



ILLUSTRATED FLORA OF EAST TEXAS NEWSLETTER

An Illustrated Texas Floras Project ♦ Volume 4, Number 2, February 2004

State of the Flora



As the New Year begins, the completion of Volume One is in sight! George Diggs, recently at BRIT, worked on various corrections to the manuscript. He and Robert George spent time in the herbarium verifying specimen characters and county records from the BRIT herbarium since many plant descriptions in the flora are accompanied by county records from BRIT and other herbaria. Monique Reed, one of the coauthors in College Station, has pored over the manuscripts with a critical and practical eye. Numerous other reviewers have made improvements to the manuscript. Though the review and correction process continues, we ARE making progress and hope to have Volume One of the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas* published and on the shelves some time this fall (2004).

The county distribution maps are finished and arranged into draft pages and are ready to insert into the text. Practically all of the more than 140 figures and illustrations for the introduction are digitized for layout. The number of figures in the East Texas flora introduction has been increased considerably compared to the North Central Texas flora. Included in the Flora are many color photos of habitat types, numerous old photos from early forestry days, old maps, and geologic and biogeographical maps and figures. Also new to the East Texas flora are several full-page color maps courtesy of the University of Texas Department of Economic Geology. These maps detail the vegetation cover types, river basins, geology, tectonics, and physiography of Texas. The

section on botanists is also generously illustrated with numerous portraits of both modern-day and earlier botanists. All of the more than 190 color plant images (mostly slides) have been digitized by the printer.

Fine watercolor paintings of three extinct birds from East Texas, the Passenger Pigeon, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and Carolina Parakeet will be included in the early settlement animal life section of the introduction. Scott and Stuart Gentling of Fort Worth have created the original paintings of these birds explicitly for the East Texas flora book. We are very grateful that they have donated their artistic talents to the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas* (See related story inside).

THE DISCOVERY FUND GIFT

On 31 Dec 2003, The Discovery Fund of Fort Worth, Texas awarded a gift of stock to The Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) in support of the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas* project. The Institute and the East Texas flora team are grateful for this generous gift. The Discovery Fund gift will allow BRIT—in collaboration with Austin College, Sherman—to make a substantial contribution to the understanding and knowledge of plant diversity in East Texas, and will contribute to species and habitat conservation. This is very timely as our natural areas are continually under threat of destruction and lost for use and appreciation by future generations. (continued on next page)

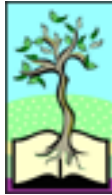
(continued from front page)

Plants are vital to all life on the planet. East Texas is home to an estimated 3,300 species or about one in six of all known plants in North America. *The Illustrated Flora of East Texas* will be like a museum (Gr. mouseion; a place of study), a foundation for learning about the many intriguing plants and diverse ecosystems of East Texas.

The Discovery Fund Gift will play a key role in facilitating the collaborating institutions of BRIT and Austin College to: **equip** secondary teachers

with accessible science-based information to assist mastery with science concepts mandated by the state of Texas; **provide** professors and students with a classic handbook and textbook of East Texas botany; **furnish** local, state, and federal agencies with reliable information to help preserve, conserve, and protect the State's natural resources; **catalog** the living flora of ET online to foster greater public awareness, and appreciation for the value of and dependence on our botanical heritage.

Make happen
a lasting legacy...



The Illustrated Flora of East Texas

From Big "D" to the Big Thicket there is a land of beautiful prairies interwoven with groves of timber, stately pines, hardwoods, wisteria, honeysuckle, lilies, orchids, dogwoods, and azaleas, not-to-mention Texas Pride!

Good thing...East Texas plants, plant communities, and natural areas are of great economic and environmental value; **bad thing...**no comprehensive scientific effort has been made to document and interpret the rich plant biodiversity of East Texas. **Answer...****education** with the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas*. **The future of our natural heritage** is in our hands! **We need your help** to bring up-to-date knowledge of the East Texas flora and associated information (vegetation, geology, soils, climate, toxic/poisonous, etc.) within the reach of students, teachers, botanists, agronomists, foresters, researchers, farmers, ranchers, landscapers, gardeners, native plant garden designers, nurserymen, builders, county extension agents, conservationists, environmental consultants, naturalists, wildflower enthusiasts, and the general public. The *Illustrated Flora of East Texas* will have a major influence on the education and development of teachers and researchers in Texas and neighboring states. Its information products will become an important educational resource on East Texas plants for use in training students and young scientists. Graduate and undergraduate students in many disciplines including, botany, forestry, agriculture, landscape architecture, horticulture, medicine, will find the *Flora* a valuable textbook and reference.

Volume 1 is scheduled for released in the fall of 2004 and volume 2 is tentatively set for release in 2009. We need your continued support to make these two volumes available to students, teachers, and researchers and you. **Your gift can make a difference** and there are many different ways to make a gift. You can give a check, a credit card, stock, pledge, bequest, trust, memorials, installments, etc.

Contact **Barney Lipscomb** at 817.332.7432, metro 817.429.3200 x 32, or barney@brit.org about contributing to the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas* project. To find out more about the project visit our website at www.easttexasflora.org.



Support the East Texas Flora Project
and receive an artist signed Museum Quality Reproduction of the
Passenger Pigeon, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, or Carolina Parakeet
...extinct birds once found in East Texas
Paintings by Scott and Stuart Gentling (Artists and authors, Fort Worth, Texas)

These 22"×14" watercolor paintings of the extinct birds of East Texas—by artists Scott and Stuart Gentling—capture their essence and beauty in breath-taking detail against a natural East Texas backdrop.

Each museum quality reproduction is an IRIS Giclee Water Color Print on Lysonic Standard fine art paper 22"×14". Each is truly a beautiful East Texas scene that is sure to bring joy and pride to your home or office. Order your print and enjoy one (or more!) of these colorful birds year round. ALL proceeds from the sale of the prints support the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas* project, a collaboration between the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) and Austin College. Thank you for your support.

Price \$350.00 + shipping and handling
Contact Yonie Hudson 817-332-4441-x32; yhudson@brit.org or
Barney Lipscomb 817-332-7432; barney@brit.org

Limelight Stuart and Scott Gentling

The Botanical Research Institute of Texas and the Austin College Center for Environmental Studies are pleased to be working with famed artists Stuart and Scott Gentling on the forthcoming publication of the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas*. They have contributed three paintings of Texas birds, now extinct: the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, the Carolina Parakeet, and the Passenger Pigeon.

Though the twins are probably best known for their bird art, they are primarily painters of portraits, still lifes, and landscapes. President Bush, Jane Goodall, and such prominent area civic leaders as Trammell Crow and Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass have posed for Scott. He has even been asked by the president to paint the official White House portraits of both President and Mrs. Bush. Two large Gentling landscapes of the Bush ranch at Crawford now hang in the private quarters of the White House.

In 1999 the Gentlings were singled out by Fort Worth as the city's Sesquicentennial Artists and later in that year were likewise honored by the Texas State Audubon Society in celebration of that Society's Centennial. The Audubon Society specially wanted to honor the publication of their elephant folio titled *Of Birds and Texas*, a forty-six pound collection of Texas landscape and bird plates with text that was universally acclaimed by critics around the country. The late Texas historian emeritus A.C. Green praised the folio as the most magnificent book in Texas history. The Gentlings produced the folio in collaboration with author John Graves who is being honored by BRIT this year with its International

Award of Excellence in Conservation.

Stuart and Scott Gentling's art hangs in collections around the world. Fort Worth, however, is the place they have called home for more than fifty years after the family was brought to Texas from Rochester, Minnesota by their father Dr. Allen Gentling. They are a product of the public schools here. Both later attended Tulane University and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Some of their most enjoyable contributions to our city are the splendid dome and ceiling murals that grace the Ball Performance Hall. They are currently working on two books for the University of Texas Press. UT Press has already published a trade edition of their bird book. The new books will be a biographical survey of their art done in the last thirty years tentatively titled *From Time to Time, the Art of Stuart and Scott Gentling* and a much awaited work of art and archaeological scholarship on the Aztecs, *The One Reed Year*.

Scott and Stuart have lectured throughout Texas and have served on the boards of several of the city's cultural institutions. They happen to be among the very few living artists to have been honored with a major exhibit at the Kimbell Art Museum. They have just closed a very successful exhibit and symposium on their Aztec project in Lubbock sponsored by Texas Tech University. The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History owns all of the original Gentling bird paintings from *Of Birds and Texas*. The Gentlings in fact may be the only artists ever to have had art displayed in all of Fort Worth's major museums.

CURRENT COUNT

Here are some current data on East Texas fern allies, ferns, gymnosperms, and monocots as they now stand.

Total number of species: 1050
Total number of genera: 289
Total number of families: 67

Largest family: Poaceae (number of species): 406
Total number of introduced species: 180

Have You Seen This Plant?

Tradescantia fluminensis Vell.

Common name: wandering Willy, white flowered wandering Jew

Commelinaceae: Spiderwort Family

This plant, a native of South America, was first described in 1825 by José Vellozo, a Portuguese scientist. Currently it is known from Alabama, California, Florida, Louisiana, Georgia, and Kentucky, according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United State Department of Agriculture. It is also documented for Texas in the following counties: Dallas (*Lehto 25584*, BRIT), San Jacinto (*E. Keith*, SBSC), Nacogdoches (R. George, pers. comm.), Brazos, and Smith (TAES—sheets reported on Digital Flora of Texas Herbarium Specimen Browser (2002), but not seen). This delicate herb is a perennial in the Commelinaceae or Spiderwort family. The plants in the genus *Tradescantia* are often called spiderworts but here this does not apply. The family also contains the dayflowers or widow's tears in the genus *Commelina*, that the family is named after. Most of the *Tradescantias* in East Texas are erect, but *T. fluminensis* is a low growing, creeping plant that roots at the nodes very easily much like many of the plants in the genus *Commelina*.

Do not be fooled by this plant's innocent, white, delicate flower. It is an invader! As the proportion of introduced plants to native plants increases in the U.S. it becomes more and more important to be aware of what we buy and allow to grow in our



photo by R. George

gardens. When Project Assistant Robert George first saw this plant it was growing as a volunteer outside his door in Nacogdoches in 1986. He photographed it extensively because of its aesthetic appeal. His attempts to identify it failed repeatedly since it was in none of the major botanical publications. At the time he tossed it off as some cultivated species of *Tradescantia* and forgot about it. Not until coming to BRIT to work on the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas* did he find out its specific epithet.

In Florida it is a declared invasive weed by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council. There it is a Category I – Invasive, defined as exotics that are altering native plant communities by displacing native species, changing community structures or ecological functions, or hybridizing with natives. Stands can be two feet deep and cover extensive areas. It is also a growing problem in New Zealand where its invasion can be very rapid, resulting in only a canopy of trees and a ground cover of *T. fluminensis*. Let's make sure that wandering Willy doesn't wander into our native habitats while it is still a nonexistent problem. If you see this plant report it to your county agricultural extension agent.



Illustrated Flora of East Texas
A collaborative project of BRIT and the
Austin College Center for Environmental Studies

<http://www.easttexasflora.org>



Below are the individuals and organizations who have made donations to the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas* Project since the last newsletter. Their generous support helps pave the way to the completion of this project.

Amon G. Carter Foundation
Sara E. Beckelman
Tony Bosworth
Logan & Eleanor Damewood
The Discovery Fund
Carolyn Fannon
Mr. & Mrs. Heinz Gaylord
Stuart & Scott Gentling
Verne E. Grant
Converse Griffith
Mrs. Jane Harakal
Pat & Tom Harrison-in honor of
William D. and Barbara Draber
Mr. B.F. Hicks
Mr. & Mrs. Robert G. Hill
W.B. Holleman
Jim & Yonie Hudson-in memory of
Georgia Ella Moore
Gordon Hultmark-in memory of Sarah Hultmark

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Mary H. Pritchett
Howard Rector
Mike Sandlin
Carl Schoenfeld
Dee Steer
Dora Sylvester
Temple-Inland Foundation
Twin City Garden Club (Winston-Salem, NC)
Margaret J. White

If you have any information, suggestions, or questions for the East Texas Project--

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*Herbaria of SMU, BRIT and VDB
Lloyd Shinnners' Collection in Systemic Botany*

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