



Trinity Forks Native Plant Press

The Newsletter of Trinity Forks Chapter
Native Plant Society of Texas

March 2008

From the Prez (Cathy Lustgarten)

A Purpose-Driven Plant Sale

The purpose of the native plant society is ... (see the entire statement elsewhere in this & every newsletter if you aren't sure) ... by education, outreach, and example. A society can do nothing without the actions of its individual members. Our annual spring plant sale is an activity in which EVERY member should be participating in one way or another. Nothing else we do all year gives us greater visibility in our community. It is our prime opportunity to spread our message, educate the public, encourage others to help us "conserve and utilize", show off the wonderful plants we are all so crazy about, and raise the funds needed to operate our chapter. And shoot – mingle with your friends and have a lot of fun. It's a FESTIVAL, so come whoop it up!

And a new event this year: Let's see how many NPSOTers we can fit into the plant sale booth at one time! Sign the "Members-on-Purpose" Register and you might just win a prize! Every one of you has an important role to play no matter how much or how little you already know about natives yourself. I already know of 3-4 people who will be out of town that weekend and can't join the party. That leaves about 85 of you to come Walk the Walk and Talk the Talk, and I sincerely hope to see all 85 of you on Saturday April 12. Even if you can't tie on an apron and help out for an hour or two, consider coming for at least 20 minutes just to window shop, say hi to old or new pals, sign the Register, and enjoy the other booths at the Redbud Festival. But while you are there, please make it your personal mission to give advice or suggestions to at least one stranger in our plant sale booth, or even just a warm smile and a glowing comment about how wonderful native plants are. It's really that easy to be a Purposeful Member.

The purpose of the native plant society is ... you. But without you, we are nothing at all.

TF President Cathy Lustgarten has been crazy about wildflowers since she was knee-high to a plant press.

Informational Minute

A volunteer is needed immediately to present a minute's worth of "Gee Whizz" at the March meeting. And April and May. Notify Cathy L that you want to do this. Keep it going!

March 27 Meeting

Master Naturalist Jim Varnum presents Botanical (A)musings where he explores the world of plants and plant naming, like how our state flower, the Texas bluebonnet, became known as *Lupinus texensis*. The presentation is not all serious and technical; Jim includes some of his nature jokes and trivia and interesting names of plants and animals. Finally Jim caps off the evening with a discussion of his very special plant. You have to attend to find out what it is.

Jim is a self-taught student of nature where his interests range from birds to plants to prairies to land preservation. He spends much time searching for native plants out-and-about in the DFW Metroplex. Jim and his wife Stephanie have recently purchased an old ranch in Hunt County and have begun to restore it back to a native prairie. Jim is a Texas Master Naturalist and on the board of the Texas Land Trust Council. And he recently retired from the board of the Native Prairies Association of Texas. He also teaches and leads trail walks on birds, trees, wildflowers and prairies.

This will be followed up with a field trip to Clear Creek Preserve in Denton on Sunday, March 30th from 2-4 pm. See trip list on p. 2 for more details

Spring Plant Sale – April 12

Our annual Spring Plant Sale as part of Keep Denton Beautiful Redbud Day Festival. It's back at the Civic Center this year. We will have an information booth inside and a huge array of plants outside. Open to the public 10am-4pm. We need helpers starting at 8am.

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 3rd 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.

PLANT SALE – April 12

Here's what we need

Plants & seeds — notify Elinor Hughes bandehughes@webtv.net or 940/387-2867 concerning what you are bringing, so we can pre-plan our space requirements and be sure to have informational signs ready.

Remember to bring only NATIVE plants. Check the lists on our website if you are not sure, or call me to check if you have a plant you don't find on these lists.

Volunteers to set up 8-10 am, shut down & clean up 4-5 pm, and especially, assist visitors to our booth 10-4; notify Cathy L. drgoodrad@verizon.net or 972-306-1088

Plastic knives for price tags — save your black, tan, or white knives from take-out meals and bring them to the March meeting.

Make sure all your pots are clean to make a good impression, and label each pot clearly with its name & sun requirements (Sun/Shade/PS).

Notes From Elinor Hughes

Please take advantage of the wonderful weather NOW to peek under and around the mulch and leaves in your flower beds to identify plants you can share for our April 12 sale! There are few things to keep in mind in regard to reporting what you find to share:

- * It is important to give me information about donations as early as possible so that we can give Painted Flower Farm a list of plants needed to fill in any gaps and also prepare signs to identify the plants at the sale.
- * If you send in lists on more than one occasion, send only additions; do not duplicate. If you are one of the three people that signed the list at the last meeting, you should not include those names on any future list.
- * If you have any question about whether your plants are native, we will try to call in one of our local experts.
- * Keep checking your flower beds as some plants may be a bit late coming up this year (some of mine are and some are ahead of schedule).
- * Report your findings/donations by e-mail or phone to me at BandEHughes@WebTV.net or (940) 387-2867.

Happy Hunting! Happy Finding!

PLANT SALE FLIER

You will notice a color flier inserted in the newsletter. Can you picture these plastered all over Denton County? Make it happen! Take your flier & post it somewhere that you travel this week - the bank, gym, bakery, church, library, where you work. We want all of Denton County to know we are holding the best little plant sale in Texas, and right proud of it! Permission to copy at will.

FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, March 30, 2-4pm

As a follow-up to his program earlier in March, Jim Varnum will lead us on a field trip to Clear Creek Preserve in Denton. He, along with Dorothy Thetford, will lead us in exploring the native plants of the area.

You can meet at the entrance along Collins Rd on the west side of the preserve at 2pm. However, because of very limited parking space there, you are encouraged to meet at Piggly Wiggly on Sherman Dr. at 1:45 for carpooling to the site.

POW WOW in the Big Thicket, April 26/27

The 29th annual Texas Wilderness Pow Wow takes place this year in the Big Thicket National Preserve and Village Creek State Park. It is sponsored by Texas Conservation Alliance (formerly TCONR) and the Big Thicket Asso. Enjoy canoeing on Village Creek or the Neches River, a multitude of fascinating plant/bird walks, and a delicious Dutch oven dinner on Saturday evening, with entertainment by environmental troubadour Bill Oliver. Camp at Village Creek SP or stay in area motels. Go to www.TCATexas.org for more details on events and reservations. Reservations need to be made early.

May 3 or 4, Member Yard Tour?

Will there be a tour of members' yards? YOU can help make it happen by volunteering to show your yard. This would just be an informal affair for NPSOT members. We are a friendly bunch. Please let Pres. Cathy know NOW if you are open for a visit.

Saturday, May 10, 9am-3pm

Annual Master Gardeners Yard Tour

Enjoy a delightful tour of beautiful yards around the area. Many use at least some natives and feature butterfly gardens. Cost is \$8 in advance or \$10 at the door.

A natural area in the city, believe it or not

by Owen Yost

This area is certainly no secret. In fact, the peace-and-quiet crowd has been visiting it for years.

It's called The Wildflower Prairie. It's an unpublicized part of Northlakes Park, north of the larger lake and east of the soccer fields. It is natural and almost forgotten except for an unpaved trail that meanders through it. Stroll at whatever pace you like - even stop and take pictures or look at birds, if you want.

Years ago, this chapter (with the OK of the Parks Dept.) planted pockets of wildflowers there. This entailed moving sections of sod from the virgin pocket prairie that peacefully existed next to the big truck stop along Hwy 77 on the east side of I-35. (Being in that location, this lovely little prairie remnant was doomed to extinction by development.) Other wildflowers just happened, as they are wont to do. Today, despite years of neglect, some of them still thrive. I've seen Gayfeather, Indian Blanket, Gaillardia, Virginia Creeper, Maximilian Sunflower, Eryngo and several kinds of Coreopsis. There are surely others that I walked past unknowingly.

On a recent stroll, I wasn't officially birdwatching but I noted several Cardinals, a Meadowlark, Red-bellied Woodpecker and a couple of Red-tailed Hawks, hoping to lunch on the aforementioned.

It seems to have, RIGHT NOW, the qualities to be certified as a natural habitat.

The trailhead is at the end of what appears to be an extension of Hinkle Drive, just past the recycling bins - just northwest of the Keep Denton Beautiful offices. The sign says "**motor vehicles prohibited in park**", but don't let the odd spelling deter you from seeing this natural jewel, right in the city.

Owen Yost is a Landscape Architect emeritus, co-owner of Denton's Wild Bird Center store, former NPSOT officer and a former chapter president.

WILDFLOWER AWARENESS

by Dorothy Brown Thetford

Common name: Spring-beauty Botanical name: *Claytonia virginica* Family: Portulacaceae

What better common name could be bestowed upon such an early-blooming, delicate, native Texas wildflower? Yes, spring-beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) is one of our earliest flowers to bloom, and coincidentally, was discovered by one of our earliest American botanists, John Clayton (1686-1773); Carl Linnaeus named the genus for John Clayton in 1753. It can be seen as early as February in our southern counties, and possibly as late as April in our northern counties. It colonizes by-the-lawn or by-the-acre, if allowed to reseed.

As NPSOT's Honorary Lifetime Member, Dr. Mary Evelyn Huey, says, "We never mow until this special little flower blooms in our lawn and my childhood memories are rekindled."

In its native habitat of sandy open woods, prairies, and disturbed sites, southeast and east Texas through North Central Texas to the Edwards Plateau, spring-beauty can be found in abundance, even though oftentimes dwarfed among the native clump grasses.

The plant is only 6-10 inches tall and is easily recognized by two or three terminal flowers atop its very slender stems. The 2 to 6-inch subulate basal leaves are usually entangled among the dried grasses. However, each stem produces a second set of two, opposite, much smaller leaves mid-way up the stem.

Every intricately-designed terminal flower has five white petals, each displaying delicate dark pink to raspberry-colored vein markings. As Geyata Ajilvsgi suggests in her book, *Butterfly Gardening For the South*, these stripes or markings are visual nectar guides for insects. The top flower in bloom is only 3/4-inch diameter, flat, and faces upward, whereas the buds-in-waiting are closed and slightly drooping downward.

Spring-beauty opens its petals during mid-day to attract two of our earliest springtime butterflies, the Orangetip (*Falcapica midea*) and the Common checkered skipper (*Pyrgus communis*), but closes them in the evening and on cloudy days.

Even though only two to four flowers per plant are in bloom on a given day, each plant may provide as many as six to fifteen blooms during its two week blooming cycle. As the plant matures, its posture becomes lazy, and ultimately appears to be half-decumbent and resting on the dried fall grasses.

The small, edible bulb-like corm of spring-beauty is often found six to eight inches deep in sandy-loam soil; thus, a valuable notation for anyone trying to transplant this perennial is to dig deeply and handle with care.

Spring-beauty, blooming alongside our native small bluets (*Hedyotis crassifolia*), provides our jump-start to a new wildflower season. May your memories, too, be rekindled!

Dorothy Thetford has been a Trinity Forks member since 1992 and 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.

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



February 2008

Trinity Forks Contact Information

President - Cathy Lustgarten 972-306-1088
drgoodrad@tx.rr.com

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

Trinity Forks Open Positions

(can you help?)

Vice President

Ways & Means Chair (plant sales)

Program Chair

Field Trip Chair

Education Chair

Historian

Membership Corner

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

Curtis & Carolyn Gold
Cynthia & Patrick Maguire
Sylvia Bayer
Elizabeth L. Bailey
Linda Krimm
Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Vik
Yvonne Reasoner
Patrick Peterson
Jeremy Voss
Lucianne Blakemore
Bobbie Ashley
Irene Hanson

Sharen Arnold
Laurie J. Hammett
Kathy Saucier
Bob & Elinor Hughes
Joanne & Ron Fellows
Jim/Marilyn Blanton
Kathleen G. Scott
Norma Lopez
Wilma Haggard
Jim Smith
Brigid Corbett
Marian McCarley

Website:

www.npsot.org/TrinityForks