IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

This is a list of ideas that can help a chapter get the word out into the local community about natives, native habitats, local ecology, etc. Readers are encouraged to send additional ideas they have tried with success so they can be added to this list.

A note of caution: it’s **not a good idea** until **someone has taken responsibility** to make it happen.

- Hold a plant sale.
- Participate with an information table/booth at local events organized by others which have a horticultural, craft, historic, or other related educational purpose. Bring a butterfly demonstration garden in a pot.
- Collaborate with City and County officials on public education
  - Natives and water conservation
  - Opportunities to spend chapter funds on public education (e.g. native identification signage in public spaces)
  - Encourage city and county officials to send key staff members to NLCP classes.
- Participate in events organized for the education of young people. These are good opportunities to introduce crafts for kids that offer an educational opportunity regarding natives.
  - Seed balls (see “Making seed balls”).
  - Seed starters (see “Making wildflower seed starters”).
  - Book markers
- For those selling at craft fairs, farmers markets, etc.
  - Bring literature and be ready to discuss
  - Bring a butterfly garden in a pot. These always attract attention and stimulate conversation.
- Find partners and help build a demonstration garden (see “Native demonstration gardens/narrative”).
- Celebrate Earth Week.
- Celebrate Native Plant Week.
- More hands-on/fun activities
  - “Apprenticeships” with professional growers who promote natives
  - Promote volunteering at WFC, invasive removal, etc.
  - Grow future experts: organize local NLCP classes to teach native basics, native maintenance, water conservation, habitat preservation, and other subjects of member and local interest
  - Organize craft type classes on how to gather and mark seeds, seed sorting and storing, making seed balls, etc.
- Provide grants or awards to growers trying to propagate difficult natives
- Identify native landscapes properly designed and maintained by other organizations (e.g. businesses, local governments, schools, etc.) and organize public recognition. (see “Commercial landscape recognition process”)
- Find collaborative opportunities with local Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Junior Master Gardeners, Agri-Life, local parks departments, etc. Make connections with nearby chapters and find opportunities to work together (e.g. jointly sponsor NLCP training sessions and other educational activities)

Native Plant Society of Texas
Dennis Perz8/1/14/14
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• Get to know your local newspaper/media folks.
  ○ In small towns, contact the editor, have a talk, and discuss opportunities for publicity. Find out who the reporters are and invite them for show and tell that they might find of interest.
  ○ In bigger cities, establishing contact with the landscaping, conservation, or similar columnist might be faster.
  ○ Journalists are always looking for fresh material about what’s going on locally. They tend to think in terms of human interest stories. For example, bringing up the Monarch Watch program may seem of less interest than wanting to discuss the people who are promoting Monarch Watch and why they are passionate about it.

• Find ways to connect with local city and county officials on their turf. Even better would be people in the business community. Look for ideas to work in their spaces (e.g. public parks, court house landscapes, etc.)

• Donate books on natives, habitat preservation, water conservation, etc. to your local libraries. Include an array for beginner and experienced gardeners, for young people, and for those looking for broader education.
  ○ Start with an inventory of what a library already has.
  ○ Decide what could best be added next. Consult with the librarians.
  ○ Determine what the chapter can afford.