Workday at Heard - Saturday, Mar. 28

Last month’s workday had to be cancelled due to bad weather. It is really important that we have a big turnout this Saturday to catch up for the season. 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.

Our Next Meeting - Tuesday, Apr. 7

The next meeting topic for the Collin County Chapter of the NPSOT, ‘Coevolution of Flowering Plants and Pollinators’ will be presented by Dr. George Diggs, Professor of Biology and Botany, Austin College.

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.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

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.

Tue. May 5, 7:00pm: ‘Photographing Flowers and Plants - and More!’, by chapter member John Worley. Heard Museum. Come get some hints for nature walks

Sat. May 9, 9:30am at 4545 CR 412, McKinney 75071: 11th Annual Stiff Creek Wildflower Walk. Bring a dish to share for brunch at about 11:30-1:00.

Tue. June 2, 6pm: Tour of the Heard Gardens and Meadows. Chapter Members lead members and guests on a tour of the Heard. Note the early start time!

Heard Museum Native Plant Sale

Coming Up – April 17, 18, and 19

For more than 20 years, veteran and novice gardeners alike have anticipated Heard Museum Native Plant Sale for the opportunity to purchase plants from a huge selection of the best plants for North Central Texas gardens. The sale runs Friday, April 17 from 4pm to 7pm for Heard Museum members only, Saturday, April 18 from 9am to 5pm, and Sunday, April 19 from 1pm to 5pm.

Plant lists are available on the Heard Museum website at http://www.heardmuseum.org/assets/2039/2015_-_plant_list_by_common_name.pdf

NPSOT Support at the Heard Sale

Our chapter will be providing support for the sale, and we need volunteers. In addition to the sale days, we need help receiving plants from the vendors and setting things up before the sale. We will have volunteering information at our meeting on April 7. If you can’t make the meeting, send an email to me at collincountynpsot@gmail.com and I will forward things.

NPSOT Booth at Recent Garden Show

Our chapter had a booth at The Garden Show, put on by the Collin County Master Gardeners, last Saturday and Sunday. In addition to providing information on native plants, NPSOT, and the upcoming Heard Native Plant Sale, we provided information on Monarch Butterfly habitat restoration and gave out both Green Milkweed and Antelope Horn Milkweed seeds to interested visitors.

We had a great time meeting the public as well as looking at the gardening demonstrations and vendors.
Collin County NPSOT Newsletter

Spring Symposium at the Wildflower Center

The NPSOT Spring Symposium is being held at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center on March 28. Speakers at the event this year will be Brandi Clark Burton of Austin EcoNetwork on Building an Environmental Community; Scooter Cheatam on Useful Wild Plants; Dawn Hancock on Pollinators; Dr. Ashley Lovell of Texas Land Conservancy on Saving Nature; and Andrea DeLong-Amaya of the Wildflower Center on Native Plant Selections.

Register online on the NPSOT.ORG website. Cost is $55 ($50 for our members or Wildflower Center members). You may pay at the door provided there is available space. Cost will be $65 at the door. Doors open at 8 am.

Editor’s Notes

I have tried to format this newsletter to be easily read directly on your PC, laptop, or tablet so that there is no need to print it out. I would be pleased to hear from you with comments or suggestions on the format.

This is our newsletter, not my newsletter. Please send me any information and content ideas that you might have. I try to prepare the newsletter for distribution in the middle of the fourth week of the month.

If you are reading this on your PC directly, all website and email links are configured to activate if you hold the cursor over the text link and press CTRL and CLICK your mouse button at the same time.

Send email to me at collincountynpsot@gmail.com.
Blue–Eyed Grass

I’ve been fascinated by Blue-Eyed Grass for years. It’s a native perennial wildflower that highlights fields in the early spring. Blue-Eyed Grass is not a true grass. It does resemble a grass – it is about 4 inches tall, has narrow leaves, and tends to grow in small bunches. Blue-Eyed Grass is of the genus *Sisyrinchium* in the group *Iridaceae* – the *Iris* family. The plants grow from a rhizome and form a small seed sac full of tiny black seeds after the flowers fade. The flowers are open in the morning but tend to close up in the afternoon. Once the flowers have faded and are gone, it’s back to looking like a grass.

I’ve moved many plant clusters into my gardens as a ground cover. I gather the seeds and get excited at the possibility of a new crop of plants each spring.

One year, Roger Sanderson mentioned that he had intended to dig some Blue-Eyed Grass plants for the Heard gardens. Unfortunately, the flowers had already faded and the plants were hard to tell from the grasses. Well, I gave him some of my seeds and when he spoke to us last year, I was thrilled to hear that he sprouted my seeds and the plants were for sale at the Discover Gardens plant sale.

I did a little on-line research. It says birds like the seeds. Blue-Eyed Grass loves full sun and will grow in our clay, but they seem to me to prefer good drainage. They self-seed, but they seem to be fairly well controlled (at least in my garden.) My research says Blue-Eyed Grass comes in many color combinations, so I guess I need to keep my eyes open as I wander through the pasture this spring.

by John Worley
Prairie Hikes

The Fort Worth chapter of the Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT) (https://fortworthnpat.wordpress.com/) introduces 1st Monday prairie hikes. Led by Jeff Quayle, these hikes will visit local prairies in the Metroplex. For all hikes, please wear proper footwear, long pants, and bring along sunscreen and plenty of water. For more information, contact Jeff at 817-729-0283 or squaylei2000@gmail.com

Monday, April 6 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm
The April hike will be at Lake Benbrook to explore some of the prairie and outcrops. Meet off of Highway 377, at the intersection of Stevens Dr & Lakeshore Dr. Just south of Highway 377 @ FM 2871.

Saturday, April 11 from 9:00am – 11:30am
Oakmont Park (City of Fort Worth)
7700 Bellaire Dr S
Fort Worth, TX 76132

Saturday, April 11 from 12:00pm – 1:30pm
Ridglea Hills Park (City of Fort Worth)
4985 Stonedale Road
Fort Worth, TX 76116

Meet in the larger parking lot to the south of the main parking lot and Oakmont Blvd. Afterwards, caravan to Ridglea Hills Park for the second half of this prairie hike. Directions will be provided that day for those who attend. This prairie faces W Vickery Blvd., and is a chalky outcrop, exposed in many places.

We will visit a sandy prairie along a riparian area with rare plant species, such as Glen Rose Yucca (Yucca necopina), Hoptree (Ptelea trifoliata) and Trout Lily (Erythronium albidum), and a limestone bluff prairie site overlooking the Clear Fork of the Trinity River, just below the Lake Benbrook dam. Notable species on the limestone bluff include Locoweed (Oxytropis lambertii), Early Flowering Gayfeather (Liatris aestivalis), Purple Paintbrush (Castilleja purpuraea), Hall’s Dalea (Dalea hallii), Cutleaf Germander (Teucrium laciniatum), Edible Scurf Pea (Pediomelum hypogaeum) and Reverchon’s Scurfpea (Pediomelum reverchonii).

Saturday, April 18 from 9:00 – 1:00pm
Eagle Mountain Park (400 acres)
11601 Morris Dido Newark Road (FM 1220)
Fort Worth, TX 73179

Meet at the park entrance by the park’s pavilions. Owned by the Tarrant Regional Water District (TRWD), Eagle Mountain Park offers a wide variety of hikes and views along the 6+ miles of trails. It is biologically rich with flora of the region. Highlights of expected species (not all in bloom), include Shooting Star (Primula meadia = Dodecatheon meadia), False Yellow Foxglove (Aureolaria grandiflora), Blue Hyacinth (Camassia scilloides), Indian Plantain (Arnoglossum plantagineum), Engelmann’s Blatterpod (Physaria engelmannii=Lesquerella) and Lotus Milk Vetch (Astragalus lotiflorus).

http://www.trwd.com/eaglemountainpark

Saturday, May 2 from 8:45am – 2:00pm
Fossil Hill (owned By Jeanne & Wayne Erickson)
Bowie, TX, south of town on Lake Amon Carter

We will meet in Decatur, at the TXDOT rest area about 3 miles to the west of Highway 287 and Loop 380. We leave from there at 9:00am sharp to caravan to the property, so please be prompt and be there by 8:45am. For those in attendance, a map will be provided with directions from the rest stop to the property on Lake Amon Carter.

There is a limit for this fieldtrip because of limited parking and access. An RSVP is required, with a maximum of 12 in attendance. After you RSVP, email me for a copy of the Fossil Hill site description and a plant list.
An excellent example of a remnant Blackjack/Post Oak woodland, with patches of sandy and gravelly prairie and some riparian areas. Biologically rich with more than 380 plant species.

**Monday, May 4 from 6:00pm – 8:00pm**

The May hike will be at Stella Rowan Prairie in SE Fort Worth. Located north of I-20 and south of E. Seminary Dr., and west of Campus Dr. Call or email for where to meet.

**Saturday, May 23 from 9:00am – 2:00pm**

LBJ National Grasslands (units 45 & 71) Decatur, TX

We will meet in Decatur, at the TXDOT rest area about 3 miles to the west of Highway 287 and Loop 380. We leave from there at 9:00am sharp to caravan to the grasslands, so please be there by 8:45am.

We will visit several highly diverse habitats within the grasslands, with unusual microhabitats, such as seeps and canyon which support rare plants found in the grasslands. Hopefully, one highlight will be to see Shooting Stars (*Primula meadia* = *Dodecatheon meadia*). Other highlights include Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*), Blue Hyacinth (*Camassia scilloides*), False Dragon’s Head (*Physostegia pulchella*), Stickleaf (*Mentzelia oligosperma*), Rock Sandwort (*Minuartia michauxii*) and Red Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*).

**Saturday, May 30 from 9:00am – 1:00pm**

Southwest Nature Preserve (58 acres)
5201 Bowman Springs Road
Arlington, TX 76017

Meet at the park entrance at 8:45am. Hike starts at 9:00am.

We will explore this high quality eastern Cross Timbers Blackjack/Post Oak woodlands with patches of sandy prairie, supporting microhabitats with rare plant communities. Some of the highlights include Glen Rose Yucca (*Yucca necopina*), Farkle Berry (*Vaccinium arboretum*), Nuttall’s Wild Indigo (*Baptisia nuttalliana*), Snout Bean (*Rhynchosia latifolia*), Goats Rue (*Tephrosia virginiana*), Prairie Flameflower (*Phemeranthus parviflorus* = *Talinum parviflorum*), Southern Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera* = *Myrica*) and Adder’s Tongue (*Ophioglossum engelmannii*).

[https://naturallyfun.org/southwest-nature-preserve](https://naturallyfun.org/southwest-nature-preserve)

**Monday, June 1 from 6:00pm – 8:00pm**

The June hike will be at Marion Sansom Park, at the Lake Worth spillway. The address is 2501 Roberts Cut Off Rd., Fort Worth 76114.

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**Prairie Hikes**

Our president, Carol Clark, is leading a series nature talks and walks at Oak Point Park and Nature Preserve for the City of Plano. (All walks meet at main parking lot at 5901 Los Rios, and are subject to change or weather related cancellation.) Pre-registration (required) at [https://parks.planotx.org/econnect/Activities/ActivitiesAdvSearch.asp](https://parks.planotx.org/econnect/Activities/ActivitiesAdvSearch.asp).

**Walks:**

- Apr. 8th, Wed., **Wildflower/Plant Walk** 10 am-$5 fee
- Apr. 14th, Tue., **Nature Walk**, 10 am--$5 fee

**Talks:**

- Apr. 4th, Sat. “**Buzz Buddies**”, 10 am-$25 fee, includes bee house materials. Learn about the fascinating, beautiful and gentle native bees in our area, and make a native bee nest box to take home for your own backyard.

**Closed-toed shoes and long pants are recommended for all events**
Native Landscape Certification Program

NPSOT has created a Native Landscape Certification Program. The program is a series of classes that teach best practices for native plant landscape and habitat preservation and introduction. Each class is taught adjacent to a natural area so we can provide instruction in native plant identification, including trees, shrubs, forbs and grasses, their use in the landscape, as well as common exotics found in the landscape.

Targeted audiences are homeowners, native plant enthusiasts, landscape architects, architects, landscape designers and nurserymen, Master Naturalists, teachers, citizens, Master Gardeners, engineers, and more.

You can sign up at: http://npsot.org/wp/nlcp/. These classes are scheduled at the Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center, 1206 West FM 1382 in Cedar Hill.

1. Introduction to Native Landscapes  Apr 19, 9am - 5pm
   - Learn the value of including and preserving native plants in landscapes.
   - Apprehend the differences between sustainable and conventional development.
   - Understand your Texas vegetation region and soil type.
   - Become familiar with 45 native Texas plants recommended for your landscape and 5 exotic, invasive plants to avoid.
   - Level 1 participants will receive a completion certificate; those who, additionally, pass a test will receive a competency certificate, from NPSOT.
   - Training will include a classroom session and a 2-hour outdoor walk.
   - Registration fee for Level 1 class is $37.

2. Planting Design with Native Plants  May 23, 9am - 5pm
   - Learn to create landscape designs incorporating native plants
   - Understand important considerations for creating a design
   - Comprehend how to preserve the native plants in your landscape
   - Become familiar with 45 native Texas plants recommended for your landscape and 5 exotic, invasive plants to avoid.
   - Level 2 participants will receive a completion certificate; those who, additionally, pass a test will receive a competency certificate, from NPSOT.
   - Training will include a classroom session and a 2-hour outdoor walk.
   - Level 1 must be completed to attend Level 2.
   - Registration fee for Level 2 class is $37 for NPSOT members and $52 for non-members.
iNaturalist

iNaturalist is a growing platform used by lots of local nature enthusiasts as well as National Geographic, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and other nature organizations. It’s a place for people to share their observations as well as help identify flora and fauna species observed by others.

The group could sure use more plant-savvy people on the iNaturalist, too! The Workshops and Get Togethers are a great way to learn more and get connected with iNaturalist as a resource and a community.

For information, contact Erin Taylor, Naturalist, Field Instructor at Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area at https://www.facebook.com/LLELALewisvilleLake

iNaturalist WORKSHOPS
Location: Lewisville Library (1197 W. Main St, Lewisville) Thu, Apr 9, 7pm - 8:45pm and Tue, May 5, 7pm - 8:45pm

The original iNaturalist events that started it all. For some, this is a review of the basics, and for others it’s a chance to get a handle on the finer points of iNaturalist. Computers and wifi are provided, but be sure to RSVP because of limited space. Feel free to bring your own laptop and/or mobile device, too. We’ll start adding info about iNaturalist apps to these presentations very soon.

iNaturalist GET TOGETHERS
Location: TBD
Tue, Apr 14, 7pm - 9pm and Thu, May 14, 7pm - 9pm

We’re looking for locations with wifi, food, an atmosphere conducive to conversation, and close to LLELA. (We can always fall back on our old standby, the LLELA offices (1801 N. Mill St, Lewisville), where our first Get Together was held.)

PHOTO SAFARIS
Location: Meet at the LLELA Pavilion Parking Lot, explore different LLELA locations each time Sat, Apr 18, 7am – 9am and Sat, May 16, 7am – 9am

These photo adventures are open to the general public (ages 10 and up) but are also a great chance to hone your nature observation skills for iNaturalist. Sometimes we’ll take public trails at LLELA, and sometimes we’ll venture into the non-public areas for a behind-the-scenes look. Be prepared for anything, especially safety in the outdoors! (FREE with entrance to LLELA $5)
Collin County NPSOT Newsletter

Got Milkweed Seeds?

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (WFC) wants to increase the availability of native milkweed plants important to the Monarch Butterfly. Milkweeds native to Texas are difficult to find in nurseries. The WFC would like to change that by working with interested folks to responsibly collect seeds from milkweeds growing along the Monarch's Texas migration path.

These seeds will be grown to increase the volume of native milkweed seed available to local growers and thereby increase the native milkweed plants for the Monarch Butterfly.

An ideal population for a conservation collection will contain at least 175 individual plants. If we can collect one follicle from each of 35 individual plants (20%) in that population, we can capture most of the genetic diversity of the population without causing the population to decline.

Seed most needed for our region include but aren't limited to *Asclepias asperula*, *A. oenotheroides*, *A. tuberosa*, and *A. viridis*. If you collect Asclepias seed to join us in this effort please include your name and contact information as well as the GPS coordinates of where you collected and the date of collection. If GPS isn't available to you the closest intersection, nearest town, and the county should be included.

Susan Prosperie, MS, RS
Propagation Specialist, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
University of Texas at Austin
4801 La Crosse Ave.
Austin, Texas 78739-1702
sprosperie@wildflower.org (512)232-0115

Collin County NPSOT General information

The Collin County chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas meets the first Tuesday of January through October, in Laughlin Hall at the Heard museum. Unless otherwise noted, doors open at 7:00 and the program starts at 7:15.

The Native Plant Society of Texas is a non-profit organization with the goal to promote the conservation, research, and utilization of the native plants and plant habitats of Texas, through education, research, and example.

Thanks for your support.

John Worley
email: collincountynpsot@gmail.com
website: http://www.npsot.org/CollinCounty/