

Trinity Forks Native Plant Press

The Newsletter of Trinity Forks Chapter
Native Plant Society of Texas

January 2010

From the Prez

Happy 20th Anniversary, Trinity Forks!

The Trinity Forks Chapter turns 20 years old in January 2010 and is as viable today as it was at its inception. We start the new year by celebrating our chapter's anniversary, and it is not just any anniversary, but our 20th. Two decades of Trinity Forks Chapter's meaningful and successful activity. Congratulations, Trinity Forks!

Through the years, the dedicated and talented members of our chapter have worked to strengthen native plant protection, enrich and spread the knowledge of Texas native plants, plant natives and eradicate non-native invasive species in certain areas. Our members have contributed countless volunteer hours to public education about the value of using native plants in landscapes, water conservation, and habitat preservation and restoration. The Trinity Forks Chapter has received the NPSOT "Chapter of the Year" award 3 times in its 20-year history for successful activities in promoting the goals of conservation, research, and utilization of Texas native plants and plant habitats through education, outreach, and example. Our chapter serves members primarily in Denton, Wise, Cooke, and Collin Counties, but also in Tarrant and Dallas and as far as Grayson and Rockwall Counties. Our members participate in monthly meeting programs, tours and field trips, plant sales and plant donations to schools, display gardens, write newspaper articles, and serve in local boards and other community groups such as Master Naturalists, Organic Gardeners, etc. Through events like these we reach large numbers of people in North Texas to publicize the value and beauty of native plants.

As the Trinity Forks Chapter begins a new year, I would like to express thanks and appreciation to our 2009 board members, especially to Cathy Lustgarten, who served as

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Jan. 28 Mtg. – Insects & Native Plants

Our January program will be presented by Gail Manning, noted entomologist at the Ft. Worth Botanical Gardens, talking on the interactions of insects with native plants. Manning has said: "There is a strong relationship between native plants and insects. They protect as well as pollinate native plants." Come explore these fascinating relationships. Invite a friend, and spread the word on natives.

Special Birthday Wishes

While Trinity Forks celebrates its 20th BD this month, we also want to extend fond birthday wishes to charter member Wilma Haggard, who celebrated her 88th BD on January 20. Happy Birthday, Wilma!!!

Learn More About Organics

Being organic and using native plants go hand in hand for saving water and attracting birds and butterflies to your yard. The Denton Organic Society meets the third Wednesday of each month except July, Aug. and Dec. at 7:00pm in the Denton Senior Center. Visitors are welcome. To see a list of their activities go to: www.dentonorganicsociety.org.

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 meeting begins at 7:00pm on the 3rd floor.

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President for the past two years, and Laurie Hammett (Membership), a retiring board member who has graciously offered to continue helping with different activities of the chapter. I am pleased to welcome incoming board members Marshall Fox as President Elect, Fritz Poppe as Treasurer, and Joan Phelps (past Treasurer) as Membership officer. I personally thank all members for contributing to our continued success and I am looking forward to serve as the Chapter's President in 2010.

The beginning of a new year is a good time for us, native plant lovers and protectors, to plan for the future so as to be more effective in 2010 and beyond. At this point in our history, I encourage our members to re-evaluate themselves and make resolutions for the coming years. What direction do we want our chapter to take? What do we need to change in order to better represent how the members feel a Native Plant Society should work in achieving our mission? What are the most efficient and effective ways for our members to join forces to educate, conserve and enjoy Texas' wonderful flora? I would like to invite all members to participate in a survey that will give our board the benefit of gaining a better understanding of our members' interests and aspirations.

I believe that Trinity Forks Chapter can and shall provide a wide range of opportunities for members to make a difference in how the State of Texas looks on and uses its heritage of native plants. Texas ranks second in the nation for overall diversity of species, just behind California, and third in the number of species unique to the state. Unfortunately, Texas ranks fourth in the number of extinct species, according to an article in the January 2009 issue of the *Texas Parks & Wildlife* magazine. Therefore, we have work to do.

Our chapter will commit to continue educational and outreach programs that create a sense of stewardship and respect for our wildlife, both plants and animals and their habitats, and natural ecosystems. The key to native plant conservation is the continued existence of diverse natural ecosystems and the preservation of native biodiversity.

There are many ways in which members can contribute to the mission of our chapter and therefore to the mission of NPSOT. For the chapter's 2010 strategic plan, I propose to focus on two main issues: increasing membership and increasing our visibility to the public. How can we grow? One way is for members themselves to bring new members. Bring your neighbors, friends, and relatives. If we can imagine new ways to make others feel 'at home' in our chapter, then those efforts may have at least as large an influence on the future of the chapter and NPSOT as our efforts to identify and train new generations of native plants advocates. The Annual Symposium will be held in Denton on October 4-6. Cynthia Maguire and her committee are working with the NPSOT to put on what appears to be a terrific program and a source of new members for our chapter, so, please, reserve your volunteer place at this event. With the start of a new year, you probably have your resolutions in place. It is not too late though, to make the resolution of becoming more active with our chapter. After all, we still need field trip leaders and a chapter historian.

Members can provide publicity for our goals and activities, educate the public, local government and industry on the ethical and effective use of native plants, advocate their use among current non-users, educate younger generations, and encourage science fairs where students report on studies they conducted on native plants. We need to get our message out about the need to preserve and restore native plant communities to maintain healthy ecosystems and about the value of creating mini-habitats in our own backyards. Let's try to make ourselves even more visible in 2010.

Increasing membership will result in more publicity and visibility, which will result in increased membership and a stronger chapter with enhanced ability to achieve its mission. Please join with me in strengthening our chapter and spreading the word about native plants. I look forward to another great year for the Trinity Forks Chapter.

Camelia Maier

Wildflowers of Texas

by Dorothy Brown Thetford

Common name: White or Bushy Honeysuckle
 Botanical name: *Lonicera albiflora*
 Family: Caprifoliaceae

When you hear the word 'honeysuckle', you automatically think of yellow and white, two-inch tubular flowers with a sweet fragrance, blooming along a vigorous, twining vine. That is called Japanese honeysuckle (originating in Japan, Korea and China). We've enjoyed that fragrance for years but are now being alerted that it has become an out-of-control alien pest in the United States. With this new awareness, we should discourage any new plantings of Japanese honeysuckle and, as custodians of the earth, should be removing any established plants found in the wild. "Why?" you ask; it's only a plant. A simple response is that since it is so aggressive, it crowds out our native plants which provide food, nectar, habitat for our native birds, butterflies and pollinators.

Few of us are aware that Texas lays claim to several native honeysuckle plants. One, in particular, is commonly called white, or bushy honeysuckle (*Lonicera albiflora*). The fragrance of bushy honeysuckle is not quite as strong as the Japanese flowers', but the flowers are similar in structure. Our native flower is about one-fourth the size, creamy-white, and is nestled in a cradle-like leaf at the end of each branchlet.

This unique, terminal leaf design is called 'perfoliate' and appears to be two opposite leaves. However, it is only one leaf, basally united around the stem, providing a showy saucer or cradle for both the cluster of small spring-blooming flowers, and also for the Fall berry display. They are pale blue-green to yellow-green in color, and have a waxy feeling to the touch. These tardily deciduous leaves normally are chewed by insects, or, are turning gray by the time the fruit becomes noticeable.

Berries or fruit begin developing as flowers drop in early Summer. It's not until October through December that they are in their prime size and color. Bright red berries, one-fourth inch diameter, provide another uniqueness to this native plant. The maximum number of berries (that I've seen) in one cluster is seven... six arranged in a flat circle with one stacked on top in the center. The normal find is three berries, lying flat in the leaf cradle. As leaves dry and fall in the Fall, the plant becomes a visible skeleton of intertwining, woody stems accented by the beautiful red berries perched on the end of bare, four-to-five inch branchlets.

As a four to six foot sprawling shrub, bushy or white honeysuckle can be found growing natively on rocky slopes, limestone outcrops, cliffs, roadsides, and cedar brakes in central and north central Texas and Oklahoma.

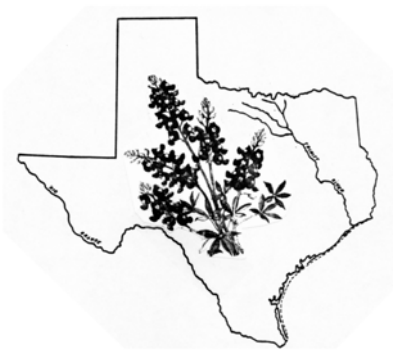
L. albiflora's fragrant, nectar-filled flowers attract butterflies, hummingbirds and various pollinators during the Spring. And, its long, entangled, arching branches provide a natural bird refuge during the Summer and Winter, complete with a wintertime built-in deli...all without being invasive.



Photo by D. Thetford

Dorothy, a TF member since 1992 and former (twice) president and a 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.

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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 joined or renewed their memberships in Trinity Forks recently and hope to see you at the next meeting. You are what makes Trinity Forks special!

Lora Connaughton, Lewisville

Marion McCarley, Sherman

Brigid Corbett, Denton

Russell Bilyeu, Chico

Trish Biedermann, Richardson

Lisa Bellows, Gainesville

Medina Cobb, Dallas

Debbie Van Ness, Shady Shores

Jim Smith, Aubrey

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Norma Lopez, Carrollton

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