



Trinity Forks Native Plant Press

The Newsletter of Trinity Forks Chapter
Native Plant Society of Texas

April 2008

From the Prez (Cathy Lustgarten)

We had another fantastic Natives Only Plant Sale, slightly exceeding all our previous sales. The weather was splendid, which we definitely deserved after the last 2 years! We owe a huge debt of thanks to the 2 nurseries who supported us with plants on consignment -- Painted Flower Farm in Denton and Shades of Green in Frisco. Please give these folks your patronage, and be sure to thank them for helping us while you are there.

We also had a tremendous turnout by members, plus support with your plant donations numbering close to 800 plants. At the end of the sale, we donated 45 plants for the Calhoun Middle School garden and the landscaping for the new Clear Creek Natural History Area visitors center. Five new members joined during the sale. Please give a big welcome to Ivy Doak, Will and Mattie Evans, Cheryl Kesterson, Cheri Moorhead, and Gary Truitt. Best of all, we had lots of fun!

Thirty members signed our "Members on Purpose" attendance list, and 19 helped with the sale. If you were at the sale but think you forgot to sign the attendance sheet, please notify me at once. All 30 names plus those of our 5 new members will be entered in a drawing at the April chapter meeting for a chance to win the decorated plant press that was on display during the sale. Regardless of who wins it, all of you give yourselves a big pat on the back from Trinity Forks!

As you will note in the next column, we have a **temporary change of location for the April and May meetings** while the ACT building is being renovated.

Hope to see you there.

TF President Cathy Lustgarten is nuts about natives and the people who love them!

April 24 Meeting

Steven Ray, District Conservationist with the Denton USDA NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) will present a program on native grass restoration and management practices and the USDA conservation programs available to landowners.

Our **meeting location** for this month will be room 313 in the Arts & Science building located on Oakland St. just SW of the Clock Tower bldg. Enter from Oakland St. There are 2 parking lots along Oakland that are close to the A & S building. No food is allowed in the building, so we have to forgo the usual treats. However, chatting is allowed and encouraged. So gather at 6:30 for displays and chatting, as usual, just in a new location.

Members' Yard Tour – Sat, May 3, 1-5pm

TF members have graciously volunteered to let us all visit their native landscapes for our inspiration and education – Jeremy Voss & Patrick Peterson, Irene Hanson, and Lon Turnbull & Becca Dickstein. Meet at the TWU parking lot on Oakland directly west of the Clock Tower building at 1pm sharp. Please plan to carpool to minimize the number of cars, since we will be covering a lot of distance.

Trinity Forks Chapter of NPSOT meets on the fourth Thursday of January through May and September and October. Sign-in, social time with refreshments, educational displays, etc. starts at 6:30. The program begins at 7:00pm.

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.

Make every day Earth Day -- Grow Native

WILDFLOWER AWARENESS

by Dorothy Brown Thetford

Common name: Indian paintbrush
 Botanical name: *Castilleja indivisa*
 Family Scrophulariaceae

Indian paintbrush lovers beware; check out the roadsides and soak in the beginning displays of paintbrush while their colors are vibrant and, more importantly, before the grasses engulf their beauty. Oh yes, we are indeed grateful for the spring rains (without hail), but so are the grasses and weeds! April welcomes the debut of this colorful native wildflower into North Central Texas (NCT).

The roadsides south of Dallas on Interstate 35 (toward Austin and beyond) display miles and miles of paintbrushes that were planted by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) beginning in the early 1930's. Enforced policy of deferred mowing in those counties provides natural seed production and perpetual wildflower displays year after year. Thank you TxDOT.

I suspect that you've seen varying colors of this paintbrush and often wondered (from your moving vehicle) if they were all the *Castilleja indivisa*. Yes, their colors vary from pale lemon yellow to pink to pale orange to reddish-orange. Texans to the southwest lay claim to ownership of the reddish-orange flowers, whereas we in NCT see a dominating salmon-to-orange color. We welcome all.

Resembling brushes that have been dipped in orange paint, the leaf-like bracts actually provide the eye-catching color, while the small, white-to-yellow, tubular-shaped flower, jutting out between the bracts, draws little fanfare

New, young leaves are very narrow (only 1/8-1/4 inch wide) and 2 to 4 inches long, alternate, and sessile or subsessile (without a pedicel, petiole, or stalk). Mature leaves are entire or with narrow lobes and approximately 3/4 inch wide. In reality, the pale green slender leaves blend in with the early spring grasses making it difficult to find the plants until the colorful bracts appear. The neighboring grasses serve as host plants as the paintbrush roots parasitize for additional nutrients.

The single or several-stemmed clump begins blooming when it reaches a height of 6 to 8 inches, and continues providing new color as it grows and blooms upward to a maximum height of 12 to 15 inches.

To appreciate its symmetrical design, along with the fantastic color combinations, look straight down at the top of a mature flower and witness nature's amazing kaleidoscope.

Even though Indian paintbrush's primary bloom period is April and May, we often see a few stragglers throughout the summer. Preserve and protect this annual/biennial by allowing it to reseed before mowing; it's truly a gift of nature.

Dorothy, a Trinity Forks member since 1992 and a former president, is a roving ambassador for wildflowers with her "Wildflowers-of-Texas" photo cards and programs. Her cards are available locally at Cupboard Natural Foods & Cafe in Denton.



Trinity Forks Memories

by Dorothy Thetford

Gee, Owen's article in our March 2008 newsletter triggered some fun thoughts of yester-year, and as my mind raced through those thoughts, I realized that some of our newer members might enjoy learning the history of the Wildflower Prairie. Thus, I'll consider this an addendum to Owen's walk through Denton's North Lakes Prairie.

While serving as president for our chapter the second time around, I had the good fortune of knowing and working with Ken Struthers while he was Manager of the TWU Bookstore. My wildflower photo cards, being marketed under his management, led to many gardening discussions....and thus our friendship, on a business level, evolved into a common interest in native plants. [He and Karen joined our Trinity Forks chapter and were very active until his retirement and their move to Arizona.]

Within the first year, I got a call from Ken who said he needed to talk with me as soon as possible. He had a story to tell me, and did he ever. At dusk of the previous evening, while he and his son were loading their fishing gear at North Lakes, they witnessed an arsonist setting fire to the area that Owen mentioned. Long story short....the fire burned about 1/4 acre of the park. Fire fighters and police completed that scene.

However, what evolved from that burned area was a fun project for Trinity Forks members. I invited Steve Weinhager (then a UNT Ph.D. student and very involved in the Society for Ecological Restoration, now employed by LBJ Wildflower Center) to join us at the burned site and advise us how we could restore the area with native wildflowers. I also invited Nona Muncie, then Parks Dept Horticulturist, to join us for tossing ideas around. Great gathering, plus, the Denton Record Chronicle sent a photographer to the scene. Front page coverage, and, we were given the nudge to go for it !!!

Ken and I brainstormed for a couple of meetings and devised a plan that would provide a U-shaped path through the center of the burned area, and thus we divided the outer perimeter into pie-shaped wedges of garden plots and the center into 3 sections. With our plan feebly drawn out to represent a map of sorts, we presented the idea to our chapter members,

baiting to see if anyone would play our landscape rehab game. Lo-n-behold, all but 3 plots were seized for ownership. Ken & I adopted those 3. Each owner was responsible for planting, watering and maintaining his plot until the plants could survive independently.

So, that part went well....very well. However, the fun had only begun.

Nona provided us 8-to-5 access to her shredded bark mulch piles. Got it? 8-5, while our members were all at work. So, Elizabeth McMath in her sturdy maroon pickup, Ken in his 'workhorse,' Lisa Euchner in 'ol' blue' and I in my zippy little S15 made umpteen trips to Nona's 2-story gold mine of mulch. Yep, we shoveled and shoveled and shoveled mulch up into those pickups. Great exercise, we said. But, that was only half of the mulch story. We hauled each load to the park knowing that we also had to shovel each load out when we reached the park. Wheelbarrow? Great exercise, we said. There is no telling how much mulch was shoveled in, hauled to, unloaded out, wheeled to and spread over our 5-ft. wide pathway loop.

Small rocks were gathered from the park to be used as lines between the plots. Plant dates were scheduled, members brought seeds, plants and water, and the prairie began. We worked feverishly tromping through the black soot.

Nona had a new gate designed and installed to keep 4-wheel vehicles from invading the area, and, she also arranged to have the "Wildflower Prairie" sign added to the park's sign on Windsor.

Gee, does anyone else remember this project?

Education - Outreach - Example



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



September 2008

Website: www.npsot.org/TrinityForks

Trinity Forks Contact Information

President - Cathy Lustgarten 972-306-1088

drgoodrad@verizon.net

Secretary - Lon Turnbull, 940-323-8999

Treasurer - Joan Phelps, 940-898-2860

Membership-Laurie Hammett 940-383-3287

Hospitality - Fonda Fox, 940-627-2343

Newsletter - Mike Mizell, 940-382-8551

birdmizell@msn.com

Membership Corner

We give a big Thank-You to all these folks who have renewed their memberships in Trinity Forks since May. Hope to see you at the next meeting. You are what makes Trinity Forks special!

John E. Vandigriff

Fritz Poppe

Lisa Euchner

Hugh Garnett

Debbie Van Ness

Mary Curry

Dorothy & Alan Thetford

W.R. Mote

Marshall & Fonda Fox

Elizabeth McMath

Julie Kidd

Stanley Lovelace

Trinity Forks Chapter of NPSOT meets on the fourth Thursday of January through May and September and October. Sign-in, social time with refreshments, educational displays, etc. start at 6:30 on the 2nd floor of the Administration & Clock Tower (ACT) building at Texas Woman's University in Denton. ACT is located at Oakland Ave. & Administration Drive. The program begins at 7:00pm on the 3^d floor.

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.