



White Passionflower  
(*Passiflora affinis*)

One of my favorite passionflowers is the White Passionflower (*Passiflora affinis*) because of its uniquely layered design. A brief description of the 3" diameter flower reveals a lower layer of 5 sepals and 5 petals of similar shape and size, of an off-white color with dark purple markings, and a second layer of crinkled filaments. The third, slightly elevated, layer provides a smaller, flat circle of 5 pale yellow stamens/anthers, and the top level displays 3 stigmas. Some religious beliefs associate this flower with the Passion at Easter, or Crucifixion of Jesus, i.e., 3 stigmas representing 3 nails, 5 stamens representing 5 wounds, and the fringed corona of filaments representing the crown of thorns.

The flowers are visited by many pollinators, hummingbirds, and various butterflies. And, it's interesting to know that passionflowers hold their bloom for only 12-15 hours before expiring, depending on temperature. Yes, the short-stemmed flower can be cut and 'floated' in a shallow dish of water in order to bring the sweet fragrance into your home. However, watching the multitude of pollinators flitting around the flowers may be more gratifying than vasing one for your own pleasure.

The key factor in this butterfly-luring process is the foliage whereby it is the larval plant on which the female Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*) butterfly lays her eggs. Leaves of *P. affinis* vine are alternate, simple, and palmately 3-lobed, even though I've found 5-lobed leaves on some of the longer stems. Equipped with strong tendrils, the vine can cling and sprawl 20-30 feet during one season, but will die back each winter and provide new growth each spring. A colony of these plants can be considered a butterfly hatchery in your own landscape if trained for fence, trellis, or arbor growth. My plants cling to cattle panel fencing sections that are attached to a 6' tall privacy fence between neighbors. The highest level of foliage on fence is like a 'fly-by diner' for bluebirds, but the space between the wooden fence and the cattle panels is a smorgasbord for Cardinals, Mockingbirds, and Wrens when they are frantically searching for caterpillars for their babies. They repeatedly flit behind the wire trellis, grab food, and hurriedly rush back to their nests....before any neighborhood cat can detect.



Gulf Fritillary caterpillar  
(*Agraulis vanillae*)

Even though this genus has 430 species, Texas is native to only four: *Passiflora incarnata* (pale lavender color), and *P. lutea* (smaller flower of pale yellow color), *P. tenuiloba* (small green-ish color) and *P. affinis*. Not only do these plants 'vine' aggressively, but you must know that they also sucker underground. You can either containerize the plant, or allow the suckers to surface and grow roots for digging and transplanting, or you can mow them if they surface in unwanted areas. I think you'll quickly learn that your friends and neighbors will welcome your gifted, rooted, suckers once they see the breathtakingly beautiful flowers and the hordes of butterflies nectaring.



G. F. butterfly, under side  
wing markings



G. F. butterfly, top side  
wing markings

**G**et your plants in the ground soon so that the roots can become established over wintertime for a jump-start of a summer-long blooming season next year. If a nursery plant is covered with caterpillars or showing signs of riddled leaves, don't be alarmed; it's proof that the plant is serving its purpose. Plant your plant, watch for the Gulf Fritillary butterflies, and be ready to hang your 'eatery' sign out for your bluebirds. Grow Native!

## Migrating Hummingbirds need help after drought

By CHARLENE VANDINI Valley Morning Star

**T**he ongoing drought is only getting worse, and this year, migrating hummingbirds will find little native vegetation to sustain them as they fly south for the winter.

This year, local birding experts say, it's essential that humans feed the tiny feathered travelers.

Norma Friedrich, president of the Arroyo Colorado Audubon Society, said that on a recent visit to Central Texas, she saw no native flowering plants on which the hummingbirds would rely as they pass through the state, en route to Mexico and Central America.

The migrating birds will be forced to rely almost entirely on humans for their food, she said. This year, more than ever, the hummingbirds will seek out flowering plants in gardens, as well as feeders in yards, on porches and patios.

The migration should start any day now, she said, and it's a good time to prepare for the birds' arrival.

The first to arrive will be the ruby-throated hummingbirds, and an Audubon Society member in Arroyo City already has reported seeing a few there.

The ruby-throats, which spend the summer in New England, the northeastern U.S. and southern Canada, will be followed by black-chinned hummingbirds that travel south from the western United States. Then the Rufous hummingbirds arrive, migrating from the western United States and as far north as Alaska.

The peak of the migration generally is in mid-September, and then it will taper off, Friedrich said.



She also reminds humans who feed any birds of a lesson many birders know: "You attract more birds with water than with seeds."

A water mister or a lawn sprinkler with a fine spray will attract many kinds of birds. The appreciative hummingbirds will give themselves showers by flying through the spray.

Another benefit of feeding hummingbirds is that you'll be rewarded with annual visits, Friedrich said. Once they find your feeder, they'll return every year, bringing their offspring with them. And within a few years, there will be generations of migrators visiting the same yards and gardens.

"If you're feeding annually, and you don't have the feeder out," Friedrich said, "they'll buzz around waiting for the feeder to reappear."

*Article reprint submitted by Jeanne Erickson as shared by Eileen Porter of Cross Timbers Chapter NPSOT*



Photo courtesy  
Larry Brennan

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MIDDLE: Veronica Ruangskul, Don Fikes, Jonathan Smith, Diana Warrendorf, Kim Hawk, Maggie Dodd, Ellen Ryfle and Kim Orlandella

FRONT: Sandra Pepper, Shari Brand, Susan Burke, Amesha Morris, Lisa Prier, Rita Lokie and Suzanne McDonald

Not pictured: Donna Coleman



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### **Monthly Chapter Meetings**

**9:30 a.m. preceded by a social time at 9:00 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month. Chapter meetings are open to the public.**

**Next meeting September 19, 2013**—Ryan Blankenship, Assoc. Wildlife Biologist with Kimley-Horn and Associates in Dallas on threats to Herpetofauna in N. Texas and conservation of herp species

**Meeting October 17, 2013**—Randy Johnson, Milk weed & their importance in the ecosystem

**Location: Joseph A. Carroll Bldg., 401 W. Hickory Street,  
Denton, TX 76201-9026**

### **Board Meetings**

**The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m. The Board last met September 12, 2013. Next meeting October 10, 2013.**

**Board meetings are open to members.**

### OUR MISSION . . .

*“to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our community”*