

October 2008 Newsletter

Native Plant Society of Texas - South Texas Chapter



Oct. 2nd – Monthly Meeting – Guest Speaker – Forrest Smith

Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Garden Senior Center, 5325 Greely Drive, Corpus Christi.

Forrest S. Smith, the Native Plant Collections and Evaluations Manager at *South Texas Natives*, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, will give the talk “Restoration in South Texas—Challenges and Expectations.” South Texas is host to a suite of conditions that make the restoration of native plant communities especially difficult. Non-native grass species, an irregular climate punctuated by frequent drought and seasonal deluges, exceptional native plant diversity, and lack of commercially available seed are all factors that must be considered when planning a restoration effort. Non-native species such as guinea grass (*Urochloa maxima*), sabi grass (*Urochloa mosambicensis*), old world bluestems (*Bothriochloa* & *Dichanthium spp.*), buffelgrass (*Pennisetum cilliare*), bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*), and a number of other non-native grasses frequently invade restoration plantings or exist on potential restoration sites.

Droughts, floods, and inconsistent seasonal weather patterns further complicate restoration planning and implementation. Selection of plant species for a restoration project should focus on an understanding of natural vegetation progression or succession, while seeking to meet management objectives. Those overseeing potential restoration projects should thoroughly investigate the potential plant community for the soil or habitat type of the restoration site. Native plant material for a site should be selected that has proven adaptability to the site and soil type, or use material that originates within the site’s specific eco-region. Those undertaking restoration projects should have realistic expectations of the results. Most



Kleberg Bluestem
– photo by Shelly Maher



Guinea Grass – photo by Forrest Smith

restoration projects only begin to duplicate or restore the natural processes and development of a stable plant community, and non-native species are difficult or impossible to completely eliminate from a site. Realistic expectations of restoration projects are increasing plant diversity, re-introducing desirable native plants, jump starting ecological processes and natural re-development of the plant community, and increasing productivity for wildlife, aesthetic value, or other objectives. Restoration projects should strive to meet long-term goals. Tips for successful planting projects include reducing non-native grasses, preparing good seed beds, planting during favorable moisture conditions, using site adapted native material, planting diverse seed mixes, planting a large percentage of fast establishing native species as part of the mixture, and using all available management tools to help the restoration planting succeed.

ALSO – Forrest will bring copies of the South Texas Restoration Manual published by STN (\$20.57 total). Cash or check only please.

Our Next Meeting is November 6th
"Native Dave" and Christy Ilfrey –
Sustainable Landscapes for Texas

New Memberships
Welcome to our new members:

Ray & Kris Kirkwood of Rockport

Fall Symposium Silent Auction: Items Needed – from Linda Knowles

It's time to think about the Fall Symposium Silent Auction, taking place October 16-18 in Beaumont. Proceeds of the Silent Auction will go to the Kate Hillhouse Scholarship Fund. We would like to get at least four or five items from each chapter (either the chapter itself or its members). NPSOT members can contribute to the Silent Auction either through the donation of items, bidding on items, or both. Please tell your members about the need for Silent Auction items. If you plan to bring items for the silent auction, you can print and fill out the bid sheets ahead of time. A link to the bid sheet form can be found at:

(<http://www.npsot.org/symposium2008/NPSOTSilentAuctionBidSheet2008.pdf>) If you would like to mail items for the Silent Auction, send them to Linda Knowles at 831 Olney Oak Drive, Houston, TX 77079. Thank you to all of you who contribute to the Silent Auction! If you have any questions, please contact either of the NPSOT Fall Symposium Silent Auction committee members below: Linda Knowles e-mail: dknowlespe@aol.com phone: 281-558-3710 fax: 281-558-3711

Margaret Gnewuch e-mail: margaret.a.gnewuch@exxonmobil.com phone: 281-489-3127

Register for the Big Thicket Symposium at <http://www.npsotreg.org>

Go Wild in the Thicket!

Do You Know Your Natives???" Contributed by: USDA-NRCS Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center

Blackeyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta* L.) is a native warm season, annual forb reaching 1 to 3 ft tall. It flowers from April to July in the Coastal Bend and reproduces by seed. The leaves are alternate, simple, and longer than broad with margins entire to obscurely toothed. The stems, leaves and calyx are all covered with hairs. The flowers occur in



solitary heads. The ray flowers number from 12 – 20 and are yellow or orange in color.

Often the ray flowers will have a red to brown spot at the base. The disk flowers are purple-brown to brown

in color. The fruits are very small, black achenes. Blackeyed Susan occurs on dry plains, prairies and disturbed sites throughout Texas except the Trans-Pecos region. It is easy to grow and makes an attractive annual addition to any prairie garden. The leaves and stems are eaten by white-tailed deer and cattle. The seeds are eaten by Rio Grande turkeys.



The PMC is working on releasing a native ecotype for the Gulf Coast Prairie region for the conservation practices of 390 Riparian Herbaceous Cover, 562 Recreation Area Improvement, and 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat. However, more collections are needed to represent the entire range of this species in South Texas. If you find a population of blackeyed Susan in South Texas, the PMC would appreciate a seed collection.



Info Sources: *Manual of the Vascular Plants of Texas* - Correll and Johnston; *Plants of the Texas Coastal Bend* - Lehman, O'Brien, & White; *Field Guide to the Broad-Leaved Herbaceous Plants of South Texas* – Everitt, Drawe, & Lonard; and research performed at the PMC.



Upcoming Events (361) 852-2100 www.ccbotanicalgardens.org

- **Moonlight in the Gardens** – Saturday October 11th is a casual evening fundraiser, beginning at 7 p.m. Under a nearly full moon, guests will enjoy multiple food and music venues, special garden lighting effects, star and moon-gazing with telescopes, and a Starlight Silent Auction. Tickets are \$50 members, \$60 non-members. Tickets which include an exclusive 6 – 7 p.m. SUNSET HOST PARTY are \$75 each. Sponsor opportunities are available. Call for more information.
- **Herb Day** - Saturday, October 18. Seminars will be presented on the hour, from 9 a.m. through 1 p.m. Master Gardener Linda Collins and other members of the Rockport Herb & Rose Study Group, will lecture on various herb topics, featuring an 11 a.m. cooking demonstration by Cheryl's on the Bay. Cindy Meredith of the Herb Cottage in Hallettsville, will have potted herbs available for purchase. General Admission Only. No class fees, members free! Please call for seminar reservations.
- **EarthKind gardening** methods with new composting alternatives will be taught in a seminar, from 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, October 25. Master Gardener and EarthKind Gardening specialist Bob Becquet will discuss making gardens more "earth-kind" with greener options for landscape maintenance. Seminar fee is \$6, \$3.50 members. Call for reservations.

2008 Dates from the Coastal Bend Bays Foundation (www.baysfoundation.org) 361-882-3439

- **Oct 13th - Coastal Issues Forum** - Hypoxia in Corpus Christi Bay. What is it? What are the long term and short term impacts? Will it impact fishing and crabbing? What are the regulations? 5:30pm social, with forum starting at 6pm. Free, Carlos F. Truan Natural Resources Center, TAMUCC.
- **Oct 25th** - Join US Fish & Wildlife Service & partners for a **clean up of bird nesting islands**. 9am - 1pm. Location to be determined. Email birdislandcleanup@gmail.com with questions and the size of your volunteer group.
- **Oct 25th** - Moody High School, ROTC Parking Lot, 10am till 2pm. **Moody Clean Air Fair**. Free and open to the public. AutoCheck will be there with free emissions testing.
- **Nov. 6th - 6th Annual Conservation & Environmental Stewardship Awards Program**. Nomination forms available in early August - help us recognize our local environmental heroes! Visit www.baysfoundation.org.

NPSOT Calendar Fall 2007- Spring 2008

- **Oct. 2nd** - NPSOT Monthly Meeting 7 p.m. – Forrest Smith of *South Texas Natives*
- **Oct. 16th - 19th** – NPSOT Symposium in Beaumont
- **Nov. 6th** - NPSOT Monthly Meeting 7 p.m. – "Native Dave" and Christy Ilfrey - "Sustainable Landscapes for Texas"
- **Dec. 4th** - NPSOT Monthly Meeting 7 p.m. – Speaker T.B.A.
- **Jan. – meeting in December and not January this year**
- **Feb. 5th** - NPSOT Monthly Meeting 7 p.m. – Speaker T.B.A.
- **March 5th** - NPSOT Monthly Meeting 7 p.m. – Speaker T.B.A.
- **April 2nd** - NPSOT Monthly Meeting 7 p.m. – Speaker T.B.A.
- **May 7th** - NPSOT Monthly Meeting 7 p.m. – Speaker T.B.A.

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State Web Site www.npsot.org