in the ACT Building. At 6:30, see Display Tables and enjoy refreshments in the second floor lobby; program begins at 7:00 p.m. in Room 301. Program topic TBA. ☞

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



Current Officers/Board Members

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Publicity/Webmaster	972.539.9471
Irene Hanson	<i>ICHanson@metlspan.com</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 3017, Fredericksburg, TX 78624.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address 2: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

New Prices effective May 1.

- () Student \$15 () Senior Individual (65 and over) \$20
 () Senior Couple (at least one age 65 and over) \$30
 () Individual \$25 () Couple/Family \$40
 () Group \$50 () Patron \$100 () Benefactor \$250
 () Supporting \$500 () Corporate Sponsor \$1,000
 () Lifetime (one-time payment; includes couples \$1,000)

Many Native Plants Owe Their Existence to Bats

by Owen Yost

Bats make up about a quarter of all the animal species on earth, and account for a huge number of our native plants being pollinated and their seeds distributed. In north Texas, the native plants they're likely to pollinate include **wright acacia, fern acacia, partridgeberry, foxglove, wood violet, parsley hawthorn, Mexican plum, rain lily, and yucca**. A complete plant list would include almost every native plant in existence.

The bats here are tiny (bodies about the size of your thumb), virtually harmless, and eat roughly 5,000 flying insects a night - EACH. Without them, many of our native plants would be very, very hard to find. Since they fly when it's dark out, the white blooms, which can be seen easier in the dark, are more apt to be pollinated by bats, rather than by birds and insects, which are out and about mostly during the day.

Some plants, particularly fruiting ones, would probably not be around at all if bats disappeared. These include **peaches, bananas, figs, mangos, dates** and **cashews**. Several cacti, such as **saguaro, organ-pipe** and the **agave** plant (the basis for tequila) are about 99% bat-pollinated, the remainder being done by wind.

Encouraging bats is an ideal way to boost the pollination of your native plants, and restore balance to our ecology. Scores and scores of past generations of bats have learned to seek out the plants that grow here naturally, not the exotics. As a bonus, they'll silently rid the air of lots and lots of flying insects.

Owen Yost is a Denton Landscape Architect, a former Trinity Forks chapter president and co-owner of Denton's Wild Bird Center.

Native Plant Society of Texas
Trinity Forks Chapter
P.O. Box 425491
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www.npsot.org/TrinityForks
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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