Welcome to the second issue of our newsletter!

In this issue, I have expanded some of the features to include one on an invasive species and an edible species.

I am also introducing a feature that will be called “Don’s Corner.” The initial installment was submitted by Pam Allison after an interview she and Judy Jones had with Don Bozeman. This will be a continuing tribute to our founding member and will feature contributing members writing about their favorite native plant or chapter event.

I encourage members to submit articles and information about their activities, so they can be published.

Remember to stay active and keep your dues current.

Thank everyone for supporting our chapter. Have a great summer!

Joanne Toler
President

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

Check out our website for chapter event announcements and updates

www.npsot.org/amarillo
Tragopogon dubius Scop
Western Salsify, Goat’s beard

The common name Goat’s beard comes from the fluffy form of the seed. Goat’s beard is an exact translation, *trago* means “goat” and *pogon* means “beard”.

There are 3 species that the Europeans introduced to North America, most likely as a root crop-Western Salsify (*T. dubius Scop*), Meadow Salsify (*T. pratensis L*) and Oyster Plant (*T. porrifolius L*).

Salsify is a biennial, producing an edible root the first year and a more fibrous woody root the second.

The yellow species are more bitter and fibrous than the purple species.

The solitary yellow flower heads bloom in summer at the ends of the stalks. The blooms opens early in the day and closes as the day heats up. The ray flowers are 5 toothed.

Like other members of the Dandelion subfamily, salsify has no ray flowers and the stems have a milky sap.

Stems are somewhat hairy when young, and nearly hairless when older. Stems become swollen and hollow just beneath the flower head.

The clasping leaves are opposite and very grass like and can be up to 12” long.

A distinguishing feature is the elongated needle like bracts (typically 12-13) that are in 2 rows and extend past the petals. A similar species, meadow salsify, has shorter bracts (usually about 8) that do not extend past the petals.

Salsify can outcompete native grasses, but generally does not occur in big stands. It is not considered an aggressive weed and control is seldom necessary.

The Native Americans used sap for gum. Leaves and stems were good in a salad or as a cooked vegetable. Stem and buds could be eaten as asparagus.

Young roots could be eaten raw, older roots would need to be cooked.

In Europe, it was used medicinally to aid digestion and to relieve heartburn, pleurisy and liver disorders. The inulin in the roots provided the base of a cough syrup for bronchitis. Roots also have diuretic properties for relieving water retention.

Submitted by: Joanne Toler
Tradescantia occidentalis (Britton) Smyth, prairie spiderwort

Group: Monocot
Family: Commelinaceae
Duration: Perennial

Growth Habit: Forb/herb

In and around the areas that I forage including Palo Duro Canyon and the Canadian River, the prairie spiderwort is the genius of Tradescantia that I most commonly see. It is a variation of the other Tradescantia members, as it is adapted to dryer climates and sandy soil. It is a perennial and if you once find its location you should be able to find it every year, which makes it convenient for the forager. The spiderwort is somewhat an unusual flower as it is a monocot instead of the more common dicot. Although the references state it can be found with white, pink or purple flowers, I have only seen it with bright blue flowers with three petals and six yellow anthers.

If you look at the stamens you will see blue hairs radiating from the stamens up to ½”. Take a loop and look directly at these blue hairs and you will notice they seem to be composed of 20 plus bumps linked together like a chain.

What you are seeing is a series of some of the largest cells that exist. The cells of the spiderwort hairs are so large that they are routinely used in education and laboratory applications. The spiderwort was chosen as a passenger in the 1960’s on the first US Biosatellite to study weightlessness on living organisms and it has been used since the 1950’s as a biological detector of radiation and chemical exposure. The spiderwort’s blue stamen hairs will turn pink when subjected to certain mutagens.

As far as edible, the spiderwort is good to eat. Raw it can be munched on directly, both the crunchy stems as well as the delicate flowers. One can also take several of the stems, chop them into 3-4” lengths boil them with added seasoning and eat. The cooking will remove the sticky sap. Spiderwort or more precisely the species, Tradescantia, was named for John Tradescant, the royal gardener of King Charles I of England.

Submitted by Troney Toler
GardenFest 2012

We participated in the Amarillo Botanical Garden’s GardenFest which was held on Saturday, May 12th.

This is our only fundraiser every year and we grossed approximately $530.00!!

Judy, Ginger and Joanne rescued various plants from St Peters Episcopal Church on Amarillo Blvd.

While attending a state board meeting of NPSOT in Kerrville, our board members made a side trip to Manchaca to pick up 2 flats of Antelope Horn Milkweed donated by Monarch Watch.

Thank you Neal for the 4 flats of native plants (Dotted Gayfeather, Bush Morning Glory, Drummonds Skullcap, Missouri Evening Primrose) you donated for our sale!

Thanks go out to Judy Jones (her Desert Willows were real hits), Ginger Frazer, Denise Williams and Angie Hanna with HighPlainsGardening.com for helping man our table.

Thanks to all our members and friends who supported our chapter in making this fundraiser a huge success!
Cross Bar Field Trip

Cross Bar is a 12,000 acre short grass prairie that is cooperatively managed by Bureau of Land Management and WTAMU. WTAMU conducts a variety of research projects there on wildlife habitat, plant diversity, fire management and watershed control.

Susan Thompson led our field trip to Cross Bar CMA April 29th. She took us to the “plunge pool” and an overlook of the Canadian River.
It was a great day, rather cool and windy and we were able to identify about 35 species of wildflowers.

DJ Harris, one of our newest members, had a close encounter with a diamondback rattler when he was reaching for a piece of barbwire!

Above, after eating lunch, we took five to take in the view overlooking the Canadian River.

Right, you can see where the successful manual removal of salt cedar is evident.
The Amarillo chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas was formed because Andy Wasowski and others downstate prodded and poked a young English Professor at Amarillo College to the point that he no longer could say “never” or “no” or “not now”.

Or so he says.

Don Bozeman’s initiative in forming the Amarillo Chapter has continued to be a journey of passion and love for the wild plants that dotted the landscape through which he walked, and for the people that shared his path over the years.

But, what brought an English Professor to the Texas Panhandle in the first place? In a word – family. Don left the University of Missouri in 1961, with his compass pointed west. His plan was to move closer to Albuquerque, home to his parents who had begun to experience health problems. Amarillo was definitely in the proper direction, and a long-day’s-drive closer to family. So, Amarillo College it was.

It is hard for me to imagine Don living anyplace else.

In March 1991, Don succumbed to the external pressures down state that there should be a cluster of native plants enthusiasts in the high country of the Texas Panhandle. Letters to local members of the state organization and a press release announced the organizational meeting held at the Amarillo Central Library.

People came, and the chapter took root in March 1991.

Early members included Don, of course, along with Charlene Barnard, Joe Cepeda, Rusty Donelson, Estelle Duncan, Monica Hilling, Ardis Martin, Regina McMullin, and me.

After the organizational meeting, the group met at the Amarillo Garden Center for some years at the tune of $60/year for the group to be considered a member of the Garden Center and thereby allowed to use its space in the basement at the back of the building for monthly meetings. When the fee was raised to $120/year, the fiscally responsible group moved its meetings elsewhere. The Garden Center has since grown into its current title of Amarillo Botanical Gardens, and our group has continued its ongoing relationship with the Garden Center over the years, supporting and helping in various planting projects and participating in its annual Plant Sale the 1st Saturday of May, most years.
Don recalls the 1st field trip to Palo Duro Canyon State Park led by our prairie plant expert J. R. Bell. Other early field trips were to the newly established Caprock Canyons State Park and the Duncan Ranch near White Deer.

Under Don’s enthusiasm, the chapter planted native plants to grow into a demonstration garden at the similarly-aged Wildcat Bluff Nature Center – many of which survive to this day, even through the heat/drought of summer 2011.

As a result of this beginning, the Amarillo Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas has persisted, with much gratitude to the prodders and the pokers and, more especially, to Don Bozeman for taking the bait. But he didn’t do it alone. Donna Otto, Diane Zavatsky, and Janice Blackerby pitched in to help when the time was right and the need was there.

The Amarillo Chapter NPSOT has reached “drinking age.” It has made its way through its first 21 years and has seen members come and go – some passed over and others passed through – but each and every one was welcomed by Don into this facet of our natural world.

Thank you, Don, for our beginning and for steering the boat along the way.

Sláinte

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Judy Jones and I visited with Don on April 1st to piece together this part of the story. Our plan is that someone else will write the follow-on segment to the chapter’s continuing story. – pam allison
Upcoming Events

June 9  Angie Hanna, with High Plains Gardening will have a walk/talk thru the Xeriscape Garden at the Amarillo Botanical Gardens.
We will meet inside the gate at 9:30 AM.
Entry fee is $5.00

June 19  Our monthly meeting will be a field trip to Neal Hinders, Canyon’s Edge Plants. We will meet there at 7:00 PM. Directions will follow as time approaches.

July 17  TBA

July 21  NPSOT state board meeting in Tyler, Tx

July 31  Riparian Restoration Workshop, sponsored by the Panhandle Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists. 2 hour program presented by Ricky Lenix, NRCS out of Weatherford, TX. 6:00PM, Southwest Amarillo Library

Aug 21  Playa Plants, Jim Steiert, Texas Master Naturalist and author of Playas, Jewels of the Plains 7:00PM, Southwest Amarillo Library

Learning from the Past
Archived newsletters from the NPSOT are available for all to read on their web site, simply go to the home page and at the top on the right hand side is Members News. Click on that area and choose the second option Newsletters, the newsletter are from 1983 to the present. Reading through them you will find all sorts of things. Two of them I would encourage you to read are Snow-on-the-Praire by Betty Allison Crawford in the Sept/Oct 1997 issue and Conservation Guidelines for Collecting Wild Plants by Jackie M. Poole in the Jan/Feb 1987 issue. This should pique your interest and I hope encourage you to delve further into our newsletters.
Judith Jones
Welcome to our new members this quarter!
-- Kisaundra & DJ Harris
-- Gillian Hodler
-- Katherine & Brian Schneider
-- Cristina Zepeda

Amarillo Chapter Officers

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Angie Hanna’s website: www.highplainsgardening.com is the gardening information website for the Texas High Plains region! Take a look at her website for an easy and successful way to garden.

9-5 Friday & Saturdays
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