



# Trinity Forks Native Plant Press

The Newsletter of Trinity Forks Chapter  
Native Plant Society of Texas

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May 2009

*From the Prez*

## **Walkin' & Talkin'**

No, it's not about a field trip, though we had a great one a couple of weeks ago. Let's run a self-diagnostic test to see if you are "walking the walk" and "talking the talk". Every one of us in NPSOT obviously has an interest in native plants, whether preserving them in nature or using them in our landscapes or studying them in the laboratory. Are you telling your neighbors and co-workers about them? Explaining to passers-by that for your native plant garden, you don't need to use artificial fertilizers, which contaminate our drinking water, that you are providing the food that insects and butterflies need to survive in the face of urban sprawl?

At every opportunity, each of you should be spreading the word, but you needn't be preachy -- just informative. The property manager where I rent business space asked me what to do about our ailing pansies. I told him to plant perennials instead, and specifically natives. That was all it took. Though it has to go through bids & other paperwork before they are actually here, the manager says it is definitely a done deal. In fact, he says, "everyone" - - the other tenants, the property owner, the landscape maintenance crew -- is all excited about this new thing and can't wait to see them planted. It truly is as simple as that. So did you pass the test? Are you walkin' & talkin'? If not, there is no better summer project for you to work on. But after you pass, don't plan on graduating just yet. Like so many other things in life, "walking the walk" is a journey, not a destination.

Here's another journey for you to consider. For our chapter to successfully host the 2010 state symposium, we need every one of you helping where you can. What talents do you have besides a love of natives? That's exactly the job we have for you! Can you make table decorations? Edit the proceedings book? Create a list of local nature preserves or gardens and other sites for visitors to see on their own? Call me or Cynthia (numbers on back page) to find the best assignment for you. Each member just doing a little walkin' and talkin' on behalf of your chapter will make this 30th anniversary symposium the best one ever!

*Cathy Lustgarten*

## **May 28 Meeting** -- "Lush Lawns vs. the Coming Water Shortage" by Cecil Carter

Cecil Carter and his wife Polly are recent enrollees as members of NPSOT and Trinity Forks. Cecil, in particular, has jumped right in as an enthusiastic volunteer.

For our program this month, Cecil will present statistics on the existing and coming water shortage in North Texas and the need for vigorous adoption of native plants in our landscapes

Cecil is on the Lake Cities Municipal Water Authority. He is a Certified Community Developer, having consulted for 10 years with small towns trying to finance new water facilities. In Oklahoma, he is also a Certified Community Development Block Grant Administrator.

With 18 hours of graduate statistics classes, Cecil is a closet statistician. He will present his statistics on demographics, resource usage, and population growth in the Upper Trinity area. There is a relatively finite water supply and a rapid increase in population. By 2050, this area will need another water reservoir the size of Lake Lewisville with an average depth of 20 feet.

One mitigating conservation factor is the vigorous adoption of native plants in our landscapes. Cecil will present the issues involved in changing society's awareness of water consumption and in starting a grass roots effort to change perceptions about "lush lawns."

Cecil and his wife have always been organic gardeners, but after his wife entered the Master Naturalist Program three years ago, they began moving exclusively to native plants.

### **MEETING LOCATION CHANGE FOR MAY**

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.

## **TWU Garden Workday 2009:** **A Start to Something Beautiful...**

*by Tiffany Johnson and Cynthia Maguire*

On March 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, several Trinity Forks chapter members and 92 students descended on the Benny J. Simpson Memorial garden. They came for different reasons: community service, possible extra credit, and love of nature. Whatever the reason, the mission was the same; to continue to improve upon the work done in Fall 2008 where students and mentors cleared the garden of some invasive species, returning much needed balance and beginning the “facelift” others would continue working on this spring. The Trinity Forks goal was to prepare to host our statewide 2010 symposium, during which we will commemorate the founding of NPSOT here thirty years ago. The main goal of the workday for the professors involved was to get students interested in science and civic engagement with something that was easily accessible and viewable, the Benny J. Simpson Memorial Garden right on campus.

In order to complete preparation for the second half of the “facelift” on the Simpson garden, **Bobby Trevino** (TWU Landscape Services Supervisor) and **Cynthia Maguire** (TWU Chemistry & Physics and NPSOT) collaborated with a student, **Tiffany Johnson** (TWU Biology). After agreeing that March 6<sup>th</sup> was the best day, things started to come into place. Mr. Trevino, authorized the project and loaned tools, mulch, watering cans, etc. Mrs. Maguire raised funds to purchase plants and helped organize workers during the garden workday, and Ms. Johnson was in charge of recruiting and coordinating student volunteers for the garden workday from various disciplines within TWU. Cynthia and Tiffany shopped for plants at Painted Flower Farm, where **Don Kenney** once again gave wholesale pricing on a total of 110 plants from fifteen native species, and delivered them all for free.

When March 6<sup>th</sup> arrived, it was a dry day with rain in the forecast for the next weekend. NPSOT members and students arrived at 7:30a.m. to help set up for the day. At 8a.m. NPSOT members **Irene Hansen** and **Wilma Haggard** each graciously delivered 3 species of donated plants. At 8:30 a.m. **Don Kenney** delivered his fantastic native plants. By 9a.m. the first few students showed up ready to work and the second TWU Garden Workday was off to a fantastic start!

Between 9a.m. & 3p.m. students cleared whole Chinese Privet bushes, cleared trash from the area, pulled weeds removed an entire bed full of grass, and planted 160 plants without complaint. Some were also lucky enough to get history lessons on the native plants that they were planting from NPSOT members!

Many thanks to all 92 student volunteers who worked a total of 264 hours to make this day happen. For just about three hours per student, they did so much in so little time! Students were recruited from six professors’ courses and from members of TWU Helping Hands, Kappa Sigma fraternity, and Sigma Lambda Alpha sorority. They cared enough to come, whether it be for credit, extra credit or just to help the environment. At the end they

were overheard saying, “This is so much fun”, “How can I do this for my own home?” and “When will we do this again?” Thank you, students, for taking the time to apply what you learned in your courses to everyday life. What you have done will benefit TWU students for generations to come.

Thanks, too, to the professors: **Mrs. Maguire, Dr. Jones, Dr. Peebles, Dr. Maier, Dr. Shah, & Dr. Knauf** for recruiting your students. Thank you for teaching that science education goes hand-in-hand with civic responsibility. Thanks to the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement, which graciously funded the refreshments for all working in the garden that day. We all appreciated that!

Thanks also go out to Mr. Bobby Trevino and the TWU Landscape Services staff. Mr. Trevino expressed his desire to restore lost trees to the area near the Lowry Woods community, and Mrs. Maguire and NPSOT ran with the idea. The landscape staff brought the tools and several loads of mulch to the garden for our use. So without Mr. Trevino and Landscape Services, this event would not have taken place. Every tool and bag of mulch they gave contributed to the success of the garden workday.

An enormous amount of gratitude is owed to each of the NPSOT members and others who not only graciously gave of their funds, but also gave of their time to lead and educate students throughout the day. The mentors were **Rachel Biggerstaff, Marshall Fox, Laurie Hammett, Cynthia Maguire, Camelia Maier, Mike Mizell, Fritz Poppe and Lon Turnbull**. They got students who had never planted a garden in their life interested in ecological sustainability.

The main goal of the workday, to get students interested in science and civic engagement with something that was easily accessible, was definitely accomplished thanks to students and faculty of Texas Woman’s University and the Native Plant Society of Texas. With the impending state symposium in 2010 and the improvements on the Benny J. Simpson garden until then, March 6<sup>th</sup> wasn’t just a garden workday, but a “Start to Something Beautiful.”

## **Coming Events**

**Sat, May 23, 9am-1pm:** Fieldtrip to LBJ National Grasslands near Decatur led by Jeff Quayle. For details contact Jeff at [s-quaylei@earthlink.net](mailto:s-quaylei@earthlink.net) or 817-729-0283.

**Sat, May 30, 8:30-12:30:** Fieldtrip at Isle du Bois State Park led by Jeff Quayle. Contact Jeff as above.

**Sat, May 30, 10am-noon:** Jan Hodson will be leading a Native Plant Hike on Dogwood Trail at the Johnson Branch unit of Ray Roberts Lake State Park.

**Sat, Aug. 29, 9 to 11 am:** Our annual August social will be a bit different this year. It will be back at TWU near the greenhouse and the Benny J. Simpson garden, but this year will be a morning “Brunch in the Garden,” featuring fruit smoothies and home-baked muffins, etc., followed by a walk through the garden.

**Sat, Oct. 10, 9am to noon:** Fall plant sale on the lawn between the Senior Center and the swimming pool along Bell Ave.

**Thurs-Sun, Oct. 15-18:** NPSOT State Symposium in Wichita Falls.

## **NPSOT Chapters Support Summer Internships at BRIT**

*Provided by Amanda K. Neill, Director of the BRIT Herbarium*

The Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) is one of the most prestigious and best known private, not-for-profit botanical institutes in the country. BRIT was incorporated in 1987 as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization governed by a board of trustees, and opened to the public in 1991. With a collection of over one million dried plant specimens representing most of the Earth's plant families, BRIT has the largest independent herbarium in the Southwest and one of the world's best collections of Texas plant specimens. BRIT provides a comprehensive record of the diversity and distribution of the plants of Texas over the last 200+ years, as well as for other regions of the world. New specimens are constantly being added, through staff collections, donations from amateur naturalists, and exchange programs with other herbaria worldwide. All accumulated specimens become potential research material, to be examined by visiting botanists, or loaned to other institutions for study. The collections are the ultimate basis of all the research and education activities at BRIT—but this huge resource is still underutilized.

By increasing the online availability of our plant collections we can reach many more potential users of plant data, particularly non-botanists including students, teachers, and amateur naturalists. With BRIT's innovative online Biodiversity Information System called Atrium, developed originally for our Andes-to-Amazon Project, we now have an excellent and user-friendly online resource to display plant data, maps, and photos (the example for Peruvian plants can be viewed at <http://atrium.andesamazon.org>). Atrium is ready to be used for plants of any region of the world. Currently, BRIT is preparing to release an instance of Atrium for its general collections, initially focusing on specimens of Texas plants, and also the BRIT Type Collection (special specimens upon which new species names have been based). However, BRIT needed assistance in supporting people to do the work of scanning digital images of specimens and data-basing specimen labels.

With support of the NPSOT Trinity Forks Chapter, a summer internship has been provided to a student who will be scanning and data-basing specimens in the BRIT Herbarium that were collected in Denton County. The goal is to have at least one specimen of each plant species from the county digitized and available online. Once this project is completed, any person wishing to obtain a botanist-confirmed, voucher-based list of species occurring in Denton County will be able to acquire an up-to-date listing on the BRIT Atrium website. Not only will this project provide a verified county species list, but it will also allow naturalists working in Denton County to see what species have NOT been collected—species for which a voucher still needs to be collected. The intern that has been selected for this project is Beverly Davis IV, currently a junior at Baylor University majoring in Chemistry.

The addition of the specimens digitized during this internship will help to create a new and valuable resource to anyone hoping to identify a plant or learn more about plants in Texas. This is a valuable collaboration that will be of use to NPSOT members, and will increase public knowledge of Texas's plants in general. This also gets us one step closer to a virtual state flora that can be accessed by anyone.

Thank you to the NPSOT for supporting this exciting project! We will provide an update at the end of the summer once the fruits of the intern labor are available online.

*Amanda K. Neill*  
*Director of the Herbarium (BRIT-SMU-VDB)*  
*Botanical Research Institute of Texas*  
[www.atrium-biodiversity.org](http://www.atrium-biodiversity.org)

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**May 2009**

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**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!

*Don & Patricia Edwards, Denton*

*Brigitte Yarborough, Denton*

*Will & Mattie Evans, Denton*

*Owen Yost & Nancy Collins, Denton*

*Carla Orr, Saint Jo*

*Mark Pape, Copper Canyon*

*Michelle Harper, Denton*

*Fritz Poppe, Denton*

*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.*

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