

# Trinity Forks Native Plant Press

The Newsletter of Trinity Forks Chapter  
Native Plant Society of Texas

---

April 2009

*From the Prez*

## **Birds, Bees, Plants and People**

As usual, we had a terrific time at the plant sale Apr. 11, and previous records tumbled. Kathy Saucier rounded up nearly 1800 plants of more than 110 species, thanks to the generosity of our members and the strong support of two of our NICE! Nurseries. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Painted Flower Farm and Shades of Green Nursery. Be sure to thank them with your words and your business. Members, too, tumbled from everywhere to help out. I counted more than 20 working at various times, and others who lent moral support and bought plants. I hope everyone found all the plants they need for a thrill-filled spring. Many visitors expressed interest in coming to our meetings, or hearing more about Natives to Neighborhoods. Congratulations to all of you for this most successful day.

Without birds and bees, where would our plants be, and vice versa? Last month we heard all about honeybees and their interactions with native plants. This month we will hear how to attract birds to our yards using native plants and how our plants benefit from our feathered friends.

Don't miss it!

*Cathy Lustgarten, whose favorite  
flower this week is yellow columbine*

## **April 23 Meeting – Of Birds & Plants**

Our very own member, Marshall Fox, will speak on “**Native Plants for the Backyard Habitat.**” He will describe his and Fonda’s experience in attracting wildlife to their yard in Decatur by providing a diversity of habitat. Learn what is required to attract birds, butterflies and other critters to your yard.

Note that we will be back in our usual location in the ACT building this month.

## **Field Trip, Saturday, April 25**

We had planned to tour Hugh Garnett’s wonderful prairie near Forestburg, but the raging prairie fires that swept our region early this month has blackened everything there. We extend our sympathies to Hugh, for whom this fire must have been heartbreaking. Hopefully, we may visit there next year, and witness first hand the breathtaking renewal such fires bring to the prairie.

Fortunately, we are able to switch our trip plans to visit Cross Timbers Park in far south Denton, 10 am to noon. The Cross Timbers Park is a wonderful remnant stand of the eastern Cross Timbers forest and an environmentally sensitive area filled with a wide variety of plants. The trail is unpaved but fairly level, making for an easy walk as it explores the floodplains of Fletcher’s Branch of Hickory Creek.

Location: 7609 Waterside Place. Take Hickory Creek Rd west from Teasley Lane. Immediately past McNair Elementary, turn north on Waterside & meet us in the parking lot. There are picnic tables if you wish to bring a lunch to enjoy after our walk.

## **WILDFLOWER AWARENESS**

*by Dorothy Brown Thetford*

Common name: Spiderwort

Botanical name: *Tradescantia ohioensis*

Family: Commelinaceae

Surprise! While enjoying the salmon-orange colors of our native Indian paintbrush, Indian blanket, and the lavender colored prairie verbena, you may begin discovering bluish-purple colors of the prairie spiderwort, *Tradescantia ohioensis*.

The botanical name, *Tradescantia*, was given the plant to honor John Tradescant, an English gardener who utilized seeds given to him by his American friends. The species, *ohioensis*, is the most common of the twelve species found in North Central Texas and, as referenced by FLORA OF NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS, is the most common and widespread of the species from an American genus of seventy.

Once you learn to identify the small, three-petaled blossoms atop a 15 to 36-inch tall, jointed stem, your search to find more becomes addicting as you case the roadsides. Flower colors range from pale blue to fuchsia pink, with bluish-purple being the predominate color. Each petal has a slightly ruffled tip edge, and the combined three petals average only 1.5 inches in diameter.

The search becomes more intense when you realize that each native spiderwort flower blooms only once, and that the timing is controlled by temperature. Normally, they bloom from early morning to noon. However, on a cool or cloudy day, they may stay open until mid-afternoon.

Each cluster head, which consists of multiple buds, blossoms and seed pods simultaneously, produces only one to four flowers per day. Thus the blooming cycle lasts several weeks.

Leaves are alternate, narrow and pointed, six to twelve inches long by one inch wide, and are folded or creased down the center. One gray-green leaf grows from each of the three to six joints of the stout stem, and surrounds the stem without a petiole.

With ample rainfall, additional clusters of flowers emerge on a peduncle in the cradle of each clasping leaf. Thus, the blooming cycle is extended for several more weeks.

Our native Texas spiderworts are found along roadsides, in ditches, open prairies and fence-rows of sandy to clayey soils. They also perform beautifully in manicured flowerbeds in full sun or dappled shade and, as a perennial, can be enjoyed year after year.

Look for spiderworts in the morning-time from March through May, and witness the many pollinators at work.

*Dorothy, a Trinity Forks member since 1992 and a former president, is a roving ambassador for wildflowers with her City Nature Hikes, DISD programs, and her photo cards. Her "Wildflowers-of-Texas" greeting card line is available locally at Cupboard Natural Foods & Cafe.*

## **EDUCATION, OUTREACH and EXAMPLE**

Many of our members are involved in promoting and educating the public about native plants. Even though we have no formal report available to update the membership regularly, I'm sure that you'll enjoy learning of these behind-the-scenes volunteers who keep our Trinity Forks chapter aligned to our mission statement.

In late March, Cathy Lustgarten gave her program on Natives-2-Neighborhoods to North Central Chapter of NPSOT (Ft. Worth).

Also in late March, three of our members gave programs to Pilot Point's 100 5th-grade Kids-N-Nature science event. Liaison Jan Hodson with PP Science Coordinator, Kent Vawter.

Three of our members are currently giving 'prairie' and 'wildflower' classroom programs to 20 Denton ISD elementary schools during April-May. Each presentation reaches approximately 100 2nd-graders along with their teachers and aides. Liaison Cheryl Kesterson with Sharon Betty, DISD Science Curriculum Coordinator 3-5.

Several of our members are ID-ing native plants for 2nd-graders who hike Clear Creek Park. Liaison Cheryl K. with Kathy Morrison, DISD Science Curriculum Coordinator K-2.

Several of our members are sharing informal native plant information while hiking with Denton's City Nature Hikes Committee. Liaison Dorothy Thetford with Tracy Durmick, Denton Parks & Rec. Leader.

Mike Mizell orchestrated a display promoting native plants and TF chapter along with the Denton Organic Society in a large showcase at Lewisville's Main Library.

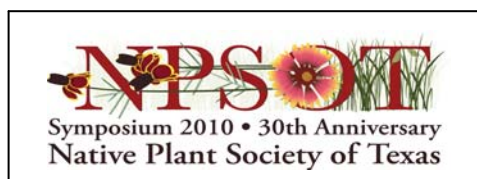
Camelia Maier, Ph.D., is promoting native plants for the Calhoun Outdoor Learning Area gardens.

Janet Gershenfeld and Joan Stanley are pouring time and energy into realigning plants that are native to the Ten Climate Zones of the 'Texas Our Heritage Garden' of Heritage Elementary, Highland Village.

Webpage: <http://www.lisd.net/schools/heritage/TOH.htm>

*If you're interested in reading more about our members' plant-related activities to the community, please let Dorothy know of your interest and/or inform her of other activities being done by our members.*

*Submitted by Dorothy Thetford*



### **Symposium 2010 Arrangements**

Helpers are needed for several small, very manageable tasks. Contact Cynthia Maguire or Cathy Lustgarten.

## Study predicts when invasive species can travel more readily by air

University of Florida News

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Global airlines be forewarned: June 2010 could be a busy month for invasive plants, insects and animals seeking free rides to distant lands.

A new study forecasts when climate factors such as temperature, humidity and rainfall will match at geographically distant airline departure and destination points, which could help to shuffle invasive species, and the diseases they may carry, across the globe along existing flight routes. The findings provide a framework that could help people who monitor airline flights — and the people, baggage and cargo aboard — to plan more efficiently and accurately for detecting and intercepting invasives.

Andy Tatem, who holds a joint position at the [Emerging Pathogens Institute](#) and the [University of Florida's geography department](#), said his model uses the latest forecast data for climate change and air traffic volumes.

“The problem is that as the global transport networks expand, we’re getting more and more invasive species and pathogens coming from different parts of the world that have survived isolated for thousands of years,” said Tatem, who joined UF in January. “But now they have this high-speed link going between different regions of the world.”

The study was published online Jan. 22 in the journal *Ecography*, and the work was performed in his previous position at the [University of Oxford](#).

Tatem predicts a peak risk will be reached in June 2010, when multiple factors converge to create a month when the climate factors at many flight origin and destination airports would be most similar.

“The model shows us that climatic shifts are not greatly significant over the next few years,” Tatem said. “But the great increase in traffic volumes from expanding economies in India and China are likely to have a significant effect on moving species. This gives us much more of a detailed idea on the importance of key risk factors and how these change over time, compared to previous work we did in 2007.”

Tatem reached his conclusions by comparing fine-scale global climate models for 2009 and 2010 prepared by the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research with models forecasting traffic volumes on existing airline networks, prepared by OAG Worldwide. The airline models include more than 35 million scheduled flights between 3,570 airports on more than 44,000 different routes.

But exactly how native species wind up aboard an outbound passenger or freight aircraft is still being studied. Tatem said it can be a combination of goods, transport and people bringing things aboard either accidentally or knowingly.

“Some studies have shown that mosquitoes can fly on randomly, or they may get into baggage,” he said. “But some things, like plant pathogens, happen when people purposely bring fruit aboard, or they may bring in a plant that makes it through inspections, or they may just have seeds stuck in the soles of their shoes.”

These activities compound over the entire global system, threatening local economies, public health and native ecosystems. In 2007, a biological invasion was documented from a single invasive insect in a study conducted by [York University](#) biologists Amro Zayed and Laurence Packer. A different 2007 study by Andrew Liebhold, published in *American Entomologist*, examined records of U.S. Department of Agricultural inspectors encountering invasive species in airline baggage. Liebhold, a research entomologist with the Northeastern Research Station of the U.S. Forest Service, reported that infested fruit, mainly from the tropics, was the most commonly intercepted commodity, and that flies, cicadas, planthoppers, aphids and scale insects were the most commonly intercepted invasive insects.

Liebhold said Tatem’s study provided fascinating predictions about expected trends in the accidental transport of invasive species among continents.

“Unfortunately, unwitting air passengers have too frequently provided transport of plant pests and human diseases and this trend has increased with elevated intercontinental passenger traffic,” Liebhold said. “Hopefully, government agencies will pay attention to these results and utilize them to strengthen inspection activities at airports in order to protect the world from the devastating impacts of alien species on natural ecosystems as well as on human health.”

### **Credits**

Writer: DeLene Beeland, [tdb@epi.ufl.edu](mailto:tdb@epi.ufl.edu)

Source: Andy Tatem, [andy.tatem@gmail.com](mailto:andy.tatem@gmail.com)



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



**April 2009**

---

### **Trinity Forks Contact Information**

**President** - Cathy Lustgarten, 972-306-1088  
drgoodrad@verizon.net

**Vice Pres.** - Marilyn Blanton, 940-464-7775

**Secretary** - Lon Turnbull, 940-323-8999

**Treasurer** - Joan Phelps, 940-321-5980

**Membership**-Laurie Hammett, 940-383-3287

**Hospitality** - Fonda Fox, 940-627-2343

**Newsletter** - Mike Mizell, 940-382-8551  
birdmizell@msn.com

*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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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<sup>rd</sup> 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.*

### **Membership Corner**

We give a big 'Thank You' to all these folks who renewed their memberships in Trinity Forks last month and hope to see you at the next meeting. You are what makes Trinity Forks special!

Shirley Weems, Lindsay

Becca Dickstein & Lon Turnbull, Denton

Curtis Taber, Forestburg

Rodney Barton, Hickory Creek

Karen & Jeff Mangum, Argyle

Cynthia & Patrick Maguire, Denton

Lyle & Patricia Nordstrom, Denton

**Website:** [www.npsot.org/TrinityForks](http://www.npsot.org/TrinityForks)