



# DCLS NEWS

NUMBER 59

APRIL, 2005

The Dallas  
County  
Lepidopterists'  
Society  
Est. 1995

Purpose:  
To provide a  
forum where  
people may  
gather who  
share an  
interest in  
butterflies  
and  
moths,  
whether that  
interest takes  
the form of  
collecting,  
gardening,  
photography,  
study or  
casual  
observation.  
Membership is  
free.

## Next DCLS Meeting: Saturday, April 9th

The next meeting of the Dallas County Lepidopterists' Society will be this coming Saturday, April 9th at **12:00 Noon**. **Please make note of the later time!** This is our annual trip to the LBJ Grasslands in Wise County, just north of Decatur, Texas. We will meet underneath the overpass of Hwy 380 at the intersection with FM 730 and then caravan to the location eight miles north of Decatur.

To get to the meeting place from Dallas, take I-35 north to Denton. In Denton, take Hwy 380 to Decatur. When you get to Decatur take the FM 730 exit.

By meeting later the temperature will be warmer and more things should be on the wing. There are a number of spring species that we are hoping to find, including Olympia Marble (*Euchloe olympia*), Falcate Orangetip (*Anthocharis midea*), and the Yucca Giant Skipper (*Megathymus yuccae*)

Be sure to bring plenty of water. Chiggers and mosquitoes shouldn't be an issue this early in the year. Make sure you make any required "pit-stop" before the meeting as there are no restroom facilities at the location.

As always, if there is any doubt about the weather canceling the trip, be sure to check the DCLS website that morning for any updates, or your email.

## DCLS T-Shirts Available Soon

For numerous years members have been asking for DCLS t-shirts and it looks as if it is at last about to become a reality. DCLS member Ty Phillips is spearheading the project and has several designs in the works. Quotes estimate the price for the



Preliminary design of  
DCLS T-shirt

t-shirts will be about \$15-20. We will probably offer two colors and we'll begin to take orders soon. Hopefully these will be available sometime by late spring or early summer.

Watch the website and future newsletters and emails for details.

# The Butterfly Garden

by Tina Dombrowski, Director of Horticulture, Texas Discovery Gardens

## Agarito – A Shrub for All Seasons

Found throughout much of Texas and into New Mexico, Arizona and Mexico, Agarito (*Berberis trifoliata*) is an exceptional choice for the landscape. Used as a specimen plant or grouped as a hedge, Agarito is a drought tolerant evergreen growing from 6' to 8' in height, and 6' in width. Relatively slow growing, Agarito should be planted in full sun. This shrub is not fussy about soil type as long as the soil and site are well drained, Agarito provides fragrant spring blooms, attractive and edible summer fruit, and blue-green foliage throughout the year. The masses of golden flowers attract honeybees and hairstreak butterflies in particular, but there is always an assortment of winged visitors in the blooms.

The fruit is relished by many species of birds, especially Mockingbirds. It is not unusual to see visitors to the garden tasting the berries, which can be used to make jelly or wine. The abundant, juicy fruit is small, filled with minute seeds, and quite a challenge to harvest from the protection of the spiny leaves. This thorny nature protects the plant from over browsing mammals and provides shelter for birds and small animals. A hedge of Agarito would certainly discourage the unwary trespasser.

There are medical and ethnobotanical properties to this plant. A yellow dye is made from the wood and roots. The alkaloid berberine, extracted from the roots, was used by pioneers to alleviate toothaches and for treating skin lesions.

Agarito is usually available in the retail nursery trade, especially from nurseries specializing in

Texas native plants. It can be propagated from cold stratified seed; the seed requires a length of cold temperatures before germinating. Once there is an Agarito in the landscape nearby, the birds assist in propagation and dispersal. These small bird-assisted seedlings are easy to transplant into a container to grow on, or simply planted in a more desirable location.

With so many plants competing in their springtime floral display, Agarito is one native shrub providing nectar for butterflies and bees in spring, fruit and shelter for birds, and landscape interest to the gardener throughout the seasons.

### Butterfly Gardening On DCLS Website

Be sure to check out the relatively new **Butterfly Gardening** section on the **Dallas County Lepidopterists' Society** website.

Even though this area is still “under construction” the Host Plant area has been completed. Host plants can be searched for three different ways: by the butterfly species, by the common name of the plant, or by the botanical name. Photos of the plants will be added throughout the year to help add to the value of this resource.

Work on the Nectar Plant section has begun and should be posted within the coming weeks.

## William Howe at the Heard Natural Science Museum

Noted artist and lepidopterist William Howe will be attending the opening of a new exhibit at the Heard Natural Science Museum in McKinney.

Mr. Howe, whose 1975 volume “The Butterflies of North America,” is still considered by many to be **the** book on butterflies for North America, will be at the Heard on Saturday,

April 9th from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to help kick-off the showing of 24 of his original paintings.

Howe’s incredibly detailed artwork not only illustrated all 97 plates in the 1975 work, but he also wrote and illustrated another book—“Our Butterflies and Moths” in 1963. He often has copies of this earlier book

for sale at his speaking engagements and if it’s not in your library now you should try to get one. This earlier book is written in a more anecdotal manner than the first and is full of fascinating and useful information about our Lepidoptera.

For more information call the Heard at 972-562-5566 or visit:

<http://www.heardmuseum.org/>

## Butterfly “Events” at the Texas Discovery Gardens

With bulldozers in the conservatory, the Texas Discovery Gardens, located in Fair Park, is well on its way toward the goal of having a year-round live butterfly exhibit and insectarium. Even though construction is in full-swing, programs continue and there are several upcoming events that will have particular interest to the butterfly aficionado.

For the eleventh year, Butterfly Gardening workshops will be held in May, with four different days from which to choose. May

5, 7, 11, or 12th., from 9:00 a.m.—12:00 noon. Three hour workshop on either day features lectures on plants and butterflies, a walk in the gardens to see and identify both, handouts to take home with you, as well as a flat of unusual host and nectar plants to get you started. Registration required. Fee: \$45 to non-TDG members, various discounts to TDG members. Call 214-428-7476.

Then on June 4th, the third annual Butterfly Plant Sale will take place in the TDG greenhouse parking lot at 10:00 a.m.. This is an excellent

opportunity to purchase lots of butterfly host and nectar plants, many of which are very difficult to find anywhere else.



To learn more about butterfly gardening attend one of the four butterfly gardening classes being offered at Texas Discovery Gardens.