

Day two —

## COMMITTEE SURVEYS THE GOOD SAMARITAN CAMPUS

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o generate ideas for the plantings and areas, on the rainy morning of July 3, the following committee members composed of GSS staff, resident volunteers, and Master Naturalists toured the campus grounds:

- Freddie Martinez**, GSS, Director of Senior Living, appointed contact for the Project
- Luis Alfonzo**, GSS, Director of Environmental Services, Primary contact for required work
- Nancy Kurrus**, GSS Resident (Hardscape Donor)
- Joe Baldrige**, GSS Resident (Volunteer Worker)
- Betty Mullenweg**, GSS Resident and TMN Project Lead
- Marilyn Blanton**, TMN, Native Plant specialist
- Fritz Poppe**, TMN, Native Landscape specialist



Passion flower

In **Phase I — Plot A** the following plants are planned:

- Gulf (Pink) Muhly Grass
- Passion Flower Vine
- Coral Honeysuckle (Texas native only)
- Turk's Cap

w. odum



The rest of the plants for the area will be determined later and will initially consist of plants/flowers supplied by residents and Master Naturalists.



Rosemary

For the second target area on **Plot B** these plants will be placed:

- Beauty Berry
- Coral Berry
- Rosemary

Additional flowering plants will be grouped around the rosemary and in remaining area as suggested by the planting specialists. Those considered are:

- Salvia greggi
- Blackfoot daisy
- Fall aster



Salvia greggi

For **Plot C** there is a possibility for berm or trellis planted with full-sun loving, butterfly (and possibly bumble bee) friendly natives that will be determined.

In **Plot D** planting considered is **Asian Jasmine** since the area is in deep shade. The area has been unsuccessfully sodded with St. Augustine grass over the years.



Asian jasmine

**Plot E** will be a herb garden with **rosemary**, **peppermint**, and **spearmint**

For **Plot F** there is a possibility of **native grasses** and **wildflowers**. This area will be reviewed at a later time.



Possum haw

Several other general suggestions were made especially for trees that may include **Possum Haw**, **Roughleaf Dogwood** and **Redbud**.



Betty Mullenweg

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his is an ambitious plan that will be developed and matured over time, and when complete, the Good Samaritan campus will see a wonderful transformation that will provide enjoyment for residents, staff and visitors for years to come; but more importantly, a **crucial habitat for wildlife**.

This information was taken from the Minutes prepared by **Betty Mullenweg**, resident, Master Naturalist, and Project Lead  
(**Wanda Odum**, resident, Master Naturalist, and Naturalist News editor)



READ AND LEARN — knowledge  
is freedom



Bob

## Common Sense

By Bob Ross

**M**any people in the know, from meteorologists to old-timers whittlin' on the courthouse square, claim we are presently in a decade drought. Do you agree? How are you personally helping to conserve water? Or, do you think all the attention about the shortages of fresh water is a clandestine action by some government agency and you are responding by doing nothing to preserve our precious supply of water?

Just what is a drought? A drought is an extended period when a region receives a deficiency in its water supply, whether atmospheric, surface or ground water. A drought can last for months or years. Generally, drought occurs when a region receives consistently below average precipitation. A drought can also reduce water quality, because lower water flows reduce dilution of pollutants and increase contamination of remaining water sources.

Anyone who has spent time aboard naval ships, or spent extended time as a mariner at sea, knows about what is referred to as a “navy shower”. A “navy shower” is a method of showering that allows for significant conservation of water and energy by turning off water during the “middle” portion of showering. An initial 30 seconds or so are used to get wet, followed by soap and lather without running water, which is then rinsed off in a minute or less. The total time for the water being on is typically under 2 minutes. “Navy showers” originated on naval ships, where supplies of fresh water were often scarce.

My son, who is nearing 40 years of age, was taught about “navy showers” when he was in junior high school. He would get up in the morning before attending school, get in the shower, turn on the warm water, and then he would stand in the corner letting gallons and gallons of water run over him. I kept telling him to conserve water and he needed to take “navy showers”. One day when I felt the time was right, I went and drew a bucket of ice cold water in the kitchen, I then went outside and turned off the water main. My son was in the middle of soaping when he suddenly had no water in the shower. I went in and told him I had shut off the water and he could finish his shower and rinse with the bucket of ice cold water. Needless to say, he was not a happy camper! He and his family now live in the semi-arid area of the Texas Panhandle and he fully understands the need for water conservation. By the way, if I did such a thing in today's society I would probably have Child Protective Services knocking at my front door.

His son, my grandson, plays a lot of baseball each year. My grandson's baseball team has been coming to the Metroplex for the past several years to play in tournaments. The last 4-5 times they have come down to play baseball my grandson's tournament eventually gets rained out. Nowadays, I simply get on the phone and let my grandson know he needs to bring the family and come down here to DFW and play in a tournament because we need some more rain. Thankfully, he is still young enough to think that is funny.

Remember, when taking a 10 minute shower one may use as much as 60 gallons of water, as oppose to, taking a “navy shower” one may use as little as 3 gallons of water. One person can save 15,000 gallons per year. If you calculate 15,000 gallons saved by one individual and multiply that by the 6.5 million people residing in the DFW statistical metropolitan area you would have an enormous savings of fresh water each year. Even though we are under water restrictions in our neighborhoods are we all going to begin our conservation by taking “navy showers”? Common sense will tell you no. But, common sense will tell you that it would not be hard for you to reduce your showering by 10-30 gallons. Common sense will tell you that most folks over do their lawn watering. Common sense tells us that the perfect answer to having a beautiful yard is to xeriscape. Xeriscaping is landscaping and gardening that reduces or eliminates the need for supplemental water from irrigation. Utilizing the proper native plants to beautify your yard is challenging and enjoyable. Do not miss the opportunity to meet and discuss with your local Master Gardener when establishing a schematic plan for planting and maintaining a xeriscaped yard. We are all together in this common sense approach to saving water and preserving the natural beauty of the area.

## Neil Sperry's e-Gardens Newsletter Texas Tree Tips: April 2014

From Steve Houser—  
(This article was held over from June 2014  
Naturalist News due to space constraints.)



What's this? The Dallas Mavericks and area arborists are planting trees? In a time of drought? Veteran arborist Steve Houser [explains](#) why it's a very good idea.

Save the date! Saturday, April 26, for the ChariTree Earth Day fun tree climb. Details in our next e-gardens and also on Neil's Facebook page.



Arborists instruct volunteers about the basics and finer points of sustainable tree planting at a recent *Trees for Threes* planting event. Photos by Bill Seaman.

By Steve Houser

### Tree Planting During a Drought?

“We are in a drought and you guys are planting trees! Are you crazy?”

This question was posed during a recent tree-planting event sponsored by the Dallas Mavericks and PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers). *Trees for Threes*, or TF3 for short, plants a large tree at a Dallas-area school for each three-point shot scored by the Mavs. The trees are irrigated and maintained for three years to help ensure their survival. Now in its fifth year, *Trees for Threes* has planted more than 1,000 trees on DISD school campuses. (<http://www.mavs.com/community/events/trees-for-threes/>).



This newly planted tree will soon generate cooling shade, help clean the air, and reduce storm water runoff.

Since trees need water to survive and grow, it seems only a tree hugger would promote tree planting during a drought. However, if you care about water quality or quantity, you should also care about trees. There is a direct link between them.

### **Water Quality**

Trees are not only big air filters; they also help to filter our water. Trees remove water from the soil, where the water starts its journey through a tree's vascular system and is released into the air in a fine mist. The process is called *transpiration*. A single tree can emit up to 400 gallons of water in a **day**. The water is cleaned as it travels through the vascular system. A tree that cleans 300 gallons a day will clean 109,500 gallons of water in a year.

The watersheds of Lake Lewisville and Lake Arlington were previously researched by Vision North Texas and the North Central Texas Council of Governments using a “greenprinting” tool developed by the Trust for Public Land. The study found that maintaining natural and undeveloped areas and forests in the watershed offered significant benefits to water quality. [www.nctcog.org/watershed](http://www.nctcog.org/watershed)



Tree roots help filter ground water and reduce soil erosion.

Water is also filtered as it travels through tree roots and seeps into our groundwater. Research shows that some tree species break down water pollutants, including metals, pesticides, and solvents. Research also shows that tree roots prevent erosion of precious topsoil by stabilizing the soil and dispersing rainfall.

### **Water Quantity**

Research from Russian physicists Victor Gorshkov and Anastassia Makarieva produced the biotic pump theory, which postulates that trees are the driving force behind rainfall over land. If you live in a desert, you have very little rainfall. Well duh! But it leads to the question of why? Tree transpiration may play a role. If a typical tree transpires hundreds of gallons of water per day, multiply this number times the number of trees on earth and it seems reasonable that rainfall totals could be affected.

If rainfall occurs over a hard surface such as concrete or asphalt, it quickly runs off, greatly increasing the amount of water leaving a site and creating the potential for flooding downstream. Tree foliage helps to reduce the amount of water runoff by holding it on the surface area of leaves and stems — and then slowly releasing it as it drips off or evaporates. More tree foliage on a site equals more water that enters into the soil, which helps to reduce the potential for drought problems. Research shows that tree canopy cover reduces storm water storage costs by billions of dollars in urban areas throughout the country. Shade from trees reduces the evaporation of soil moisture, reducing the need for landscape irrigation for the plants underneath the trees' canopy.

Water is the element that gives life. If you truly care about water, you should also care about the trees, forests, and the natural ecology in your area. Who knows, someday it might even be cool to be a *tree hugger*! Stranger things have happened.

I say, “Ask not what trees do for you, but rather, what you can do for trees!”

Posted by Steve Houser • March 31, 2014

### **About the Author**

Steve Houser is a Dallas native with more than 30 years of experience as a consulting arborist and tree climber.

## Milkweed Seed Cleaning, Storage and Propagation

By Cathy Downs

### Cleaning

Cleaning milkweed seed from the pod can be a time consuming and messy business if left for too long. It is not a task to be undertaken inside the home as the chaff tends to fly about with a mind of its own. There are a variety of ways to separate the seed from the chaff, or fluff. If you were able to pick the pods before they split wide open the following method is easiest. Open the pod at the seam and grasp the silk together firmly by the tip. Gently lift the seed and silk from the pod with one hand. Then you can literally "tickle" the seeds into the palm of the hand or a container by sliding your fingers along the silk from top to bottom with your other hand. Keep a firm grasp at the top and continue sliding the hand down as seeds come away. A fellow Monarch Conservation Specialist, Candy Sarikonda, put out this you tube video describing this method in detail. Our milkweed pods tend to be dark in color but the pod she is using is from the Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) and looks green to us. Although the pods look different the method will be the same. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=aFXWitrxOmQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=aFXWitrxOmQ)

If you were not able to get to the pods before they burst open you can empty the seed and chaff from the pods into a brown grocery bag and shake the contents repeatedly. The ripe seed will fall to the bottom and you can release the fluff through the top of the bag. Just tear a slight hole in the bottom corner of the bag to release the seed into a tray or container. I find this method less time consuming and more effective than any other methods. I do the releasing out in my meadow in case there are still a few seeds attached.

Other methods I have heard of include burning the seeds to remove fluff. After a test for germinating success by the author, however, it was decided that the burning method destroys seed germination (and it's a little dangerous...fluff is very flammable) some folks put it through a vacuum cleaner; some have fancy equipment that churns the seed. You can find several of these methods and engineering diagrams on the internet. Personally, I like to keep it simple.

### Storage

If you don't have the time to glean the seed right away milkweed pods should be dried thoroughly for at least an hour in a paper lined flat tray to discourage mold. The pods once dry can be stored in brown paper grocery bags until cleaning time. You can use the same bag to separate seed as above. Just be warned when you open the bag to begin cleaning fluff will be all the way to the top. Clean seed should be kept stored in paper in a cool dry place. I use lunch size brown bags, fold the top over, staple shut and write the specie common and botanical name, date and county location of origin.

### Propagation

There are many methods, videos and essays on propagating milkweeds. The one common thread seems to be the vernalization or cold stratification of the seed. Monarch Watch details vernalization and scarification as follows:

#### Vernalization

Seeds of most temperate plants need to be vernalized, which is a fancy way of saying that they need cold treatment. The best way to give the required vernalization is through stratification. To stratify seeds place them in cold, moist potting soil (sterilized soil is best but is not required) in a dark place for several weeks or months. Since most people prefer not to place potting soil in their refrigerators, an alternative is to place the seeds between moist paper towels in a plastic bag. This procedure works well, in part because there are fewer fungi and bacteria available to attack the seeds. After a vernalization period of 3-6 weeks, the seeds can be planted in warm (70°F), moist soil. Without vernalization / stratification, the percentage of seeds that germinate is usually low. "Shocking" seeds that have been refrigerated by soaking them in warm water for 24 hours also seems to improve germination rates.

## Scarification

Even after vernalization / stratification, seeds of many plant species will not germinate. In these cases, the seed coats appear to require action by physical or chemical agents to break down or abrade the seed coat. "Scarification" with some type of physical abrasion that breaks the seed coat usually works and can be accomplished by placing the seeds in a container with coarse sand and shaking the container for 30 seconds or so. Scarification may be required for some milkweeds and might improve the germination rates of other species.

I use a warming pad when I start my milkweeds from seed. I use 4" peat pots in starter trays as it gives the plant more opportunity to put out the all important tap root. Germination usually takes place within a week to 10 days. Once the plant shows two sets of real leaves I put the entire peat pot into a 1 gallon container with a mix of 2/3 garden soil, 1/3 potting soil and about 1/10<sup>th</sup> granite sand for drainage. This way the transplant experiences the least amount of shock. Milkweeds are notoriously tricky transplants and I find the older the rootstock the more success the plant will have. I will not put a milkweed into the ground before the rootstock is at least 10 months old or more. If you have room to winter over the gallons even better! I water only when the pot is dry to about 4".

Bobby Gendron has a great two part video that explains in detail planting methods for milkweed using a seed starting kit.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGRFXb9Xe7g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGRFXb9Xe7g) Part 1

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcJDa6lovQ4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcJDa6lovQ4) Part 2

I find that Mother Nature always knows best, though. Every year at the beginning of November during a light rain or drizzle I walk through my property scattering any seed I have left to the four winds. My milkweed plant count has tripled in the six years I've been doing this. Or, perhaps, I'm just paying more attention.

## Cathy Downs

Chair – Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas

105 Feather Hill Road

Comfort, TX 78013

[mzdowns@hctc.net](mailto:mzdowns@hctc.net)

830-377-1632

See companion article “**Collecting Milkweed Seeds**” — Naturalist News, June 2014

Green Milkweed  
(*Asclepias viridis*)



Hierbe de Zizotes  
(*Asclepias oenetheroides*)



Antelope Horns  
(*Asclepias asperula*)

## Forwarded by Eileen Porter

VP and Program Chair

Cross Timbers Chapter

NPSOT