



# Trinity Forks Native Plant Press

The Newsletter of Trinity Forks Chapter  
Native Plant Society of Texas

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March 2009

*From the Prez*

## Visions of Spreading Natives

April must be my favorite month, but March isn't far behind, when everything gets "sprayed" a fresh coat of green. It makes me dream about additions to my native plant xeriscapes. If you, too, have visions of native gardens dancing in your head, but need help with ideas, you won't want to miss this month's program on enticing birds to your backyard! For more great ideas on using native plants in the landscape, check our on-line plant lists for Denton County specialty gardens <[www.npsot.org/TrinityForks/TrinityForksWeb/plants.html](http://www.npsot.org/TrinityForks/TrinityForksWeb/plants.html)>. There's one for shady areas, one for butterflies, and many more. Then you can create a shopping list for our annual plant sale April 11.

We definitely need "all hands on deck" on plant sale day. This is our chapter's Main Event to distribute native plant information to the public, encourage new members (new friends!) to join our Chapter, and to raise the money that pays for our speakers, newsletters, NICE! program, and our charitable native plant activities. I hope to see 100% of our members there supporting our chapter. Even better -- bring your neighbors!

I'll close with a quote from one of my favorite charities. "... we each have wonderful gifts to share with the world. Whether that gift is time, skills or resources, we each have *something* that can positively affect the journey of others." Why not use your gifts to help spread more Natives To your Neighborhoods? See you at the plant sale!

*Cathy Lustgarten*

*Wild about natives and N-2-N originator*

## March 26 Meeting

### **Honeybees in the Native Garden**

Allison Adams, Collin County Honey Queen, brings experience as well as knowledge of the honeybee. She will talk about the role bees play in our native landscape. Maximilian sunflower, horse mint, Indian blanket, rock rose (pavonia), goldenrod and salvias are a short list of natives favored by honeybees.

Allison Adams is the seventeen-year-old daughter of Ned and Caryl Adams of Plano, Texas. She began beekeeping five years ago through the Collin County Hobby Beekeepers Association youth scholarship program and has thoroughly enjoyed it ever since. She also finds pleasure in drawing, cooking, gardening, sewing, English country dancing, and most of all, spending time with her family.

The American Beekeeping Federation is a country-wide support organization for beekeepers. The website is [www.abfnet.org](http://www.abfnet.org). The Texas Honey Queen travels the state talking about honeybees on behalf of Texas beekeepers. The website is [www.texasbeekeepers.org](http://www.texasbeekeepers.org).

#### **MEETING LOCATION CHANGE FOR MARCH**

This month's meeting will be in the CFO building room 202, on the TWU campus, the white bldg. just southeast of our usual location in the Clock Tower building. Park in the visitor parking area on the north side of Administration Drive just west of Bell Street, or in the parking lot on the west side of Oakland Street just south of Administration Drive. As usual, come at 6:30pm for socializing and viewing of educational displays; 7:00pm for start of meeting.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

*Helpers Needed for...*

### The Best Li'l Plant Sale in North Texas!

When: Saturday April 11, 10 am - 4 pm

Where: Denton Civic Center, 321 East McKinney

Our outdoor booth is in the same great location as last year, west side behind building

#### Here's what we need

- Plants & seeds – notify Kathy S what you can donate, 972-492-4680 or [gsaucier@swbell.net](mailto:gsaucier@swbell.net)
- Remember to bring only NATIVE plants. Check the lists on our website if you are not sure, or call a board member if you have a plant you don't find on these lists. If we know what's coming, we can try to have information signs available for every species.
- Volunteers needed for set up 8-10am; shut down & clean up 4-5pm; assist in plant sale booth 10-4; assist at indoor information booth 10-4; contact Cathy L
- Emcee needed for our 100-plant give-away & give how-to-plant-it demonstration 2pm.
- Price tag coordinator: see that colored knives are placed in every plant.
- Deliveries on sale day: loading zone available 7:00 to 8:30 a.m. All outdoor vendor vehicles must exit the park before 8:30 a.m. After that you will have to carry items from the parking lot to our booth.
- You, your friends, neighbors, relatives, co-workers, with long "Looking for Natives" wish lists.
- If you know of school or other public gardens that may need our left-over plants, have them contact Cathy L right away – first come, first serve!

### Be a Garden Hunt Docent April 4 @TWU

On Saturday morning, April 4, Texas Woman's University will host their 20<sup>th</sup> annual Regional Science Fair. Four to six volunteers from Trinity Forks chapter are needed to hang around in the TWU gardens during the judging from 9:30 to noon as families stroll through. We will be providing each student who enters the fair with a Scavenger Hunt card encouraging them to visit the garden area and look for certain native plants. An advance tour will be provided to TF volunteers, so you will have the answers to frequent questions ahead of time. Those who wish to volunteer should contact Cynthia Maguire (940.594.6555 or [cynthia.maguire@verizon.net](mailto:cynthia.maguire@verizon.net)) for more details. (And by the way, the gardens are going to be gorgeous by then—all our hard work is starting to really pay off!)



### Symposium 2010 Arrangements

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

### Educating by Example Deserves Appreciation

Denton ISD board members recently took bold action to spend a bit more up front to save money and the environment over the long run by using "green" building features in two new schools. The following editorial (slightly edited here) ran in the Denton Record-Chronicle on January 23.

"Thanks to the foresight of the Denton school district's board and administrators, DISD's next two schools will incorporate several environmentally friendly features. The board voted recently to amend plans for a new elementary school in the Cross Oaks Ranch subdivision & the planned middle school in Shady Shores. The elementary school is scheduled to open next year and the middle school a year later. They will include such things as classrooms designed for optimum natural lighting, geothermal heating and cooling devices, solar water heaters and thermally insulated windows. The grounds at each school will be landscaped with drought-resistant native plants that will be irrigated by water condensation and collected rain runoff.

"These changes are not only environmentally sound; they make good economic sense, too. They will result in long-term energy savings that will quickly eclipse initial costs.

"The environmental features on each campus will also offer a teaching opportunity for the faculty and a learning experience for students. Students will learn about the eco-friendly measures taken at their schools, and about why they are necessary. The schools themselves will become, in effect, environmental science laboratories, with maintenance staff members running the experiments.

"As energy costs rise and resources dwindle, such careful planning will become even more important, not only in our public schools but in our private lives as well. We can only hope that the lessons learned by the students at these new schools will make their way back to parents and families who will then begin checking around their own homes to see what energy-saving steps might be taken there.

"The school board was wise to incorporate these environmentally and financially enlightened changes into its plans for its newest schools. Our expectation now is that board members will keep them in mind in the earliest planning stages of all new schools and other district buildings. And to our city and county governments, and private builders as well, we say: Go thou and do likewise."

Our dear member Wilma Haggard alerted us to this editorial and hopes to donate some plants from her property for the landscaping. What we should ALL do NOW is express appreciation and support to board members of DISD for their insightful and courageous action.

You can send one letter to the president of the board and indicate "c.c.'s" to all board members and Supt, Dr. Braswell. Send to:

Charles Stafford, President  
DISD Board of Directors  
1307 N. Locust  
Denton, TX 76201

## “All Grass to No Grass: An 8-year Adventure in Gardening”

*A report on the program given in January by Becca Dickstein and Lon Turnbull*

We moved to Denton in August 2000 and although we were gardeners at heart, we were poorly prepared for gardening in North Texas. Becca came from Philadelphia, where people garden from May through October and Lon had last gardened in British Columbia, which has a similar gardening season as in Philadelphia.

We arrived at the beginning of August 2000, and for the first approximately 6 weeks, it was over 100°F every day except one. It was a rough introduction to gardening in our new home. The very first thing we did in our yard was to dig up and move a crepe myrtle tree that had been planted right next to the house in the backyard, which we did on the very last day of August 2000, thinking that autumn was right around the corner. We discovered that we were wrong about that, but with a lot of babying, the crepe myrtle survived and is still flourishing.

Since then, we have slowly converted our all-lawn backyard into a no-lawn, almost no-grass oasis. The only grasses that are in our yard now are native bunch grasses: little bluestem, side-oats grama, and Mexican feather grass, which don't need mowing. Our yard has a lot more diversity in it and is a no-mow garden full of perennials, herbs, vegetables, and flowers.

We started slowly, working on one garden bed at a time. We allowed ourselves the luxury of mistakes – we've had a lot of trial and error along the way. We chose native and adapted plants and have started many plants from seed and taken cuttings from friends and acquaintances, and have come to many native plant sales. For each garden bed, we worried first and foremost about soil preparation. We added soil amendments to encourage beneficial soil microbial growth: compost, lava sand, molasses, etc., then we dug the soil with hand tools and removed as much of the grass and its roots as we could. The better prepared beds have had less weeding and as each year passes, we find that we have fewer weeds that need to be dug out. For our garden, we also started with a plan that was modified as we went along. Even though we had a plan, not a year went by that we didn't modify the plan in some way. We did the work on the garden slowly, starting with smaller garden beds that we merged into larger ones as time progressed. We added stone walkways through our beds so that we could easily reach the weeds and the desired plants for maintenance when needed.

Later, as we got more experience, we made larger beds at the beginning. One and a half years ago, we had the grass paths between the beds removed and replaced with gravel by a local contractor, Dale Branum. At the presentation, we finished the talk with photographs of many of the plants in our yard during the four seasons. Since we gave the talk in winter, we highlighted our yard in winter, which contains dried and dormant foliage and flowers that provide cover and habitat for birds wintering in Texas. Typically we prune at the beginning of spring, when the new growth starts.

*Becca Dickstein and Lon Turnbull joined NPSOT soon after moving to Denton and have been dedicated members. They say they have received valuable inspiration and knowledge from other members. Lon has served as Secretary for our chapter for the past 5 years and Becca has done most of the descriptions for the NICE! plants. They both work in the Department of Biology at UNT.*



Native Plant Society of Texas  
Trinity Forks Chapter  
P.O. Box 425491  
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**March 2009**

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**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 6:30pm; the program begins at 7:00pm. **See special location for this month on page 1.***

*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 have renewed their memberships in Trinity Forks since February. Hope to see you at the next meeting. You are what makes Trinity Forks special!

*Sharen Arnold, Aubrey*

*Sylvia Bayer, Gainesville*

*Bill & Patti Pierce, Plano*

*Camelia Maier & George Roberson, Denton*

*Steve & Marian Kester, Denton*

*Curtis & Carolyn Gold, Denton*

*Matthew Dempsey, Frisco*

*Betty Miller, Irving*

*Mike Mizell, Denton*

*Kay Broyles, Muenster*

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