



Trinity Forks Native Plant Press

The Newsletter of Trinity Forks Chapter
Native Plant Society of Texas

February 2010

From the Prez

Winter Winter Go Away ...

How are you surviving winter? Have you ever seen so much snow in North Texas before? Did you get cabin fever, snuggled in front of the fire with a good book in your hands, most probably a native plant book, or in front of the TV watching the Winter Olympics? Whatever you did, I am sure that you thought about spring at least once a day.

Do not worry, spring is around the corner. We have surprising news from the Ten-petal anemone (*Anemone heterophylla*, *Ranunculaceae*) and Coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*, *Caprifoliaceae*) that spring is surely approaching. Dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*, *Asteraceae*) never died off, Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*, *Lamiaceae*) is flourishing now, Asters (*Aster* sp., *Asteraceae*), Blue fieldmadder (*Sherardia arvensis*, *Rubiaceae*), and Birdeye speedwell (*Veronica persica*, *Scrophulariaceae*) have been in bloom in my yard since December. Hardy plants, year-round goers in our climate. Are they real indicators of spring? Herman Benke, a long time ago, vested these 'weeds' "with the title of cosmopolitan flowers – so wonderfully hardy as to be almost universal both as to time of flowering and distribution" (*American Midland Naturalist*, 1932).

As gardeners, we know when spring arrives by the blooming of daffodils, forsythia, and Bradford pear trees. All of these plants are visitors to our gardens from Europe and Asia. Are these foreigners to be trusted in deciding when winter has passed away and another spring season has started? Most of our natives are not so sure spring has arrived. It may be that the arrival of spring this year in North Texas is behind a few days due to the cold snowy weather that persisted all the way into mid-February. Or maybe not with some forbs. We'll see. What are native plants doing during winter? Well, they are waiting patiently, to be read – dormant, for spring to come. Herbaceous annual plants are dormant as seeds in the ground. Herbaceous perennials have other means of dormancy, such as bulbs, corms, rhizomes, and tubers. But how about trees and shrubs, the so-called woody deciduous perennials? Spring-blooming woody plants develop flower buds in summer-fall of the previous year, and these flowers are dormant and must undergo chilling in winter to break dormancy in spring. As days get shorter in the fall and cold weather sets in, trees drop their leaves and go dormant. With defoliation, other physiological changes occur in bark and buds to protect trees from the oncoming winter cold. The amount of chill needed to satisfy a trees' dormant rest requirement, plus

the amount of heat required to initiate growth, determines how long buds will remain dormant. In general, the lower the chill requirement, the earlier a tree will bloom.

Scientists, using mainly fruit trees, have developed models to determine when particular fruit cultivars will bloom based on the concept of accumulation of "chill hours." The optimum temperature for accumulating chill hours to break flower bud dormancy in spring lies between 35-45° F. Once the chill hours have been accumulated, blooming will start, provided the weather is warm enough for flower buds to grow. Forsythia requires about 800 hours of chilling to break flower bud dormancy while Bradford pear requires about 900 hours. In general, the chill hours are accumulated for most tree and shrub species by mid-January.

Some native trees, such as Honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*, *Fabaceae*) and Horseapple (*Maclura pomifera*, *Moraceae*), however, require 1,000 or more chill hours, and if they have received that amount of chilling, blooms appear very quickly. So, if you are impatient to plant tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, etc. in your vegetable gardens, you best believe the lesson taught by the above native trees, and delay another week or two, making sure these trees' leaf buds burst before you plant your vegetables.

For a number of years, every appearance of spring flowers was anticipated with the keenest interest and closely watched by everybody and especially by plant-lovers like us. The very first bloomers, almost invariably in our area are species such as Trout lily (*Erythronium* sp., *Liliaceae*), Field pansy (*Viola rafinesquii* or *V. bicolor*, *Violaceae*), False garlic (*Nothoscordum bivalve*, *Liliaceae*), and Ten-petal anemone (*Anemone heterophylla*, *Ranunculaceae*). Yes, it is time for these early bloomers to show their beauty, announcing, "spring is here, spring is here." I am sure you will notice, look for, and enjoy these early spring natives before we are overwhelmed by the colorful fields of Bluebonnets, Evening Primroses, Indian paintbrush, Indian blanket, Coreopsis, and others we love.

Camelia Maier

Feb. 25th Meeting – Plant Propagation

Our February program will be presented by our new president and TWU biology professor, Camelia Maier. She will cover the various ways of propagating native plants – seed, division, cuttings.

Trinity Forks is on Flickr!

Wildflower pictures by TF members have been VISIBLE on Flickr at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/tfcnpsot/> since the beginning of February 2010. Our logo is a photo of the Texas bluebonnet, *Lupinus texensis* (*Fabaceae*), and our e-mail address is trinityforks@yahoo.com. The current administrator of the site is George Roberson and he will be more than happy to receive your input and guide you in learning more about Flickr. The Board thanks Sonnia Hill, member of the Tyler Chapter and friend of Trinity Forks for her generous donation that allows us to post unlimited photos on our Flickr site. Please, visit our Flickr site, comment on the photos, print some of them if you recognize yourself in those frames, and more importantly send in your own pictures at the e-mail address above to be posted on our site. Also, visit the photos of our contacts, other Texan native-plants lovers, some of them your own friends or acquaintances, and view a collection of favorite native plants as a slide show. Flickr is a way to share photos and comments plus identify and learn about native plants and stay in touch with our large Texas native plants family. Please, enjoy and contribute to our site.

Camelia Maier, TF President



Flickr Logo – Photo by Camelia Maier

Outdoor Learning Center Gardens

I've invited Jill Coulter to our February meeting. Jill is a second grade teacher with McNair Elementary and, also, Science Coordinator for the environmental gardens on her campus. I'll show you my original photograph of her garden plot as I introduce her so that you'll be able to recall who's doing what where! I know you'll give her a big round of encouragement as she and her committee are venturing into the natural and native world with McNair's 100+ third graders.

Dorothy Thetford, Outreach Chair

Symposium 2010 T-shirts on sale now

Symposium 2010 is coming to DENTON Oct 7-10.

The Symposium 2010 planning committee needs your help. We need YOU to wear the official tee for this year's symposium as often and in as many places as you can. Show it off and talk it up. Help us get the word out that this is one not-to-be-missed environmental education event. Spring plant sale? You bet! Soccer games? Sure! Don't be bashful—you're doing a public service letting folks know.

A limited number of shirts will be ready for delivery in early March and, priced under \$20, we expect them to go like hotcakes. So bring your checkbook to the February chapter meeting and get your T-shirt reserved right away. You'll be glad you did. And thanks for your support!

Cynthia Maguire

NPSOT President elect & Symposium 2010 Chair

Great Chance to Promote Natives & T F

Saturday, April 24, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Spring is always a popular time to celebrate the outdoors because we southerners are ready to shake the 'cabin fever' as soon as the days are filled with sunshine and warm air. And Trinity Forks' first invitation to celebrate both is scheduled for April 24.

Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area (LLELA) has invited our chapter to participate in their Earth Day Celebration by having an informational booth alongside the many other environmentally-oriented organizations in the area.

LLELA is a gated Corps.of Engrs. property around the south end of Lake Lewisville and will be open to the public on that day, with a waiver on the normal \$5 gate fee. The staff is anticipating an estimated 1,000 attendees, so **mark your calendar now** and plan to visit the park early. You'll have an opportunity to tour the log cabin, walk miles of trails, and maybe even catch a glimpse of their bison, turkey, deer, and bird habitats. You'll also be able to see Richard Freiheit's prairie restoration project that he's been working on since 2004. Don't miss these open gates!

More details and a map will be provided at our April meeting. Pull out your hiking boots, take advantage of all of the activities, and then take a break by stopping at our Trinity Forks booth to share-a-smile as you share-a-membership application with visitors ! **(Can you volunteer 30 minutes? Let me know if AM or PM).**

Dorothy Thetford, Outreach Chair

Wildflowers-of-Texas

Common name: Windflower

Scientific name: (*Anemone berlandieri*)

Family: Ranunculaceae

From a total of 150 species, Texas claims five anemones as native. Rightly named, windflower begins blooming in late February and continues blooming right through the March winds. *Anemone berlandieri* was named for Jean Louis Berlandier, 1805-1851, one of the first botanists credited with extensive plant collections in Texas.

Nestled in dried winter grasses, 3-5" petioles emerge at the ground level, each terminating with three palmately-lobed leaves. This basal set of leaves is in a triangular arrangement and grows in a prostrate position. Each single leaf is approximately an inch wide, and the combined three leaves (also in a triangle) total two inches across. You may want to check your lawn now for leaves that match this description; the plant is in the leaf stage, and will be shooting up its scape soon.

The flower scape (naked, leafless, flowering stem or stalk arising from the ground) seems to suddenly appear, without notice, from the center of the rosette of leaves, supporting a single flower bud. This bud is cradled in a set of leaf-like bracts. These three bracts are slender, deeply dissected, and are attached at the same node, encircling the scape. Once you discover this stage of the plant in your flowerbed or lawn, you'll soon be the proud owner of one of our early blooming native wildflowers.

But watch closely because within days, the scape grows to approximately 5" in height. At this stage, the upper flower stem grows another 3-5" taller, leaving the leaf-like bracts at mid-stem.

Following this quick spurt of growth, the bud develops into a solitary white, blue, lavender, or violet colored flower head of 10-20 sepals (which resemble petals). Each sepal is narrow, about 1/2" long, and arranged side by side around the cylindrical green column. These sepals are often a rose colored on their underside.

Now that you've learned to identify the foliage, the scape, the bud, the bracts and the flower, you'll need to know the flower's preferred blooming time of the day. Yes, blossoms open mid-morning in full sun and close late afternoon; and they rarely open on a cloudy day. When the flowers are fully open, several stamens are visible encircling the fruiting head.

So what is a fruiting head, you ask. The fruiting head of the windflower is the center column. As the flower matures and petals fall, the head begins elongating, then expands and erupts into many hairy achenes (one-seeded fruit). These are freely dispersed with March winds, or, can be collected and planted in any sunny flowerbed, Outdoor Learning Center, prairie or park.

Don't let a February snowstorm dampen your spirits; spring will be spring as soon as you witness acres and acres of this native perennial windflower blooming along roadsides, open prairies, unmowed nature trails, and even in residential lawns where herbicides have not been applied.

Be watching !

Dorothy, a TF member since 1992 and former (twice) president, and a (2500 hr) certified Master Naturalist, is a roving ambassador for native wildflowers with her City Nature Hikes, DISD programs & hikes, and DISD OLC garden projects. Her "Wildflowers-of-Texas" photo-greeting cards are available locally at Cupboard Natural Foods & Cafe.

Divide, Thin, and Rescue to Support Our Spring Plant Sale – April 9

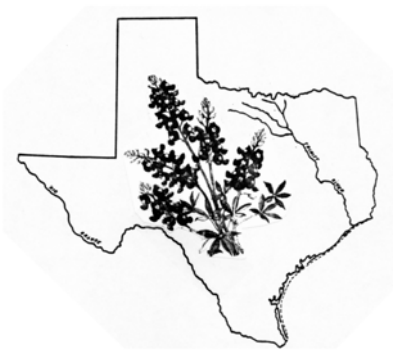
By the time you receive this, our annual "Exclusively Native" spring plant sale will be only 6-7 weeks away, April 9 at the Denton Redbud Festival. So, as soon as the snow melts (hey -- I might never again be able to use that phrase!), start checking your yard for things that you can donate for our sale. The spring plant sale is not only our major source of chapter income, but an important means of delivering our message to the community and making it easy for everyone to landscape with native plants. In addition, it is always lots of fun, and one of the highlights of our year. The funds we raise pay for our newsletter, the NICE! program, and all our community outreach programs. This year's spring sale is more important than usual because we will be too busy with the State Symposium to hold a fall plant sale.

When and what should you pot up? If you are dividing a woody perennial or transplanting a tree seedling, right now while they are still dormant, is ideal. For everything else, plants should be in their new pots by the 3rd week of March to allow the roots time to get established by growing into the potting soil and on their way toward the pot perimeter. For those plants that wait until the week before the sale to poke their heads up and get your attention, you will need to dig a larger root ball around them so they nearly fill the new pot with minimal added soil, in order to recover from transplant shock before Sale Day.

Sometimes we forget that old favorites in our gardens may not be natives. Be sure to check the list of natives on our website, www.npsot.org/TrinityForks/TrinityForksWeb/plants.html to be certain each donation meets our sale criteria -- to promote natives that do well in the Denton area. And remember you MUST have permission to dig if you are not the property owner, even when plants are in the path of construction or destruction. If you think you have a native but don't find it on our lists, contact me (drgoodrad@verizon.net) or Kathy Saucier (gksaucier@verizon.net) so we can check into it for you. Or, our phone numbers are on the back of the newsletter. Please let each other know via our chat list TrinityForksNPSOT@yahoo.com if you have spare pots or are in need of some. Let the digging begin!

Cathy Lustgarten, Ways & Means (plant sale) chair

Native Plant Society of Texas
Trinity Forks Chapter
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Coming Oct 7-10



February 2010

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Website: www.npsot.org/TrinityForks

Membership Corner

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

Jeremy Voss, Denton
Bobbie Ashley, Decatur
Sharen Arnold, Aubrey
Christina Wasson, 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 6:30 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.