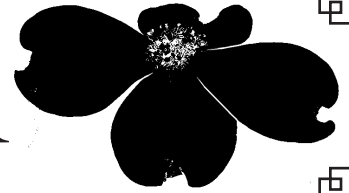


# ILLUSTRATED FLORA OF EAST TEXAS NEWSLETTER

An Illustrated Texas Floras Project ♦ Volume 7, Number 1, October 2007



## State of the Flora



It's hard to believe that volume one of the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas* has been on the shelves for over a year. Though it's late in coming, let me say, officially for all involved in the project, that we appreciate all your support—both moral and monetary. Volume one was met with an enthusiasm that was well worth all the work that went into it.

Of course, in reality, work on volume two had begun even before volume one was sitting on our loading dock. Volume two will cover about the first half of the dicots (~1,300 species) alphabetically by family from the Acanthaceae (Wild Petunia Family) through the Fabaceae (Bean Family). Of note, this includes such familiar groups as the hollies, sumacs, milkweeds, sunflowers (a huge family), mustards, morning glories, spurge (euphorbs), and of course the beans (another giant family).

Though volume two will deal with about 250 more species than did volume one, we expect the book itself to be a little lighter—probably a relief, physically, to those of you who own volume one. There are at least two reasons for a lighter volume two. Volume two will have no introduction (to speak of), since this was fully addressed in volume one, and volume two will have considerably fewer appendices than found in volume one (which had 26!).

Both volumes two and three will otherwise follow the same format as volume one. You can expect every species to be illustrated with a line drawing and county distribution maps for almost all species. Both will be illustrated with an ample color photo section toward the front, as have all volumes produced by the Illustrated Texas Floras Project.

## Progress to Date

Most of the plant line drawings for volume two have been scanned and edited. The first drafts of several families have been written: Acanthaceae (Wild Petunia Family), Anacardiaceae (Sumac or Cashew Family—includes poison ivy), Annonaceae (Custard-Apple Family), Cactaceae (Yeah, that's the cacti), Dipsacaceae (Teasel Family), Droseraceae (Sundew Family), Ebenaceae (Ebony Family), Elaeagnaceae (Oleaster Family), and Elatinaceae (Waterwort Family).

Families currently in progress include: Amaranthaceae (Amaranth or Pigweed Family), Brassicaceae (Mustard Family), and Caryophyllaceae (Pink or Carnation Family). Much to the relief of senior author George Diggs, BRIT researcher, Guy Nesom, will contribute the treatment of the Sunflower Family. Guy is well versed in this large and contentious family—a family that at present numbers nearly 400 species and many varieties in East Texas. This works out to nearly 30 percent of the species included in the volume! Much of the rough draft on the Sunflower Family has been done.

Volume three will pick up with the Fagaceae (Oak Family) and end with the Zygophyllaceae (Caltrop Family) and will be the smaller “half” of the two dicot volumes.

Now, my guess is you're all wondering when volume two will be out. At this point in time we are projecting volume two on the shelves sometime in 2010.

## Call for Photos

At this time we'd like to send out a call for color photos for volume two. These would be photos from the families in the volume: Acanthaceae—Fabaceae. If you are interested in offering your photos there's one thing you need to be aware of. If your photo is used and it's a 35 mm slide, the scanning process involves removing the positive film from the cardboard or plastic mount. In the case of cardboard mounts a slit is cut along the long side to remove the film. After scanning, the film is returned to the mount and the slit is only taped shut. Additionally, we usually keep the photos until the book is out in case they are needed for some reason. If you like, you can send a high quality dupe if that's practical for you. If you have digital images, they can be mailed to us on a CD. Generally, digital images need to be in tiff or JPEG format at 300 d.p.i. at 3 by 5 inches or better. If you want some idea of what we're looking for and you don't have access to an *East Texas Flora* or *North Central Texas Flora* they are both on line at [www.easttexasflora.org](http://www.easttexasflora.org).

For more information and a list of desired species contact: Robert George at [rgeorge@brit.org](mailto:rgeorge@brit.org), phone: 817-332-4441 ext. 11, or BRIT, 509 Pecan Street, Ste. 101, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4068.

## Illustrated Flora of East Texas Causes a Stir in Nacogdoches



*George Diggs talks with conference participant*

The *Illustrated Flora of East Texas, Volume One* made its debut in May of 2006 at the Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference in Nacogdoches, the heart of the Texas pineywoods.

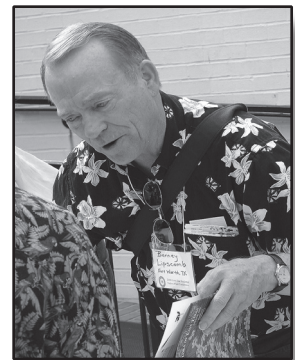
As our van approached the Forest Research Institute on the Stephen F. Austin State University campus in Nacogdoches we noticed increasing activity in the milling crowd. They were trying to tell where we might set up. As we emerged and began to unload our cargo, people anxiously gathered and began to line up at our reserved table. We wrestled our limited number of books out of the van and began to extricate the newly delivered volumes and free them from their cellophane. At times, I feared fisticuffs might break out as participants vied for the limited number of books, but the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas* made its debut on the S. F. A. campus without the necessity of Campus Police. Its exact official publication date would be recorded as that date, May 26, 2006.

Why all the excitement? Even though the eastern third of the state is one of the more botanically rich areas for its size, there's no recent publication providing comprehensive plant information. Now, BRIT had delivered on a promise to do just that for the people of East Texas and nature lovers all over the state.

The *Illustrated Flora of East Texas, Volume One*, is the first of three volumes detailing plants in the eastern part of the state. It supplies information on a third of the plants (more than 1,000). It's the second publication of the encompassing BRIT/Austin College program known as the Illustrated Texas Floras Project.

It's goal is to provide comprehensive, accurate information about all plants in the different regions of Texas. The kicker here is that the books are written to inform, educate, and serve the amateur devotee, student, and the professional botanist. This includes: plant scientific name, common name, plant description, plant distribution, uses, toxicity, and a host of general interest jewels. Plus, the authors have written it all with as little scientific jargon as possible. To ease the use of necessary jargon, a concise illustrated glossary is included. But most of all, it's the fact that there's a line drawing for every species in the book that makes it so accessible to the layperson.

Now it's time to get that second volume out!



*Barney Lipscomb signing books*

Speaking of Volume Two, thanks to all those who have donated since Volume One was published. Your continued support for Volume Two is appreciated.

**Mary S. Blackwell  
Sonnia and Bob Hill**

**David and Pat Lewis  
Shirley Lusk  
Dora Sylvester**

**Native Plant Society of Texas-  
Trinity Forks Chapter**

Robert George-Editor Contacts: 509 Pecan St., Fort Worth, TX 76102; Phone: 817.332.4441 ext.11  
rgeorge@brit.org



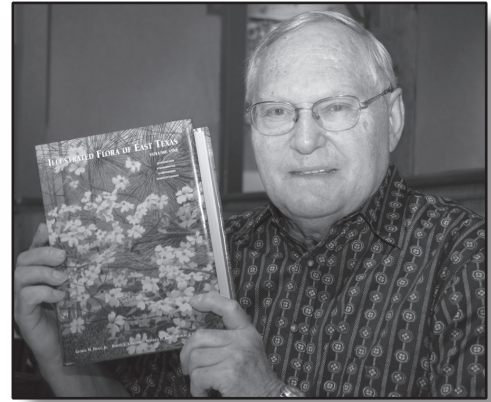
Thanks to David Gibson of Dallas for hosting a book signing at his home (seen at left with co-hosts Susan Roberts, left, and Sue John, right). Thanks also to Will and Joy Crenshaw of Beaumont for the book signing they hosted (Joy seen at right with Barney).



## BRIT and SFA Biology Department Honor Elray Nixon

On a Friday evening late last March folks from all around the state gathered at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches. They all had at least one thing in common—great respect for Dr. Elray Nixon. It was an event organized by the SFA Biology Department and Chairman Dennis Gravatt and the East Texas Project team.

The purpose was to honor Dr. Nixon as the dedicatee of the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas, Volume One*. Everyone was there. Authors, George Diggs, Barney Lipscomb, (Monique Reed, in spirit), and Bob O’Kennon, were there to sign copies of the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas* as, of course, was Dr. Nixon. There were close to 50 people in attendance. Many former students, including Elray’s first graduate student who came all the way from Brownsville in deeeep (sic) South Texas, were on hand. Also present were a great number of current and



Dr. Nixon with the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas*

retired biology faculty along with numerous Texas botanists both vocational and avocational. After some brief remarks in one of the SFA lecture halls everyone retired to the cozy freshman lab where refreshments were served and books signed.

It was like homecoming for East Texas botany! And Elray was the Homecoming King. Bruce Cunningham, illustrator for the Nixon authored *Trees Shrubs and Woody Vines of East Texas*, was also on hand with that book in tow. Bruce was signing his books and Elray was on double autographing duty between his own book on East Texas and the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas*. It was great to see so many present to honor Elray and show that the science of botany was alive and well. Old friends got reacquainted, shared old times, and generally talked botany. Young botanists and students



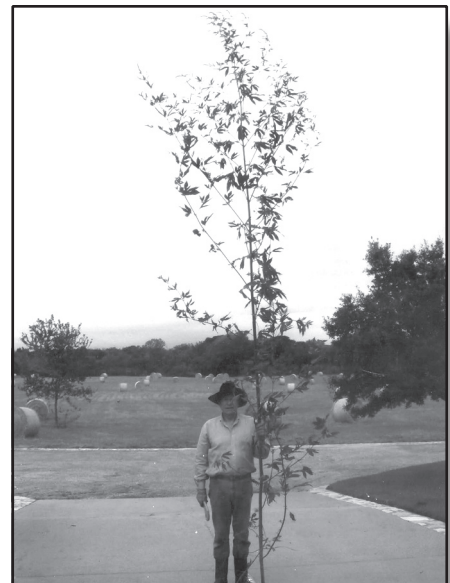
Barney Lipscomb (center) with Drs. Will Godwin (left) and Dennis Gravatt of the SFA Biology Department

had a chance to meet more seasoned active botanists and “get in the loop.” After a flurry of autographing activity, the party settled down to a pleasant low hum and Elray had a chance to visit with friends and colleagues he hadn’t seen in years. After over two hours of festivities the celebration finally shut down.



### Giant Ragweed!

The giant ragweed at right was “collected” on September 18, 2007 in Johnson County. It measured in at about 19 feet tall. In the photo at left is Fort Worth resident Charles Webb, who is 6 feet 1 inch tall. He collected the giant on his property ~four miles northeast of Cleburne.



### Happy Birthday BRIT!!

The Botanical Research Institute of Texas celebrated its 20th Anniversary on October 2nd. CONGRATULATIONS!

## Guy Nesom to Contribute Sunflower Family for Volume Two

Guy first strolled into the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) in 2001. He's a seasoned botanist with a penchant for the Sunflower Family, though he often strays into other taxonomic territory. He lends BRIT a great deal of credibility in the world of botany for his copious and collegial publication reputation. One of his Sunflower Family forays was an infatuation with a forgettable and usually overlooked group called the cudweeds (genus: *Gamochaeta*). We've all probably stepped on at least one at some time in our life. They're small grey-green herbs with minute flowerheads.

While rummaging through *Gamochaeta* collections in the herbarium (otherwise known as curating), Guy observed some errant identifications—plants that just didn't quite match the ID given by the collector. He realized that some of these plants weren't "supposed" to be in the U.S., at least according to his ID. They were plants that supposedly were only in Mexico or South America. These misidentified plants were hiding (at least under the noses of some botanists) under the guise of more commonly known species in the U.S. Guy found the "new" species misidentified in the collections of several herbaria. But unlike some botanists that confine themselves to the solace of the herbarium, Dr. Nesom took an extended meandering trek through the southeast. What he found was that these "new" *Gamochaetas* were all over the southeast

and had been collected as early as the 1940s but misidentified. Thus, he discovered a species that was new to East Texas and the U.S.

Similarly, Dr. Nesom has discovered two species of *Gamochaeta* new to science: *Gamochaeta argyrinea* and *Gamochaeta chionesthes*. In much the same manner, while rummaging through herbarium specimens, he found some identifications were wrong but in this case the plants' appearance fit no known species. These too, he found were distributed widely in the southeastern U.S. with one spreading into East Texas. Hence, these scientific discoveries were, at least initially, mined from the herbarium. No doubt, many more await discovery. And only one tool required—the keen observation of a scientist.

So we are glad to have just such a scientist on our team; a scientist with the requisite qualifications and desire to author the largest plant group in volume two: the Sunflower Family.



*Dr. Guy Nesom in the herbarium*



BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS  
509 Pecan Street, Suite 101  
Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060 USA

Herbaria of SMU, BRIT and VDB  
Lloyd Shinnery Collection in Systematic Botany