



# Trinity Forks Native Plant Press

The Newsletter of Trinity Forks Chapter  
Native Plant Society of Texas

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May 2010

*From the Prez*

## Talking Advocacy of Native Plants

After looking “**advocacy**” up in different dictionaries, this is what I found: Random House Dictionary (2010) lists advocacy as “the act of pleading for, supporting, or recommending” and dated this noun back to 1375–1425. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (Fourth Edition, 2009) has the following entry, dating the origin of the word to the 15<sup>th</sup> century: “**ad·vo·ca·cy** (ăd'və-kə-sē) n. The act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy; active support.”

Other sources talk about advocacy by an individual or a group, aiming to influence public policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions.

Almost two years ago, NPSOT adopted a three-year renewable Strategic Plan designed to increase the effectiveness of the organization and establish it as Texas’ “premier resource for information about native plants and plant habitats.” One of the sections in the Strategic Plan is dedicated to **advocacy** and encompasses four areas of activities: “working with elected and other government officials to affect legislation, working with major state contractors and state agencies whose management practices affect plants, working with the educational system and with the media” in advocating use and protection of native plants.

Why advocate for native plants? It may be motivated by moral, ethical or faith principles or simply by the desire to protect an asset of interest. Scientists from all over the world are advocating using native plants in sustainable, ecologically balanced gardens in suburban and urban yards to create or re-create backyard wildlife habitats. The public at large has become more concerned about the environment and environmental issues, and therefore the interest in the preservation and restoration of native plant communities has increased over the years. Native plants are valued for their economic, ecological, genetic, and aesthetic benefits in addition to the growing societal belief in their intrinsic value as living species not merely aesthetic ‘things.’

Native plants also provide the keystone elements for ecosystem restoration by constituting the base of trophic pyramids in native ecological systems, such as a prairie, for example. They practically build the ecosystems by providing food and habitat for native wildlife. There are specific associations of fungi and bacteria with plants (mycorrhizae, roots and nitrogen-fixing bacteria), invertebrates with woody debris, pollinators with flowers, and birds with structural habitat that can only be rebuilt by planting native plants. Other advantages of

landscaping with native plants are: natives add beauty to our environment and preserve our natural heritage, decrease the amount of water needed for landscape maintenance, require very little long-term maintenance when properly planted and established, protect water quality by controlling soil erosion through their root systems, moderate floods and droughts, and serve as an important genetic resource for future food crops or other plant-derived products.

Through all our activities, Trinity Forks Chapter voices **advocating** use of native plants. Our mission empowers us to **advocate** environmental stewardship through sustainable landscaping by promoting use of native plants. To become a widely recognized voice for native plants and environmental stewardship in our community and at the state level, however, we need to do more in promoting increased use of native plantings by example, education, marketing (plant sales), and personalized support (outreach activities). Let us raise public awareness that landscaping with native plants should become the norm rather than the exception, pointing out the benefits that native plants, including trees, shrubs, wildflowers and grasses, offer. Let us persuade the general public that including native plants in home and public landscapes is aesthetically pleasing and healthier for our environment, and that reducing unnecessary turf grass reduces storm water runoff and unnecessary use of water, fuel, and lawn chemicals. Let us join forces with other organizations in preserving native plants and biodiversity from loss due to development and displacement by non-native invasive plants. Let us get our name and what we do in front of the general public over and over until it is commonly understood that “Trinity Forks Chapter of NPSOT = the place to learn about the use of native plants.” Let us show people there is a happy medium between a manicured lawn and a piece of prairie ecosystem in our backyard and teach them how to garden in harmony with Nature. Talk to your neighbors, family, and friends about the secret life of compost and benefits of such gardening activities.

We understand that the survival of native plants in the long term may depend on our efforts and other organizations’ efforts. Has Trinity Forks become the *leading voice* of native plant use in our communities yet? Are we the group most people think of first when they need information, advice, or support for the “the benefits of” or “how to do” landscaping with native plants? Think about it! As we take a break from our group activities for two months in summer, I would encourage you to continue to sustain the individual advocacy work that each of you is doing so well by educating your family, friends, neighbors, collaborators, acquaintances, students, apprentices, and even complete strangers on our beloved native plants.

Have a great summer!

*Camelia Maier, TF President*

## Events Calendar

### May 27 Program

R. Austin Sewell, Rangeland Conservationist at Caddo - LBJ National Grasslands, will be speaking about the characteristics of many native grasses found in the Caddo-LBJ National Grasslands. Sewell is a native of Wise County and has also worked professionally on several cattle ranches and as a rangeland consultant in Iowa. He received his bachelor's degree in Rangeland Ecology and Management from Oklahoma State University. He lives with his wife and two children in Denton. He also raises grass-finished cattle.

**NOTE: This month's meeting will be back in the Clock Tower Bldg. (our usual location). Social time is at 6:30p.m. Meeting is at 7p.m.**

*Cecil Carter, Program Chair*

### Wild About Flower Mound Postponed to June 19<sup>th</sup>

The Town of Flower Mound postponed its Wild About Flower Mound Festival to Saturday, June 19<sup>th</sup> due to an inclement weather forecast on the event's originally scheduled weekend. The hours for the Festival remain 10 AM to 6:30 PM. The Festival site is Bakersfield Park - 1201 Duncan Lane in Flower Mound, just south of FM 3040 (Flower Mound Rd.).

If you are willing to volunteer to help staff the NPSOT/Trinity Forks Education booth on this new date, please let us know via a phone call. Several of our original volunteers indicated they have conflicts with the new date so we are seeking additional volunteers to fill out the schedule. Shifts are only two hours so you will have plenty of time to enjoy the Festival.

Wild About Flower Mound is a free event with free parking. Activities include an environmental fair, a green building exhibit, the Wild About Flowers Expo, live music, a kid zone featuring bounce houses, rock climbing wall, stick horse rodeo, pony rides, petting zoo, and refreshments. More information and an event schedule are available at [www.flower-mound.com/wild](http://www.flower-mound.com/wild).

*Tom Kirwan (972-213-5664)*

*Leslie Kirwan (214-213-5664)*

### Save the Date

Save the date of Saturday, August 21 for our ice cream social in the Benny Simpson garden at TWU at the hopefully cool hour of 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 or so. We plan to have coffee, orange juice, delicious baked goods, and also some ice cream. We can keep cool with more fun water balloon games. So bring your lawn chairs and plan to have an enjoyable time eating, visiting, and wandering around the garden. We will have a sign-up sheet for volunteers to bring the above mentioned refreshments at this month's meeting, or you can contact Fonda Fox at 940-627-2343 or [xbfox@yahoo.com](mailto:xbfox@yahoo.com).

*Fonda Fox, Hospitality Chair*

## Outreach Report

**May 4:** On behalf of Trinity Forks Chapter, Dorothy Thetford accepted an Adopt-a-School Top Adopter Award at the annual DISD Appreciation Luncheon for "Best Adopter Campus Beautiful 2010." Hodge Elementary principal, Ms. Sam Kelley, recommended our chapter in appreciation of our NATIVE TEXAS PLANTS book and monetary donations for native plants for their OLC garden. Thanks, Ms. Kelley.

**May 7:** Monetary Gift Certificate to Sam Houston Elem. was presented to Michelle Rainer, OLC garden coordinator. On May 10, Don Kinney, owner Painted Flower Farm, and Dorothy delivered plants and met with Ms. Rainer to finalize her garden design. Students planted 54 native plants in their Butterfly Garden on May 12. Thank you TF members for judging the student garden designs at our April meeting.

**May 15:** Trinity Forks Chapter's Outreach display at Sanger ISD's 10th Annual Dads & Kids Play Day provided 2 tables of fresh wildflowers, photographs, reference books, newsletters and membership applications. However, Tom and Leslie Kirwan's 4x8 vinyl poster of an enlarged picture of an Indian blanket (*Gaillardia pulchella*) grabbed the attention of all attendees whereby each child or parent was enticed to stand behind the poster, stick his/her head through the center cut-out of the flower and be photographed by friends or family.

Exceptional interest was shown by third grader, Audrey Grisham, as she was first attracted to a box of crayolas and blank NPSOT cards along with an invitation to "draw a wildflower." Not only could Audrey draw wildflower pictures, but was well aware of their common names. After a lengthy and interesting visit with Audrey and her parents, we heartily endorsed Tom's idea of awarding Audrey a copy of THE FLOWER MOUND Fieldguide book by Alton Bowman, and welcomed her with open arms into our wildflower domain. Our bonus for the day!

Ms. Valerie Foster, Community Outreach Liaison, Sanger ISD, extended an invitation to Trinity Forks to participate in their 11th Annual Play Day next year. Thanks to Marian Kester, Tom Kirwan, and Camelia Maier, Trinity Forks Chapter had a grande showing, great display and many, many good contacts on behalf of our native plant mission!!! A big thanks to all.

*Dorothy Thetford, Outreach Chair*

## Coming Oct 7-10



Symposium 2010 • 30th Anniversary  
Native Plant Society of Texas

## Symposium 2010 Volunteer Update

October 7 will be here before we know it, and the time has come to start signing up for those little “odd jobs” to make sure it all runs smoothly when our guests arrive. To make sure of this, we are setting aside times for volunteer information sharing and signups from now until September when our regular chapter activities bring us all back together. Please, take a moment now to mark your calendar for these events and opportunities.

**Thursday, May 27 at 6:30 p.m. *sharp*** – Plan to participate in a large group photo session (we’re counting on *YOU* to make the group larger!) Everyone should wear their symposium T-shirt and be on the east steps of Hubbard Hall at TWU for a “welcome to the Symposium” photo op. We will keep it short and sweet, so don’t be late! Hubbard Hall is the large building just north of ACT where we meet. If you park in the visitor lot, you are right next to it. If you still need a T-shirt (*\$15 each, still available in sizes S, L, and XL*), contact Cynthia Maguire ([cynthia.maguire@verizon.net](mailto:cynthia.maguire@verizon.net) or 940.594.6555) to make arrangements, or just come a few minutes early and get yours from her then. Our group photo will be published in the summer issue of the “NPSOT News” along with registration information.

**Tuesday, July 20 and Tuesday, August 10**, both at **6:30 p.m.** – Stop by the lobby in TWU’s Graduate Research Building (where TF board meetings are held) between 6:30 and 7:30 to meet with members who are organizing various parts of the symposium events to sign up for a specific job, or report back on what you’ve done since the last meeting. These two dates are also the TF board meeting dates for this summer. Remember that all members are welcome to attend board meetings—we’d love to see you for both reasons! Contact either Cynthia or Cathy Lustgarten ([drgoodrad@verizon.net](mailto:drgoodrad@verizon.net) or 972.306.1088) if you have any questions about this.

*Camelia Maier and Cynthia Maguire*

## TWU Garden Day -- Spring 2010

The Garden day was the first on-campus activity where I actively played a part in the planning, organizing, and implementing. I worked with Ms. Cynthia Maguire, the Project Leader and environmentalist with a green heart, with the help of the garden staff at TWU. The TWU Gardens is one of the main attractions on campus in the spring. Flowers bloom and the leaves glisten, creating beautiful scenery for pictures, weddings or strolls. Our task was to practice sustainability by planting native trees and plants for the insects and animals to eat and live on.

The event was set for Friday, March the 26<sup>th</sup>. We had to make a list of plants and trees to be added, contact science classes, organizations and individuals to join in, and most of all get funding for the project.

The weather played a cruel, harsh and unexpected role in our planning. There were cold, rainy and snowy days, which challenged the possibility of a garden workday. We walked the gardens on a cold rainy day and also shopped for plants on a cold rainy day. We were able to get emails out to many teachers and organizations, but our flyers were posted after the Spring Break.

There was a break in the rain just before the big day! We organized groups of 3 and assigned jobs from pulling weeds to planting and mulching new flowers and trees. Our turnout was great -- we had more than enough hands to take on the project. Everyone came ready to put in their time and add a little piece of themselves to the gardens.

There were 146 students and participants, who donated a total of 389.6 hours.

As we loaded the last of the tools and trash in the landscaping trucks, people touring the campus started walking through the garden.

I’d say that was the ending of a great day at the TWU Gardens. Thanks to everyone for all your help!

*Karla Geter, student assistant*

## Wildflowers-of-Texas

Common name: Slender Vervain

Botanical name: *Verbena halei*

Family: Verbenaceae

Slender vervain (*Verbena halei*) is known by several common names; i.e., Texas vervain, blue vervain, candelabra and erect vervain. However, 'slender' certainly helps differentiate this species from among the remaining 13 species of North Central Texas.

Slender vervain rises above the Indian paintbrush, winecup, phlox, flax, prairie paintbrush and showy primrose wildflowers to produce a pale blue mirage across the prairie beginning in mid-April.

The mirage effect comes from a very slender, square, woody stem averaging 15 to 20 inches tall, possibly branched in the upper half, that is covered with numerous, small blue to purple-blue flowers. Each tubular or trumpet-shaped flower with five tiny lobes grows from the leaf axils on the upper stem only. And, since each flower is only 1/4 inch wide, one plant of slender vervain may be overlooked easily. However, when found growing in a large colony, vervain creates an illusion of a pale blue fog in early morning.

Leaves of this species vary considerably. The petioled blades are oblanceolate or obovate, toothed or lobed. Lower, basal leaves are deeply lobed, whereas the upper leaves are slightly-toothed or smooth-margined. Confused? Inspect a plant now while in bloom; you'll find a sampling of all of these variables -- very interesting.

History references slender vervain as being used in treating eye diseases and, also, as being an important medicinal herb as well as a charm against witches. And, until recently, German brides were assured of lasting happiness if they wore hats made of vervain.

Slender vervain explodes into bloom in North Central Texas in mid April and continues to bloom sporadically until October or November. It attempts to rebloom even after TxDOT mowers begin their roadside management schedules.

Found in every soil throughout the state, this native perennial is very attractive as large colonies in open, sunny prairies, abandoned pastures, roadsides and woodland edges. Feel free to grow your own plants, wear a vervain headband and live happily ever after.

*Dorothy Thetford, Outreach Chair*

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



Coming Oct 7-10



May 2010

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### **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** - Laurie Hammett, 940-383-3287

**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

**Parliamentarian** - Marshall Fox, 940-627-2343

**Field Trips** - OPEN

**Historian** - OPEN

**Webmaster** - Lon Turnbull, 940-323-8999

**Newsletter** - Mike Mizell, 940-382-8551

[birdmizell@msn.com](mailto:birdmizell@msn.com)

**NICE! Coordinators:**

Kathy Saucier, 972-492-4680

Marilyn Blanton, 940-464-7775

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

### **Membership Corner**

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

Mark Chapin, Argyle

Judy Cole, Denton

Doug Chadwick, Aubrey

Ann L. Pettit, Carrollton

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 6:30 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.*