**Workday at Heard - Saturday, Feb. 28**

We begin at 9 am and work until around noon. Come if you can, get Master Naturalist service hours, learn about the Heard plants, and provide a much needed service to our hosts. Along with gloves, you might bring hand and shrub shears.  

*Photos from Jan. Workday*

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**Our Next Meeting - Tuesday, Mar. 3**

The next meeting topic for the Collin County Chapter of the NPSOT, ‘*Gardening for Butterflies*’, will be presented by chapter member and Volunteer Director of the Heard Museum Butterfly House and Garden, Melanie Schuchart.  

The meeting will be held in Laughlin Hall at the Heard Museum. Doors open at 7:00. The program starts at 7:15.  

We look forward to seeing you there. It will be an interesting and informative presentation!

**Upcoming Meetings and Events**

Tue. Apr. 7th 7:00pm: ‘*Coevolution of Flowering Plants and Pollinators*’ by Dr. George Diggs, Professor of Biology and Botany, Austin College.

Apr. 17, 18, 19 – Native Plant Sale Heard Museum. Fri. 4 - 7pm-members only, Sat. 9am - 5pm and Sun. 1 - 5-Public. We will need volunteers to help set up the sale as well as working the sale. Watch the newsletter for more details.

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**NPSOT Booth at Garden Show**

Our chapter has a double booth at The Garden Show, put on by the Collin County Master Gardeners, on Sat. (9am - 5pm) and Sun. (11am - 5pm), March 21 and 22. Setup is done on Fri., March 20. The Garden Show is held at Myers Park and Event Center, 7117 CR 166, McKinney.

We need your help staffing the NPSOT booth. *(There is more information on volunteering for the show on the last page of the newsletter.)* You will have a great time meeting the public and looking at the gardening demonstrations and vendors. And be sure to visit all of the Earth-Kind® Gardens while you are there.

For more information about The Garden Show visit the website at [http://ccmga.org/thegardenshow.aspx](http://ccmga.org/thegardenshow.aspx). For more information about the gardens at Myers Park, visit the website at [http://ccmgatx.org/earth-kind-gardening/earth-kind-research-gardens-at-myers-park.aspx](http://ccmgatx.org/earth-kind-gardening/earth-kind-research-gardens-at-myers-park.aspx). *(OK, OK! I know that’s a lot to type. For simplicity, just go to the Master Gardeners website [http://www.ccmgatx.org](http://www.ccmgatx.org) and look for the links.)*

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**NPSOT Booth at The Garden Show 2014**
WASHINGTON (AP) -- The federal government on Monday pledged $3.2 million to help save the monarch butterfly, the iconic orange-and-black butterfly that can migrate thousands of miles between the U.S. and Mexico each year. In recent years, the species has experienced a 90 percent decline in population, with the lowest recorded population occurring in 2013-2014.

About $2 million will restore more than 200,000 acres of habitat from California to the Corn Belt, including more than 750 schoolyard habitats and pollinator gardens. The rest will be used to start a conservation fund — the first dedicated solely to monarchs — that will provide grants to farmers and other landowners to conserve habitat.

The move by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service comes as it's in the midst of a one-year review to determine whether to classify the monarch butterfly as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, which would afford the butterfly more protection. In December, the agency said that there was enough evidence to trigger a review.

"The magic of the monarch butterfly is that little patches matter," said Service Director Dan Ashe at a news conference in Washington. Piece by piece, he said, "we can make a difference on a continental scale."

The monarch lays its eggs exclusively on the milkweed plant. Conversion of prairies into cropland and the increasing use of weed killer-resistant crops have greatly reduced the extent of milkweed, officials said.

"It is weed control that is driving eradication of the milkweed plant," Ashe said.

The conservation projects will be focused on the I-35 corridor from Texas to Minnesota, areas that provide important spring and summer habitat along the butterfly's migration path. The species also faces challenges in Mexico, where its primary wintering grounds are being threatened by logging and climate change. Ashe said the hope was to eventually sign an agreement between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico to cover their entire range.

Environmental groups who have pressed for the butterfly's protection said Monday the announcement was a positive step, but said the species needs legal protection. Monarchs are pollinators and indicators of broader environmental problems. Some populations migrate thousands of miles, across multiple generations each year from breeding and wintering grounds.

"The specter of listing will spur a lot of conservation for the monarch," said Tierra Curry, a senior scientist with the Center for Biological Diversity, one of the groups that asked the Fish and Wildlife Service last August to protect the monarch butterfly and set aside critical habitat.

But Curry said the butterfly needed to be listed for it to recover.

from the Editor: This AP report was released 2/10/15
Murphy Native Plant Garden by John Worley

I stopped by the new Native Plant Garden in Murphy a couple of times this winter. (Our chapter provided the garden design and plant choices.) Since the volunteers’ installation last Nov. 1, the Murphy Parks Dept. has started installing drip irrigation, putting a bed of base sand in the walkways, and had decomposed granite delivered.

Some of the plants have started growing from the crown. I am excited to see what it will look like this first spring. And I hope our members have a chance to visit the garden, too.

Texas Pollinator Pow-Wow – Feb. 28


Birds, bats, bees, butterflies and more! Learn about Texas native plants and their pollinators, the conservation challenges they are facing, and how you can help!

The Texas Pollinator Pow-Wow will be Saturday, Feb. 28, at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. It includes 8 speakers. There will also have a group of exhibitors on hand all day to answer questions, provide resources, and showcase their organizations. Desirable pollinator-related items will be available by raffle at the end of the day.

Register by Tuesday, Feb. 24, in order to have a light breakfast and box lunch included with your $25.00 registration fee. Admittance to the Wildflower Center grounds is also included in the fee. Registration will close when capacity is reached.

Friend or Foe?

by John Worley

Here’s a little quiz to stretch your mind. I call it Friend or Foe. It simply consists of deciding which side the animal in the photo falls – Friend or Foe.

Let’s get started!

Bluebirds eat bugs. Friend, right? But, I started feeding mealworms, and now the entire family comes to the platform feeder daily wanting their mealworms. They can seem like such vicious taskmasters, yet I still call them Friend.

(cont’d on next page)
This is an easy one. A plague of Grasshoppers – definitely *Foes*. This photo was taken several years ago when the population was so bad, and they ate everything green.

Barn Swallows – ready to fledge. More difficult, huh? They eat lots of insects, but they are hard-headed. They demand that their nest be in the corner of my patio and they can be messy. I do so enjoy watching them from my window, but it can be dangerous as they fledge and try to learn the use of their flight controls. Mom and Dad fly protective strafing runs at me, while the babies are liable to run into me.

Maybe you can help me decide – Friend or Foe?

Ah, a Butterfly on a blossom in a tree. Surely a *Friend*. But with Butterflies come Caterpillars. You must be willing to dedicate some greenery for them? This one is on a Corkscrew Reed over my waterfall in my pond, but I’m not really sure why. There’s hardly enough plant there to eat.

Ahhhh! A cute White-Tail Deer Fawn at my In-Law’s home near Tulsa, OK. Cute little Bambi is surely a *Friend*. But, what about the rest of the herd?

But, don’t they bother the landscape? In this case, they are *Friend*. My Father-in-Law feeds them every evening. They safely spend the rest of the day on the neighbor’s (Garth Brooks) huge ranch. They never bother my Father-in-Law’s landscape. (We haven’t asked Garth.)

A cute little Bunny must be a *Friend*, right? But, they eat all of my Green Bean shoots and Purple Coneflowers as they emerge. (Who knew bunnies were such selective eaters?) Perhaps, the Bunny is not a *Friend* after all.

Yet, since mama Great Horned Owl became a *Friend*, I’m quite pleased to see that my Coneflowers are back.

*cont’d on next page*
Why is Mama Owl our friend? The smaller baby had fallen out of the nest and we rescued it. (Well, we called raptor rescue. Doesn’t that count as a rescue?)

We watched the pair grow and fledge. But, we did watch from a safe distance. Mama Owl’s look let us know plainly that as long as we watch from a safe distance, she won’t sink her claws or beak into our flesh.

Maybe, it’s all a matter of context. What is a Friend some of the time may be a Foe at other times.

Volunteering for The Garden Show

We will have signup sheets at the next meeting. Also, if you have any questions or can’t attend the meeting, you can send John Worley an email at worljm@yahoo.com.

The booths are in the Show Barn, out of the sun and wind. There are lots of demonstrations listed on the website noted above. Check the show schedule and perhaps pick a time to work the booth around that schedule.