

# Trinity Forks Native Plant Press

The Newsletter of Trinity Forks Chapter  
Native Plant Society of Texas

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March 2010

*From the Prez*

## **Thinking about Gardening with Native Plants?**

Here are some reasons why you should pursue the idea, as well as some tips on how to start.

Native plants are uniquely suited to growing in their native areas since they evolved in those areas even before people settled there and started farming and bringing alien plants to grow in their gardens or farms. Natives adapted for thousands of years to the environmental conditions of an area, such as soil and climatic factors, and therefore became an important part of the area ecological system or ecosystem.

Why should we garden with native plants? First of all, they take less work and resources. Water is precious in Texas. With water becoming an expensive and limited resource (worldwide) due to unsustainable use, all landscaping projects, residential or commercial, can benefit from using native plants. A large percentage of residential water is applied to landscapes and lawns, and most of it is lost through evaporation when sprayed by sprinkler systems in the air on hot days. Planting natives can reduce landscape water use. Amazingly, after native plants have been established in your garden, you do not have to water them. It seems that other than digging holes to plant your natives, there is not much work to do since you do not need to water, fertilize, and apply pesticides like you do with other ornamental plants.

Secondly, native plants rarely become invasive within a local ecosystem because they evolved within a community of plants and animals for so long that they have natural predators and competitors which will keep them in check. Most of the introduced species of plants, also called alien or exotic species, do not have natural predators and therefore become invasive, pushing native plants to extirpation in an ecosystem or even to extinction.

Thirdly, native plants have long-time, well-established relationships with local wildlife, such as birds, insects, and other animals that rely on their plant partners for food, nesting sites, and shelter -- in a word, providing wildlife habitat. These relationships are the basis for a healthy ecosystem and should be maintained if we want to avoid ecosystem collapse.

Finally, the native plants are beautiful. Please, do not overlook the beauty of natives in favor of some exotics. Remember that garden favorites such as coneflowers, coreopsis, yarrow, Indian blanket, just to mention a few, have all been 'developed' (don't we love that word?!) from North American natives through artificial selection. Look around the prairies, hills, ponds, and along highways this spring for an explosion of beauty, especially after all of the snow and rain we got this winter.

Try to follow nature's schedule in when to plant natives. In general, you plant natives in the fall. Our warm climate allows the plants to grow roots in the new location and take advantage of the winter and spring rainfall before the hot summer starts. Often that is all they need. With others, it may take a full year to get established. Either way, after that, they are on their own. Spring is also a good time to plant many natives.

By choosing plants that are native to your specific locale, the more successfully they will grow. To find resources about the native plants in your area, look at the websites for the Native Plant Society of Texas (<http://npsot.org>), the Trinity Forks Chapter (<http://TrinityForks/index.htm>), Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (<http://wildflower.org>), USDA Plants Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>), or check for books on growing native plants at the local libraries. Most of these sites will also provide a list of local native plant nurseries. Always do your homework and get your natives from a reputable source to be sure that you get the real natives of your choice and not imposters and that you do not buy endangered species that are harvested illegally.

When you decide to go native with your garden and start working on the project, keep in mind that you do not need to obtain a whole 'preserve' of native plants in a week or two or a season. Start small by including a handful of natives every season or every year until you get the whole 'preserve' you desire. You may also need to check with your local ordinances on landscaping before starting your project, especially if you plan to use native grasses, since some communities have restrictions on turf grass planting. Also, by starting small you minimize the number of young plants you need to help establish. New young plants need water more often than mature plants, which have deeper, well-established root systems.

Do you need help with your native garden project? You know where to find us, the Trinity Forks Chapter of NPSOT. Become a member, attend our meetings and activities, call or e-mail our members for help. The Chapter has plant sales every spring and fall. Mark your calendars for our next plant sale in conjunction with the Denton Redbud Festival, April 10, at the Civic Center. We love to see you and interact with you there.

Happy native blooms this spring and forever!

*Camelia Maier, President*

## **March 25th Meeting**

Our March program will be presented by Michael Perez from the Ft. Worth Nature Center, speaking on the Cross Timbers region & the FW Nature Center.

## Outdoor Learning Center Gardens

I've invited Isabel Cano to our March meeting. Isabel is a second grade teacher at Hodge Elementary and, also, Science Coordinator for the environmental gardens on her campus. I'll show you my original photographs 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 welcome her with open arms and words of encouragement as she ventures into the natural and native world with Hodge's students. Trinity Forks donated a copy of the Wasowskis' book, NATIVE TEXAS PLANTS, to the school's library, along with \$150 worth of native plants (from Painted Flower Farm) for the school's garden.

*Dorothy Thetford, Outreach Chair*

## Outreach in Action

### **Sunday, April 11, 9 to 11 a.m.**

Trinity Forks Chapter will provide an informational display at First United Methodist Church of Denton as part of its on-going "2nd Sunday Resource Conservation" program. The display will be available in the church's Miller Center from 9-11 a.m.. All members are invited to assist with promotional material as well as answer questions.

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

Trinity Forks Chapter will provide an info booth at the Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area in LLELA's Earth Day Celebration. All members are invited to assist with our booth and hike the trails, tour the restored log cabin, see the prairie restoration, and visit the entire park on this rare, open-to-the-public / fee-waived, event.

### **Saturday, May 15, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Trinity Forks Chapter will provide an info booth at the Flower Mound Flower Festival. All members are invited to assist with the booth and visit the free, open-to-the-public, festival.

**To volunteer for any or all events, call Dorothy at 940-382-9344.**

*Dorothy Thetford, Outreach Chair*

## Field Trip to Ft. Worth Nature Center

There will be a field trip to the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge on Sat., May 1, organized by Marshall Fox. We will meet at the Cracker Barrel parking lot at 8:45 a.m. and leave at 9:00 a.m. We can carpool and caravan from there. People coming from other directions can meet us at the Hardwicke Interpretive Center in the park at 10:00 a.m. There is normally a \$5.00 entry fee for those who are not already members of the Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center. We do not know yet if they plan to waive that fee. We will be evaluating the Nature Center as a possible field trip for the Oct. 2010 Symposium. We will be led by Suzanne Tuttle, who is the Nature Center Director. Bring water, snacks, sunscreen, insect repellent. We probably will be at the Nature Center for about 3 hours.

*Marshall Fox, President-elect*

## TWU Garden Workday, Fri, March 26

TWU students will be working cleaning up and planting in the Benny Simpson Garden. Mentors are needed to help direct their work. If you can help anytime from 9am to 3pm, please contact Cynthia Maguire at 940-594-6555 or [cmaguire@mail.twu.edu](mailto:cmaguire@mail.twu.edu)

*Cynthia Maguire, Symposium 2010 Chair*



## POT UP PLANTS NOW!!!!

The NPSOT Trinity Forks Plant Sale at the Denton Redbud Festival is just around the corner, April 10th. That's really soon!

**Plants need time to heal from transplanting** so they look good at the sale. **Please don't wait until a week before the sale.** Wilted leafless plants don't sell well, and we don't want our customers to buy something that dies & then gives us a bad name. **So dig in March!** If you need pots for the plant sale, contact Fonda Fox at 940-627-2343 or [xbfox@yahoo.com](mailto:xbfox@yahoo.com). She can deliver to anyone in Denton or bring them to the March 25 mtg.

Walk your yard and write down what you have and how many. **Tell me what you "think" you can provide, now.** Sometimes I take ribbon out with me and tie it to the plants I want to dig so I can find them when I'm ready to dig.

**Once you have them potted, then let me know what you "ended up with" for the sale.**

Please refer to the plant lists on our website and give me the **species name along with your common name.** Otherwise there are too many common name mix-ups. [http://www.npsot.org/TrinityForks/TrinityForksWeb/plant\\_s.html](http://www.npsot.org/TrinityForks/TrinityForksWeb/plant_s.html) If your plant is not on this list, please contact me to see if it is approved.

We will also get a supply of consignment plants from Painted Flower Farm and Shades of Green. Since both places have a limit on truck space, we use them as much as possible for those species that we can't get from members.

**So again we need to know what you are bringing as soon as possible** so we can make these arrangements with the nurseries.

And if you are looking for a particular plant, let me know what & how many. This does not reserve the plant for you, because you still need to show up and buy, but helps us get the supply that we have the demand for.

This is the biggest event for our chapter and a very important fund raiser. People of the community now expect us to be there and they return year after year for our plants.

Contact Kathy Saucier at [gksaucier@verizon.net](mailto:gksaucier@verizon.net) or 972-492-4680

We also need **workers** at the sale. Come out and have some fun with us!

Sign up to work a shift at the meeting or contact Cathy Lustgarten at [drgoodrad@verizon.net](mailto:drgoodrad@verizon.net)

Thank you to all for your help.

*Kathy Saucier, plant sale co-chair*

## **Wildflowers-of-Texas**

*Dorothy Brown Thetford*

Common name: Wood violet

Scientific name: *Viola missouriensis*

Family: Violaceae

The March wind is here, and the native wildflower commonly called Windflower has surfaced throughout the area, as mentioned in the February newsletter. I hope you've seen a few. However, while looking for Windflower, keep your eyes focused on the ground so that you can also find the Tiny, or Low Bluet (*Houstonia pusilla*). It is star-shaped, blue, only an inch or two tall and, yes indeed, tiny ... smaller than a pencil eraser. If you find a colony of Bluets in bloom, it looks like a pool of blue water; enjoy.

While Spring beauty, Windflower, and Bluets may be hiding among the dead grasses, another early bloomer is preparing to bloom. It is commonly called the Wood violet (*Viola missouriensis*). It is normally found growing in sandy soil along the edges of woods and under the canopy of trees in filtered sun on the forest floor. It can also be found in moist soil along creek banks.

The native Wood violet plant is a rounded clump of tightly-arranged leaves that resembles a florist's nosegay. Its dark green leaves are distinctly heart-shaped, or broadly ovate to deltoid ovate, with serrate edges and pronounced veins. They are almost as attractive as the flowers.

Not only are the individual leaves beautiful, but in their compact nosegay growth pattern, they collectively provide the perfect setting for displaying the plant's small, intricate flowers.

Solitary, violet-colored flowers tower only an inch above the leaf mound on three to four-inch peduncles. The arrangement of five unequal petals is often described as a 'butterfly' or bilaterally symmetrical design. The upper two erect petals are more uniform in color, and the three lower petals normally have more distinct, usually purple, vein markings. All five petals, only 1/2 inch across, are displayed in a nodding stance versus face-up. This perennial violet is native to eight of the ten vegetational zones of Texas, and begins blooming in our North Central Texas zone in mid to late March. The Wood violet is normally only four-to-five inches tall, so keep your nose to the ground for this early-blooming nosegay.

*Dorothy, a TF member since 1992 and former 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.*

## **Symposium 2010: Catch the Vision!**

Ever been to a NPSOT symposium? If you're like most members, the answer is probably no. You've thought about it and decided it was too far away, or you were too busy, or it probably wouldn't be as good as people said it

was. If you've been putting off attending, then get out your calendar right now and circle these dates: **Thursday, October 7—Sunday, October 10**. You're almost there already! Step two? Pick up the phone and call to make a hotel reservation....uh, scratch that. You won't need it. Symposium 2010 is coming to you, right here in Denton! Instead, use the phone to call a friend and invite them to attend with you. You'll both be glad you did! For those who have never been to a symposium, here's the vision of what it's like.

Those who can, come early. (Thursday is early.) The festivities begin on Thursday afternoon with a field trip to someplace outdoorsy and fun, with a casual relaxing attitude. This year, the planning committee has our sights set on Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center in far north-east Denton. There are several easy walking trails for a stroll with friends, both old and new, where you're pretty much guaranteed to see something interesting that you haven't seen before. Add a barn-like educational facility where some good eats will be served and a little entertainment. Feel free to wear your jeans and bring your camera. Are you beginning to see yourself in this picture yet?

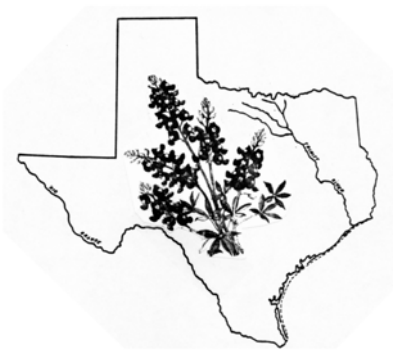
The official part of the meeting starts in earnest the next morning when the presentation of papers begins in Hubbard Hall on the Texas Woman's University campus. My co-chair, **Cathy Lustgarten**, is hard at work making sure there's something for everyone from the newest newbie to experienced hands such as **Shirley Lusk**. (Come to think of it, Shirley makes it a habit to attend these events every year. You should ask her about it sometime.) The morning will be filled with speakers who will be there to emphasize our theme, *Save Texas One Landscape at a Time: Our Native Plants Light the Future*. We want to show everyone "how to do it"—how to save money (on the water bill and on plants that won't make it in Texas' weather), how to save wildlife (give 'em their favorite native plants to munch on and live in), and especially how to preserve the ecosystems and rich botanical heritage that make Texas such a great place. It's an important message and folks from all over Texas need to hear it. (Have you called your friend yet? Don't miss out!)

Lest you think this will be a dull morning, let me hasten to add that there will be a lot of fun going on all around. New arrivals will be taking their items to set up in the silent auction (NPSOT's annual fundraiser dedicated for scholarships), the photo contest, our first-ever T-shirt exchange (need a different size?), the dried flower arrangements and who knows what else! That means there is as much to see as there is to hear...and then comes lunch! (Yes, we're planning some great food, too—but I don't want to give away all our secrets just yet!) Next month I'll write more about the fun and festivities planned for the rest of the weekend. Y'all stay tuned til then. Meanwhile, I hope you *catch the vision* and don't forget to call a friend!

*Cynthia Maguire*

*NPSOT President-elect & Symposium 2010 Chair*

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



Coming Oct 7-10



March 2010

### **Trinity Forks Contact Information**

**President** - Camelia Maier, 940-566-7913  
cmaier@mail.twu.edu  
**Pres. Elect** - Marshall Fox, 940-627-2343  
**Secretary** - Lon Turnbull, 940-323-8999  
**Treasurer** - Fritz Poppe, 940-387-9351  
**Past Pres.** -- Cathy Lustgarten, 972-306-1088  
**Ways/Means** - Cathy Lustgarten, 972-306-1088  
**Membership** - Joan Phelps, 940-321-5980  
**Hospitality** - Fonda Fox, 940-627-2343  
**Programs** - Cecil Carter, 940-321-9527  
**Publicity** - Cecil Carter, 940-321-9527  
**Education** - Marilyn Blanton, 940-387-4353  
**Outreach** - Dorothy Thetford, 940-382-9344  
**Field Trips** - OPEN  
**Historian** - OPEN  
**Webmaster** - Lon Turnbull, 940-323-8999  
**Newsletter** - Mike Mizell, 940-382-8551  
birdmizell@msn.com  
**NICE! Coordinators:**  
Kathy Saucier, 972-492-4680  
Marilyn Blanton, 940-464-7775

**Note:** Symposium 2010 T-shirts will be available again at the March meeting for only \$15. This will probably be your last chance to get one at that price.

### **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!

Cherie Arruda, Argyle  
Matthew Dempsey, Frisco  
Rodney Barton, Hickory Creek  
Jamie Spaciell, Frisco  
Betty Speed Bridenstine, 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 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.*

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