



Chapter Leaders Handbook



Native
Plant
Society
of Texas

Our Mission

The mission of the Native Plant Society of Texas is to promote conservation, research, and utilization of native plants and plant habitats of Texas through education, outreach and example.



Texas Bluebonnets on Ranch Road 152, Texas Hill Country by Rob Grebon

You have been elected to be an officer in your local chapter. Now what?

Be assured that you are not the first person to ask that question. In fact, most of us at one time or another have found ourselves in the position of not knowing exactly what we are supposed to do.

The purpose of this handbook is to make your position as a chapter leader easier by providing basic information about what chapters need to do and expectations about the role of leaders. There are also references to more extensive documentation with details on specific topics.

You can read this booklet all the way through, or you can look up specific items. You may want to keep it near your desk as a handy reference manual for when you have questions.

The Native Plant Society of Texas is one single organization. Each chapter is an integral part of the Society. We depend on our chapters to carry our message to the community. Therefore, managing a chapter should not distract from your primary goal: guiding your chapter in carrying out the mission of the Society.

The *Chapter Leaders Handbook* is an evolving document. It is expected that as our Society grows, changes and additions will be necessary. Chapters are encouraged to make suggestions to improve the handbook. After all, it is your document to help chapters navigate the many roads to a thriving, successful Native Plant Society of Texas.

Thank you for taking on this important role.

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Chapter Requirements

Chapters are –

- Part of the state organization for legal and tax reporting purposes.
- Required to follow all state and federal laws governing 501(c)(3) organizations

Chapters will –

- Receive a portion of its members' dues (a rebate) from State

Chapters must –

- In outreach, education, and example, everything must be mission related
- Be approved by the State Board upon initial formation and before membership dues may be collected
- Adopt bylaws
- Submit an annual Chapter Activity Report ([CAR form](#))
- Elect a president, a secretary, and optionally other officers (treasurer: in the proposed bylaws) and report newly elected officers to the State
- Submit required reports to the State
- Use liability release forms for all activities outside the usual meeting location as required by our insurance policy
- Collect and report sales taxes if they sell anything outside of the two 24-continuous-hours of tax-exempt events per year.
- Obtain and display at all plant sales Texas floral permits, available through the State
- Follow all Society policies, including those concerning plant sales
- Report any malfeasance or major financial discrepancies to the Executive Committee (executive-committee@npsot.org)

Chapters are encouraged to -

- Hold frequent membership meetings; successful chapters hold meetings 9 to 10 months out of the year
- Have a website and a website committee to keep it current
- Have outreach programs such as: demonstration gardens, field trips, workshops, informational tables at community events
- Use available tools in the [Chapter Tool Chest](#) on our website
- Leaders and those interested in leadership should join the [Chapter Leaders Facebook Group](#)
- Have a chapter Facebook Page or Group
- Be active on other social media such as Instagram, Twitter, YouTube

Chapters may not -

- Charge membership dues above those set by the State Board

Chapter Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

Chapter President

- Preside over chapter membership meetings and chapter board meetings
- Serve on the State Board and attend quarterly state board meetings or send a chapter representative
- Attend annual State onboarding meeting
- Be the contact point to the State and to the public
- Oversee submission of the Chapter Activity Report (CAR)
- Fulfill financial duties of the chapter treasurer if the chapter does not have this officer
- Read and be familiar with the Society's Bylaws and Standing Rules
- Become a member of the Society's Virtual Office – the NPSOT Slack Workplace
- Attend the annual State Onboarding and encourage all board members to do so as well

Chapter Secretary

- Keep and archive accurate minutes of the meetings
- Make records available to members
- Establish a quorum at meetings
- Write correspondence as necessary for the chapter
- Keep a tally of members present unless the chapter membership chair assumes this responsibility

In addition to the responsibilities stated above, other duties are necessary for a chapter's obligations to its members and State. The following positions are strongly recommended to help the chapters fulfill these responsibilities.

Chapter Treasurer

- Keep chapter financial records
- Write checks and deposit funds in chapter accounts
- Help prepare an annual budget to present to the membership
- Encourage chapter to spend funds on the Society mission
- Set annual reserve amount
- Spend down to annual reserve each year
- Send the quarterly chapter financial report to the state accountant
- Collect and report sales taxes when needed
- Allow financial records to be reviewed at anytime
- Attend annual state onboarding or training as offered

Chapter Membership Chair

- Work to increase membership and maintain a positive relationship with members
- Work with the state on membership campaigns
- Keep a tally of members present at meetings and events

Other Outreach Positions

Successful chapters have leaders in other outreach positions, some of which are included in the Chapter Activity Report.

- Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas (BBMT) Mentor
- Communications
- Demonstration Gardens
- Education
- Events
- Field Trips
- Hospitality
- Invasive Species
- Native Landscape Certification Program (NLCP)
- Natives Improve and Conserve Environments (NICE) - Native Plant Partner Nurseries
- Plant Sales
- Programs/Speakers
- Webmaster (may be under the Communications Committee)

Chapter Bylaws

Every chapter must adopt a set of bylaws consistent with the Society bylaws, standing rules and policies. They may not conflict with the Society's governing documents.

Bylaws control the organization. They serve as a legal document for members, officers and the community at large. Government entities or banks may request a copy of the bylaws. For the IRS and for company or individual donors, there must be evidence that the purpose of the Society is truly nonprofit, that procedures for elections and changes of bylaws are democratic, and, in the case of dissolution, that the funds will be properly and legally remitted to the Society.

Bylaws should be as short as possible and include the method for amending. Administrative and procedural details may be written in separate, supplemental documents such as standing rules and policies.

Sample bylaws can be found in [Key Documents > 2.E](#). The chapter may change the sample as needed to meet its requirements.

Budgets

Every chapter should adopt an annual budget.

A budget is a financial plan, a list of expected income from membership rebates, plant sales and other sources, plus a list of how the chapter expects to spend those funds. As the year progresses, income and expenses may differ from the original plan. This is normal. A budget should be as detailed as possible and should preferably show a reserve for the next year.

Often the budget is drawn up by a committee that includes the treasurer, the president, and others who may be appointed. The budget should be presented to the membership for approval and adoption. Treasurers are encouraged to present a financial report at board and/or membership meetings.

Onboarding

To assure that new leaders are equipped with the tools to be successful in their positions, chapters should hold onboarding sessions which review governing documents, procedures and resources.

Election of Officers

Chapters are governed by their bylaws and may have more than the two officers required by the state. Most chapters have additional positions based on their needs.

Officers shall be elected by the membership through a process that is specified in the chapter bylaws. Usually, officers are elected to terms of one or two years. Many chapters have term limits with exceptions when a replacement is not available.

President

Every chapter must have a president, whose duties are determined by the chapter bylaws and may differ from one chapter to another. As the chapter's chief elected officer, the president shall be responsible for all chapter business. The president shall ensure that decisions, orders and resolutions are delegated and carried out, and that all required correspondence and reports are transmitted to the State on a timely basis. When conducting meetings, our Society's bylaws require that the parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order*.

The president is an *ex officio* member of the State Board of Directors and is strongly encouraged to attend state board meetings or to name another member to represent the chapter. The president or representative is allowed one vote on any one matter that arises at the state board meeting.

The president may have other duties as specified in the chapter bylaws or other governing documents.

Secretary

It's important to record minutes of chapter and board meetings and keep track of decisions and responsibilities. Minutes may be read at the next meeting, sent to members by email, or given out as printed copies. Minutes are legal documents and may be archived in a notebook or stored online for future reference. The secretary may preserve additional records or chapter property and handle correspondence.

Executive Board

An executive board or committee may be defined by the chapter bylaws and be empowered to make decisions within a scope determined by those bylaws. An executive board may consist of all elected officers or may include appointed positions.

Other Officers

Chapters are not required to have other officers or committees, but most chapters do. These positions may be elected by the membership or appointed, based on their individual expertise or chapter needs.

Treasurer

The exact duties of a chapter treasurer are determined by the chapter bylaws and may differ from chapter to chapter. Any member assuming the duties of the treasurer should contact the state accountant to learn more about chapter financial responsibilities and quarterly reporting.

Vice President

The vice president serves as backup to the president and may also be assigned other duties. Because of the possibility of performing presidential duties, the vice president should be elected.

Incoming/Outgoing President

Many chapters find that their work flows more smoothly and efficiently when the president is either already experienced by working with the board of directors before taking over or supported and advised by the former president. Sometimes the vice president is also the incoming president.

Website Editor/Webmaster

It is recommended that every chapter have a website with a designated webmaster and website committee. The State has a digital media policy and someone is available to help the chapter host, start up and maintain the software. The chapter is responsible for keeping its website content current. Useful skills for a webmaster include writing and organizational skills.

Newsletter Editor

Putting out a newsletter can be more complicated than publishing a website. Generally, it requires familiarity with publishing software in addition to writing and design skills.

Social Media Coordinator

This person will be familiar with the Society's Social Media Policy found in [Key Documents > 1.B.](#) and assure compliance. They will coordinate the chapters Facebook page, Instagram, and any other chapter social media.

Committees

Much of the work of a large chapter is done or coordinated by committees. Often committee chairs are appointed by the chapter president, and the committee chair appoints the remaining members. In some chapters, the bylaws may specify a different procedure. In smaller chapters, committee responsibilities may be performed by a single person.

Committees usually meet informally and may conduct their business by email, Zoom, or phone. They should make regular reports to the membership. The membership may delegate some decision-making authority to appropriate committees.

Form a variety of standing or ad hoc committees to meet your own chapter's needs.

Nominating Committee

is required by most chapters' bylaws. It is responsible for finding and nominating a slate of candidates for the next election.

Programs Committee

arranges educational speakers for meetings. In many chapters the program committee chair is the vice-president or the incoming president.

Field Trips Committee

arranges field trips and outings for the chapter members.

Membership Committee

keeps a membership roll and may send reminders of meetings and other events. It reminds members when it is time to renew their memberships and organizes membership recruitment campaigns. It may also notify the State Office about changes in membership information.

Hospitality Committee

greet members, keeps sign-in sheets at meetings, makes note of visitors and may bring refreshments.

Publicity or Communications Committee

sends announcements of events to local newspapers, bulletin boards, email lists, social media and websites.

Plant Sales Committee

coordinates plant sales and other fund-raising events.

NICE Committee

coordinates the NICE! program if the chapter has one. It selects plants to recommend, networks with participating nurseries, and arranges for publicity, displays and programs for organizations such as gardening clubs and HOAs.

Membership Meetings

A chapter must hold at least one meeting of the entire membership per year. Most chapters hold meetings monthly, although it is common to skip months. Meetings may be held more or less frequently, depending on needs and interests.

In some chapters, business is conducted by the board in a separate business meeting. Regular monthly meetings may be devoted solely to educational and social functions. In the interest of transparency, it is recommended that membership meetings include a business portion with activity and financial reports. The Society uses *Roberts Rules of Order* to manage business meetings.

Educational programs for meetings should be consistent with the mission and purpose of the Society. Suggestions and ideas for programs can be found in the Chapter Tool Chest or by networking with chapter leaders in nearby areas.

Social Time

Members join a chapter partly to learn from other members and share experiences. Time should be allowed at meetings for members to get to know one another. New members and visitors should be welcomed. Many chapters provide refreshments for members to enjoy while they socialize.

Conducting Chapter Business

The business part of meetings should be informal, brief and efficient. The president may create and publish an agenda in advance. Some chapters send out minutes and finance reports in advance to cut down on time at meetings. It is important for chapters to operate transparently, keeping the membership involved and informed about activities and finances.

An agenda for a business meeting may include the following

- Reading and approval of minutes of previous meetings
- Treasurer's report

- Reports of committee chairs
- Announcements of upcoming events
- Motions and discussions regarding future projects

Additional Group Activities

Activities outside regular meetings provide excellent opportunities to increase members' knowledge, stimulate community outreach and advocacy, develop relations between members and have fun. They may be a means to raise funds and/or to use those funds appropriately.

Release of Liability Forms

Members and non-members participating in any activity outside of normal meetings must sign Release of Liability forms. That includes field trips, workshops, outreach events, work in demonstration gardens, plant rescues, and any other activity where the member is engaged in an activity that is sponsored by NPSOT. The retention requirement for these forms is 3 years. When admin-assist@npsot.org is added to online forms, the State will manage the form retention.

Paper Forms:

Paper forms to be printed can be found in [Key Documents > 1.D.](#)

Online Form:

The State offers an online liability form (via Google forms) which chapter leaders can copy to create individual forms for their chapter events. All Chapter Presidents are listed as “collaborators” on the State version so that they can make copies as needed. They can add an additional chapter representative as a collaborator to manage the forms, but the person must have access to a Google account (such as the account associated with a npsot.org email account or other existing Gmail account) to manipulate the forms.

The online form offers the ability to print a spreadsheet of responses with emergency contact information. Chapters should still bring paper forms to the event in case a participant shows up without having signed the online form and is unable to access it at the event.

View instructions for creating and managing online forms in [Key Documents > 4.B.](#) and in the “State and Chapter Resources” section of “Member and Chapter Resources” available on the [Member Portal](#). Contact our State Administrative Assistant at admin-assist@npsot.org for help with the online form.

Field Trips

Field trips can include anything from home landscape tours to visits to public parks and distant recreation areas. Ideas for field trips can be brainstormed at chapter meetings, and then

planned and scheduled by the field trip committee. Publicizing these events can encourage non-members to come along and perhaps join the chapter.

Demonstration Gardens

A demonstration garden is a public place designed to show the local community that native plants are beautiful and easy to plant and maintain. It is one of the most obvious places for a chapter to invest its resources. A demonstration garden also offers the opportunity for experienced members to work side-by-side with newcomers, teaching and learning. A critical aspect of “demonstration” is the how-to of maintenance. Natives become more appealing to the public when it is clear that a native garden can look well-kept and attractive year-round.

NICE – Native Plant Partner Nurseries

Natives Improve and Conserve Environments (NICE), this program unites chapter members and local nurseries in promoting the use of native plants by the public. A NICE Committee organized by the chapter or a group of nearby chapters selects one or several “Plants of the Month” (or quarter or season), which participating nurseries have agreed to obtain and sell. The committee then publicizes those plants with signs, posters and information handouts at the nursery itself and with website, newsletter articles and other publicity materials.

Focusing on a limited number of plants makes it more likely that the nurseries’ customers will be happy with their purchases and will look for more natives to use in the future. More information about the NICE program is at the Chapter Tool Chest.

Plant Rescue

A plant rescue removes native plants from areas where they are likely to be destroyed or are not wanted and transfers them to safer or more appropriate locations or offers them at plant sales. Many chapters have worked creatively with local parks to save plants as the parks grow or change their layouts. Property owners must agree to the removal of plants from their property.

To collect any part of an endangered species on public land requires a permit from the proper authorities. See Texas law on endangered plants and the Society’s policy on plant collection: Plant Collections Policy found in [Key Documents > 1.B.](#)

NLCP classes

The Native Landscape Certification Program is a series of classes that teach best practices for native plant landscape and habitat preservation and introduction. Classes are created and run by the NLCP Steering Committee and individual chapters will work with the NLCP to arrange for classes in their area. Contact our State NLCP Coordinator at nlcp@npsot.org.

Speakers Bureau

Many chapters have members who are qualified to represent the Society and speak about native plants to outside entities like garden clubs, civic groups, HOAs, church groups, etc. Chapters may advertise these speakers on their website and other places. It works best to offer a single point of contact to make it easier for the public to make arrangements for a speaker.

The State maintains a Speakers Bureau on the State website which serves as a resource for chapter presentations and as a model for your chapter's website.

Workshops

Chapters may organize day-long workshops or mini-symposiums either by themselves or in cooperation with other organizations.

Workshops may offer a combination of speakers, demonstrations and field trips, and can be combined with a native plant sale. The Native Prairie Association of Texas, Texan by Nature, Texas Children in Nature, Master Naturalists, Texas Parks and Wildlife-Department, and the National Wildlife Federation are among the organizations that chapters have successfully partnered with. And remember to engage with your local governmental agencies such as parks and water departments.

Texas Native Plant Week

In 2009 the Texas state legislature designated the third week in October as Texas Native Plant Week. This occasion offers an opportunity for chapters to create educational and outreach programs for the public. Seminars, classes, plant sales and other events are all possible choices. Chapters are encouraged to participate in the iNaturalist BioBlitz held in partnership with TPWD.

National Native Plant Month

April is now the nation's month to celebrate native plants. The State will promote this month and the chapters are encouraged to participate as well.

Earth Day

Either on their own or as part of larger local celebrations, many chapters find Earth Day to be an excellent venue for promoting native plants to the public. Some chapters raise funds by selling native plants that they have grown, rescued or purchased from participating NICE! nurseries.

Plant Sales

Plant sales are usually managed by a team leader with the assistance of chapter volunteers. Properly organized, plant sales can:

- Raise chapter visibility and funds for chapter projects
- Offer the public native species that are not otherwise available from local retail

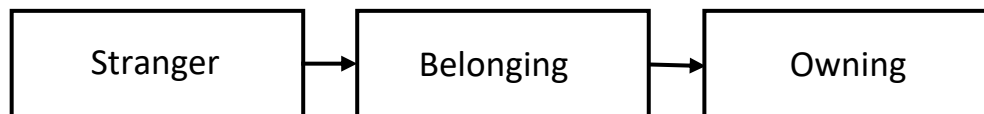
nurseries

- Answer questions about how to plant and maintain them
- Educate the public as to the value of natives and native habitats
- Help chapter newcomers learn by working with more experienced members.

Helpful hints about making your plant sale a success are in the [Chapter Tool Chest](#). See critical state sales tax and sales permit information under the [Chapter Finance section](#) of this booklet.

Attracting and Retaining Members

Attracting and keeping members is an important part of the chapter leader's job. Turnover is inevitable. Continue to seek out new members while motivating existing members to stay involved. It is helpful to think in terms of the following three-step membership progression:



A stranger is a non-member who may come to a meeting to hear a speaker, learn about natives, join a field trip, visit a demonstration garden, buy plants at a plant sale or come with a friend who is already a member. A chapter attracts “strangers” by holding and effectively promoting activities organized by current members. Media publicity, collaborations, speakers bureaus, word of mouth, plant sales and members bringing friends are simple means to make this happen.

A transition to “belonging” occurs when the visitor finds enough value in the organization to want to participate. A new member enjoys chapter activities and is expected to start helping with volunteer activities.

A transition to “owning” occurs when a member is comfortable enough to become a leader in one or more of the roles that the chapter needs.

Effective chapter meetings, interesting speakers and field trips, and outreach activities that are educational, fun, and satisfying. All work well to attract strangers and encourage them to become owners. One key to keeping members is to learn their specific interests and needs. Time allotted once or twice a year for chapter discussions about future speakers, field trips, plant sales, etc. helps focus on what members care about and are willing to work on together.

Member's past experiences can be very effectively employed to further chapter activities.

For long term chapter survival, this three-step process is important to ensure engaged candidates that will allow a continuous turnover in leadership positions. The process works to avoid burn-out, provides a growing cadre of former leaders serving as mentors for new leaders, and develops strong bonds among members.

Several articles in the [Chapter Tool Chest](#) offer ideas for effective chapter membership growth. All are based on past successes.

Keeping Track of Members

New members of the Society receive from the State a welcome letter which contains information about the Society and how it works. Members also receive reminders by mail and email when membership is about to expire.

Chapters should consider also sending their own welcome letters to new members as a way of helping them get involved. A new member packet could also include information about meetings and activities and lists of recommended native plants and nurseries in the area.

Neon is the software that the Society purchases annually and uses to maintain our internal website, events management, and membership database. Members can access it through the **Member portal** available on our website's home page.

Select chapter leaders can view or download current chapter membership information by accessing the Society's internal website dashboard through their Member portal. Follow this pathway: [Member portal](#) > Dashboard > Chapter Membership Reports > chapter of interest. Columns have links to six different types of membership reports. Members' data is subject to the "Member Data Access Policy". The policy can be found in [Key Documents > 1.B.](#)

Incorrect information should be reported to membership@npsot.org.

Communications and Outreach

Successful chapters communicate with their members and with their local community by a variety of means, such as a website, Facebook, mailing lists, and online calendars. They may also provide a newsletter, newspaper articles, announcements on local radio stations.

Website

For many chapters, a website provides their primary means of communication and outreach. A chapter website offers a public place for chapters to explain their purpose and list their past, current and future activities. This helps define the chapter to the community and encourages members to join and become involved. A website can also provide educational content and can be used in conjunction with the NICE! program to publicize specific plants and nursery resources.

A website also opens new ways to communicate with members. Besides listing information

about meetings and other activities, the website can be set up to automatically send email to notify people about events.

The state webmaster sets up a basic web page for each chapter. “How To Website Documentation” is available in the [Chapter Tool Chest](#). Contact the State Webmaster at webmaster@npsot.org when you are ready for website setup

Facebook

Many chapters encourage participation by creating a Facebook group where members can post information about upcoming events, questions, photos and other news about the chapter and their own gardens. There are some State rules concerning Facebook. They can be found here: Social Media Policy found in [Key Documents > 1.B.](#)

Mailing List

Rather than regular mail, most chapters now use email almost exclusively to send announcements and reminders to their members. Chapters can collect email addresses of interested non-members at plant sales and public events. The non-members can be included in the regular announcements of meetings and events and encouraged to participate in and eventually to join the Society.

Online Calendars

When virtual or hybrid events are added to the website with the “Virtual” category set, they are included on the “[Virtual Events](#)” calendar and emailed in weekly digest form to the State MailerLite email list.

You can also view important upcoming events, such as Committee and Board meetings, and magazine submission due dates on the State [Events Calendar](#). There is also a view specifically for [Chapter Meetings](#) across the state.

Public Media

Local newspapers and radio stations often welcome announcements of chapter meetings and events, especially in smaller communities. In Key Documents you will find “Publications.Style.Guide” in [1.C](#) and “How to write a Press Release” in [2.E](#) which includes instructions on how to write and format press releases. Learn and respect the various medias’ formats and lead time needs.

Relationship with State Office

Any State staff member can be reached at 830.997.9272.

State Board

The board meets four times a year, usually on the second Saturdays of February, May, August and November. All chapter presidents are *ex officio* members and should attend, participate

in discussions and vote. Notice of the time and location of the board meetings is sent several weeks in advance of each meeting.

Running for a Position on the Executive Board

Nine elected officers serve on the state board. Those officers' responsibilities are listed in the Standing Rules found in [Key Documents > 1.A](#). If you are interested in participating in the Society as a member of the Executive Board, contact a member of the nominating committee.

The Nominating Committee is chaired by the immediate past-president of the Society.

State officers serve for 2 years and are elected in in the weeks following the third quarter State board meeting in August.

Chapter Activity Report

Chapters must submit an annual Chapter Activity Report (CAR) describing all activities from January 1 to December 31. The reports are due in the State office to January 25. The form, policy and all past submitted reports are found in [Key Documents > 1.D](#).

Completed CARs are used to help select Chapter of the Year, and the data are used for the Society annual report. The collection of reports is a most important document that describes what the Society has done to pursue its mission. The CAR is also an important resource for idea sharing between chapters.

Chapter Finances

Chapters must use the Financial Reporting Guide for Chapters, which is found in [Key Documents > 1.C](#), and the "Member and Chapter Resources" menu available on the [Member Portal](#).

Chapter Financial Report

All Chapters must report income and expenses for each quarter and submit copies of their bank statements. Chapter Revenue and Expenditures are consolidated with State activity and reported to the Internal Revenue Service annually on IRS Form 990 due May 15. Chapter financial reports and bank statements are submitted by saving them to the Chapter Accounting Folder on Dropbox or by emailing them to the State Accountant. They are due by:

- 1st Quarter (January to March) due April 15
- 2nd Quarter (April to June) due July 15
- 3rd Quarter (July to September) due October 15
- 4th Quarter (October to December) due January 15

After the chapter financial report and supporting bank statements for a quarter are received, the chapter will be issued a rebate of the chapter membership dues from that quarter.

Bank statements for the period covered by the CFR must be mailed to the state office at Native Plant Society of Texas, PO Box 3017, Fredericksburg, TX 78624-1929. Reports may also

be emailed or uploaded to the Finance Reporting site.

After the CFR and supporting bank statements for a quarter are received, the chapter will be issued its rebate of the chapter membership dues from that quarter.

Sales Taxes and Sales Permits

The Society and its chapters are exempt from Texas sales tax on purchases made for official use and for items intended for resale. Individuals who purchase items to donate to the Society may be exempt from paying sales tax on the item, provided they do not use the item before donating it.

Forms are found in [Key Documents > 2.C](#).

The Society must collect Texas sales tax on all items it sells, except during two 24-hour tax-free days per year. Each chapter may select its own days. Chapters must record their selected tax-free dates on the quarterly Chapter Financial Report. Any other sales tax charged should be 8.25% (or the current state tax rate) regardless of location.

Whenever selling items to the public, chapters must display copies of the Texas Sales and Use Tax Permit and must display the Class M License for plant sales.

State Annual Onboarding

All chapter leaders are encouraged to attend or to view the recording of the yearly State onboarding. Important topics such as legal fiduciary requirements effecting all chapter board members are discussed. Society governance, directors and officers insurance, Society financial structure, engaging volunteers, the use and importance of Key Documents, Chapter Tool Chest, Workplace, Dropbox, and Zoom to the functioning of our Society, and helpful chapter and state resources are discussed too. Introductions of staff and the executive officers are made and how they function in the Society to serve the chapters and mission are reviewed.

The Zoom recording, a PDF of the presentation, important onboarding documents, and professional resources used to create the onboarding are found in [Key Documents > 4](#).

Chapter Fund Raising

Chapters are not allowed to charge additional member dues, but there are many other ways they can raise funds. Many of the activities listed above can also be opportunities for fund raising. Plant sales are probably the most obvious. Workshops and speakers' bureau fees are other opportunities. The NLCP classes also provide some funds to sponsoring chapters.

Chapters may apply for grants and accept donations.

Chapters are encouraged to put funds to use in ways that further the mission of the Society. Large amounts in bank accounts are not productive and may serve to dissuade potential donors. Suggestions for use of chapter funds include donating to native gardens, funding scholarships and supporting State Committees such as the Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas. Look in the Chapter Tool Chest for other ideas about fund raising.

Chapter of the Year

Each year a Chapter of the Year is chosen, based on chapter activities and other criteria established by the president of the Society. The award is announced during the Spring Symposium.

The Chapter of the Year is presented with a quilt made by Kate Hillhouse, a former president of the Society. The chapter keeps possession of the quilt (featured on the front of this handbook) for one year.

Resources

The resources listed below will contain answers to most questions. However, the Executive Director and administrative assistant are also available during business hours, and chapter leaders may contact members of the state board for assistance. Contact information for all officers and staff members is listed on our website and, from the [Member portal](#) > Dashboard > Member and Chapter Resources > Leadership Contact Information.

Governance

Information on our Society Bylaws and Standing Rules, Executive Board members, committees and chairs, and staff.

Chapter Tool Chest

Step-by-step guidance on starting a chapter, growing membership, publicizing chapter activities, and sustaining the chapter; how-to instructions and ideas for education, outreach, and advocacy activities. The link to the [Chapter Tool Chest](#) is found on the main website menu under Chapter > Chapter Information.

Member Magazine Archives

All previous issues of our quarterly Texas Native Plants Magazine are available for reading and download in the Resources section of the [website](#).