

January 2009 Newsletter

Native Plant Society of Texas - South Texas Chapter



Results of December Meeting on Fate of Chapter - Shelly Maher

At our Dec NPSOT meeting, 16 people came to discuss the future of our chapter. Many ideas were tossed around, including adding more activities and field trips. We also discussed switching to a once per quarter meeting with 2 educational outreach programs/ activities per year. No final decisions were made as we thought it best to gather ideas over the break and met back in January to reorganize the chapter. Ernie cleared a Jan. meeting place and time with the Botanical Gardens as well as gathered ideas from them (see next item below). We also need someone(s) to step forward to be president. There are many offers of help, but we need someone to preside over meeting and receive emails/ updates from the State NPSOT Office.

Reorganization Meeting

Jan 24th at 1 pm at the
STBGNC
(CC Botanical Gardens)

January 28th – Chapter Reorganization Meeting – Ernie Edmundson

I spoke with Michael Womack and the **January 24th date is open at 1 pm for our meeting**, nature trail walk, and viewing the area for the new native garden. There is a rose program that morning until noon.

We also discussed a number of options for NPSOT to be involved at the STBGNC:

1. Michael would be thrilled for us to work on the signage on the Nature trail, replacing signs missing, IDing more plants to label (he can make us a list), etc. They will prepare the signs for us to use on Jan. 24th. Each sign is already created so they just have to print on the No-tear plastic paper (no lamination necessary). The signs are cut to size, sprayed with adhesive and installed in the holders.
2. We can view the new native garden area (transitioning into the brush) where they have been working to get rid of the Guinea grass. We can possibly begin to develop that area though he anticipates that it is a minimum of two years before the building will be built. Carolyn has all the current information on the design and plans for this so I will defer any plans for viewing this or any other plans for Jan. 24th to her.
3. Michael would be very interested in NPSOT members leading guided walks of the native gardens and trail (hummingbird garden, though not all native is considered part of the trail) on a once per month basis, or less if once per month is too much. Wayne Hanselka's walks have drawn varying numbers of people usually dependent on the weather.
4. NPSOT member to present program on Natives for the Winter Lecture Series, every Wednesday in January and February, 10-11:30 am. Can include a program inside and guided tour of trail. Any of the Wednesdays are currently open, but will be filling up quickly.
5. NPSOT member to present program "Natives for Habitat" on a Saturday morning, 10 am-12, this spring. Possible dates discussed were Feb. 28, April 11 or 25, or even October. This is the program that I have been doing, but anyone else who would like to do it is certainly welcome to. Let me know.
6. Michael is very open to us scheduling a Wildscape workshop at the STBGNC. We could work towards Spring 2010 (with their calendar wide open right now) or he suggested October, 2009 any Saturday after Oct. 3.

Michael said that he is hearing more and more comments indicating interest in native plants. He also said that they would like to feature some natives at their Spring plant sale on April 4th, if we could provide him with a list of plants to get for the sale.

I will also be sending a \$50 check for dues for NPSOT to them. He said that it is usually \$50 for less than 30 members and \$100 for more than 30, but he considers any groups that do programs and work at the gardens to be more of a donation rather than dues per se.

Let me know if you have questions, or if anyone wants to volunteer to do any of the programs there. - Ernie

Renewed Memberships

Paul & Mary Meredith of Victoria

Do You Know Your Natives???"

Contributed by: USDA-NRCS Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center



Photos by Forrest Smith of STN

Hairy grama (*Bouteloua hirsuta*) is a native, short-lived perennial grass that occurs in tufts or dense clumps (Gould, 1975). It grows 15-40 centimeters tall with a spreading to erect growth form (Gould, 1975). Hairy grama produces seedheads from June to November under favorable conditions. The seedheads consists of a culm bearing 1-4 branches with 20-50 closely arranged spikelets (Gould, 1975). Hairy grama is found throughout the State on a variety of soils (Gould, 1975). Its range extends from Wisconsin and Illinois to North Dakota and south to Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, southern California and south through Mexico to Oaxaca and Chiapas, and occurs in Florida (Gould, 1975). Hairy grama provides fair livestock forage and increases with heavy grazing, but has poor wildlife value (Hatch, Schuster, and Drawe, 1999).

In 2007, South Texas Natives, Texas AgriLife Beeville, and the Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center released Chaparral Germplasm hairy grama (*Bouteloua hirsuta* Lag. var. *hirsuta*). Chaparral Germplasm is a blend of 4 collections from the Rio Grande Plains of Texas. Collections comprising Chaparral Germplasm were selected for long term survival, seed production and quality, and adaptation across



the South Texas area. Hairy grama is an important component of many range sites throughout South Texas.

Chaparral Germplasm was developed for use in highway rights-of-way seeding, native rangeland restoration, and wildlife plantings in the Rio Grande Plains of Texas. Chaparral Germplasm will persist on sand, sandy loam, clay, and clay loam soil types. Chaparral Germplasm's fast seed production, establishment, and spreading habit make it an excellent planting choice for highly disturbed sites like highway rights of way or areas susceptible to erosion. Chaparral Germplasm has shown good performance in the South Texas Plains, Gulf Prairie and Marshes, and Coastal Sand Plains regions of South Texas.



Info Sources: : *Manual of the Vascular Plants of Texas* - Correll and Johnston; *The Grasses of Texas* - Gould, 1975; *Grasses of the Texas Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes* -Hutch, Schuster & Drawe, 1999; *Manual of the Grasses of the United States*, 2nd Edition - Hitchcock, A.S., 1971; and research performed at the PMC.

Highlights from the CC Garden Council Meeting held Tues the 13th – Ray Kirkwood

Minute of the last meeting were read & approved as read. Treasurer reported on the current amount in the CCGAC checking account. She asked & was given permission to move the money into a cost free account, even if it moving the account to another bank. The current account is at Frost and they have been charging an "analysis" fee. NavyArmy was discussed as a possible cost free place.

The president informed all that the state convention was moving to another hotel. The convention will be held May 15-17, 2009 at the Hilton Houston North. Call (281) 875-2222 for reservations if you intend to attend. The state convention for 2010 will be held in Corpus Christi. The council will need much volunteer help in preparing for & supporting this event. The upcoming flower show was discussed. Arrangements seem to be in disarray at the moment. The person that has been in charge of a lot of the effort has had a stroke & is in the hospital. The District VII Spring Convention is to be held in New Braunfels, March 18-19.

The Garden Tour, April 18, needs at least 2 more yards added to the tour, so the request is for anyone who knows of a candidate yard to let them know. The new CCGAC logo was approved. The new CCGAC website is in preparation & will have its own domain name. I understand that the new website will located at "corpuschristigardencouncil.org" when it becomes available. "The Garden Book" was discussed. It was recommended that the book be revised& updated to include color pictures, sections on specialty subjects such as Native Plants, & current gardening techniques. A committee headed by Susan Dahlman was formed to investigate the feasibility to getting the revisions done and professionally edited. (If this project proceeds, I think that NPSOT should take on the challenge of writing a section on gardening with native plants.)



- ◆ **Winter Lecture Series** for ‘Winter Texans’ & residents – Guest speakers will present unique perspectives on regional environmental, agricultural and horticultural topics from 10 to 11:30 a.m., Wednesdays, in January and February. Cost is general admission only (STBGNC members free). Topics and speakers to be announced. Call for reservations or further information.
- ◆ **“Bulbs you don’t have to Dig Up” March 14** - Master Gardener John Gilbreath, who specializes in daylily and amaryllis gardens, will tell you which bulb plants you don’t have to dig up for the winter, and share hints about their long-term care, at a seminar from 10 to noon. Gilbreath will discuss Narcissi, Crocuses, Spider Lilies, Crinum, Hurricane Lilies, Iris, Gladiolas, Rain Lilies and more. Class fee is \$6 (\$3.50 members). Call for reservations.
- ◆ **“Hot New Plants & Perennial Favorites” March 21, 10 a.m. to noon** - Landscape designer Kathy Hubner, Gill’s Landscape Nursery, discusses both tried-and-true favorite perennials, and the newest plants on the market-- for color and curb appeal. Class fee is \$6 (\$3.50 members). Call for reservations.
- ◆ **Rainwater Harvesting Workshop March 28th** - From drenching rains to killer droughts, South Texas experiences nearly every moisture extreme. Come sun or soaker, students enrolled in the new Rainwater Harvesting workshop will learn how to take advantage of those rainy spells, storing up free fresh water for landscape, vegetable garden or greenhouse for the dry period bound to follow. Held from 9:30 to 3:30 pm, this water resource conservation workshop also is sponsored by the San Patricio Municipal Water District and Nueces Master Gardeners. A lecture in the Visitors Center begins the day, followed by students constructing their own take-home rainwater harvesting barrels in the Rose Pavilion. Workshop fee is \$20 per student. Class maximum is 20. To register, call Texas AgriLife Extension Service, 361-767-5217.

Coastal Bend Bays Foundation Calendar www.baysfoundation.org 361-882-3439

- ◆ Jan 23, 3:30pm, Harte Research Institute Seminar Series
- ◆ Feb 3, 7pm, Coastal Bend Audubon Society, So TX Natives Project: Habitat restoration
- ◆ Feb 5, 7pm, Native Plant Society of South Texas, topic tbd
- ◆ Feb 7, Coastal Bend Audubon Society BIG DAY 2009 Birding Event
- ◆ Feb 14, 7am, Billy Sandifer's Big Shell Clean up, Padre Island National Seashore, Malaquite Pavilion
- ◆ Feb 21, 9am, TX General Land Office Adopt-A-Beach, join CBBF at Redfish Bay, Lighthouse Lakes Park.
- ◆ April 18, 10am, EARTH DAY BAY DAY. Register today!

NPSOT Calendar 2009

- ◆ **Jan. 24th** Reorganization Meeting 1 pm
- ◆ **No other events planned at this time**

Chapter Contacts

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State Web Site www.npsot.org