

IN MEMORIAM:

SHIRLEY CAILLET DIETERICH LUSK (24 MAY 1925–29 APRIL 2017)

Mary Curry

106 Private Road 2638
Decatur, Texas 76234, U.S.A.
mac@lookingout.net
compiler and contributor

Alan Lusk

3752 Alta Vista Ln.
Dallas, Texas 74229, U.S.A.
alusk@flash.net
compiler and contributor

Shirley Dieterich was born in El Paso, Texas, on May 24, 1925 to Arthur F. Dieterich, Sr. and Louise Caillet. Shirley passed away on April 29, 2017, at the age of 91 years.

Her family moved to Dallas, Texas, in 1928 and established Hermosa Farms Dairy at the SW corner of Midway Rd and Forest Lane. She attended Walnut Hill Elementary School and was valedictorian of the 1942 graduating class of Vickery-Hillcrest High School. She graduated from the University of Oklahoma, Norman, in 1946 with a BS degree in chemistry.

After working several years for the Agricultural Extension Service lab in College Station and the lab at Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, she married Dr. Clu Flu Lusk at the family's dairy farm in Grayson County, Texas, on June 17, 1950.

After a year each in Shreveport, LA; Pineville, LA; and Weimar, TX, the family settled in Gainesville, Texas in 1953. The 50s through 80s were devoted to raising her family and supporting the children's Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and band activities. Shirley was an Elder in the Presbyterian Church, an active member of First Presbyterian Church in Gainesville, and was a government meeting observer for the local League of Women Voters.

The great-great niece of botanist Julien Reverchon and the niece of Louisiana iris advocate Marie Caillet, Shirley has followed their footsteps working for the identification and preservation of Texas native plants. In the 1990s she embarked on a self-study of botany, was a founding member of the Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) and contributed to the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT). Among her many projects was the plant list she composed for Cooke and Montague Counties, collection of plant species from these counties for the BRIT Herbarium, and plant identification and location expertise for farmers/ranchers and researchers including contributing to the book *North Central Texas Wildflowers*. In October 2012 Shirley received the NPSOT Charles Leonard Weddle Memorial Award for lifetime achievement in the field of Texas native plants. She received this award for volunteering, identifying, collecting and teaching about the native plants of the north Texas region. She was a Master Naturalist and a member of the Trinity Forks Chapter of NPSOT.



Shirley Lusk in 1944.



Shirley Lusk in 1948.

Shirley was preceded in death by her parents and her former husband, Dr. Lusk. She is survived by her sister, Nancy Kurrus (Fred) and her brother, A.F. "Buddy" Dieterich, Jr. (Nancy). She is also survived by her five children: Fred Lusk (Barbara), Alan Lusk (Terry), Jane Sears (Dwight), John Lusk (Katherine), and Claire Morris (Mike). Surviving grandchildren are Jennifer Mir, David Lusk, Patrick Lusk, Catherine Lusk, Kevin Sears, Jason Sears, Gus Mask, Elena Lusk, Kristen Morris and Elissa Morris. Great grandchildren are Tanya Mir, Ahmed Mir, Arthur Sears and Lily Ernst-Mask.

Shirley moved to Denton in 2000 and was a member of Trinity Presbyterian Church there. A memorial service was held at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 2200 N Bell Ave, Denton, Texas 76209 on Friday, May 19, 2017 at PM, the Rev. Craig Hunter officiating. A reception at the church followed.

Memorials may be made to Trinity Presbyterian Church, the Native Plant Society of Texas at PO Box 3017, Fredericksburg, Texas 78624-1929, or the Thomsen Foundation at 4528 County Rd 398, Decatur, Texas 76234. Condolences may be offered at www.dentonfuneralhome.net.

PERSONAL TRIBUTES TO SHIRLEY LUSK

Dedication to Native Plants.—Shirley Lusk is a Founding Member of the Native Plant Society of Texas, attending the first meeting at Texas Woman's University (TWU) of Denton in April 1981, which was first known as Wildflower Days. She is one of our state's greatest native plant supporters!

Shirley's dedication to native plants goes back much further. As a small girl growing up on a dairy farm in north Dallas, she would explore the "hay meadow" and collect wildflowers to decorate the dinner table. After raising five children in Gainesville, Texas in Cooke County, she had time to begin studying the native plants and wildflowers of the area. She began learning the taxonomy of native plants by attending workshops at Greenhill's Sanctuary in Dallas and at Carrol Abbot's session at TWU in Denton. From attending Elderhostel classes in the 1990s, she learned how to use a binomial key to identify new plants herself with a dissecting microscope. Armed with this knowledge and numerous reference manuals, Shirley set out on her journey to identify all the native plants in Cooke and Montague counties. Today, she is a walking encyclopedia of native plant information for the North Texas area, providing scientific as well as common names for any specimen she comes across. A self-educated plant botanist, Shirley has dedicated herself to the study and promotion of Texas native plants for over 30 years.

As the great, great niece of botanist Julien Reverchon (1837–1905; Dallas first botanist), Shirley has followed in his footsteps working for the identification and preservation of Texas native plants. Shirley possesses a true heart and dedication for this task, all performed as a volunteer.

Shirley's collections work began at the herbarium at Southern Methodist University (SMU) of Dallas and followed this herbarium to the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) when they acquired it in 1987. She has collected and documented numerous specimens from Denton, Wise, Cooke, Montague and other North Texas counties for BRIT to provide scientific study of native plant species. Several of the plants she has found in North Texas were not previously known to grow there, and she has been part of the process of getting new discoveries identified for several species including *Liatris aestivalis* on properties in Montague and Cooke counties. She also monitors many species on both public and private lands, even working with Texas State Parks and Texas Department of Transportation to preserve special plants that would most likely be lost due to untimely mowing.

Shirley was a contributor to the first fully illustrated flora for a region of Texas with the *Shinners & Mahler's Illustrated Flora of North Central Texas* as well as the *Illustrated Flora of East Texas*. (For example see



Shirley Lusk and family at NPSOT (2012) after receiving the Weddle Memorial Award for lifetime achievement in the field of Texas native plants.

page 384 in *Flora of North Central Texas* where she is cited with discovery of *Liatrix pycnostachya* in several locations; also see page 1492 in “literature cited” for her recognition.). She also helped raise funds for the Illustrated Texas Flora’s projects. Shirley was a longtime subscriber to *Sida, Contributions to Botany* and to the *Journal for the Botanical Research Institute of Texas*.

Shirley was a long-time Master Naturalist who has kept up continuing education class to continue her campaign for native plants. As stated below by someone who is a professional in this field, there are numerous people in North Texas who look up to Shirley as their guide to learning about and identifying native plants. She is our MENTOR. Please read on:

It can be definitively stated that, “Shirley Lusk is the single most influential plant authority in North Central Texas.” She is known extremely well as the “wildflower lady” and is the “go to person” if anyone needs to identify a native plant in North Central Texas. She has an outstanding knowledge of the region. Shirley can “rattle off” the names of practically every pig-trail in North Texas and knows where and by her calendar when every plant will be in bloom along the pig-trails. Shirley has an understanding of the land as well as the plants. She can be driving down the road and by looking out the window, know what plants should and probably are growing in the area. Shirley understands the importance of good stewardship, respectful relationships with property owners and the value of documentation of plants for our future.

Shirley has taught so many, so much, about native plants and her footsteps are certainly worthy of following. During each semester, I tell students a Shirley story about how a person’s passion of plants and the land can lead to long-term, beneficial knowledge in the scientific world. Shirley Lusk is a mentor and a great friend to all of us in North Central Texas who merely strive to understand our natives as well as Shirley.” Lisa Bellows, Ph.D, Director of Research and Education, Thomsen Foundation, Chair of Science and Math Initiatives, North Central Texas College (NCTC).

I’ve known Shirley Lusk since I joined Trinity Forks and NPSOT in the early 90’s. Through many field trips I learned that Shirley was the go-to person if I saw something I didn’t know. My call for “Shirleeeee” still sticks in my head. Through the years she shared with me various tips on identification of species. One particular one was about the thicket plums and bloom times of the species *angustifolia* and *gracilis*. As she would share her tips, I would write them in the margins of my *Flora of North Central Texas*. I’m so glad I listened to her and wrote these things down. Shirley was a valuable person to spend time with on any field trip, from the multi-day trips we did as a chapter to the monthly birding group outings. I also learned that if Shirley felt strongly about something, like a dreaded nonnative invasive, to listen and take heed. I’ll never forget when I walked into a meeting and showed her a lavender flower that ended up being *Scabiosa*. Her opinions left big impressions on me and I adopted them.

But beyond her mentorship in my life, Shirley was a dear friend. She always cared about me, asked about my family, sent birthday cards. After so many years in NPSOT I have come to think of many of our chapter members as family. And Shirley was at the top of that. I miss her so much.

—Kathy Saucier, *Native Plant Society of Texas*

Memorial Remembrance on May 19, 2017.—When I was asked by Shirley’s family to share her botanical wildflower story, I was honored. I was also apprehensive because what can you possibly say about a lady who guided you, mentored you and was absolutely one of your best friends. The following is a copy of the message with a few anecdotal comments in italics:

Shirley Lusk broke for wildflowers—her bumper sticker said so.

Shirley always had an “I Break for Wildflowers” bumper sticker on her Fords. She told me once that the bumper sticker informed anyone thinking she was having car trouble or other concern for being parked on the roadway that she was indeed doing her job and to leave her alone.

A few of her favorites were shooting star, bluebell, trout lily, funnel lily, and a particular gay feather which she and Hugh Garnett identified in Montague County. Those were some of her favorites and she made it a point to always be in the field to see them when they bloomed. I had to honor her by mentioning the gay feather because it was a big deal to her. Someone else took the credit for that one and she died a bit angry about it. I hope my saying it publically helped her resolve just a little bit.

And these are but a few that come to mind for which she broke. These wildflowers are all special, delightful and rare to find just as Shirley was special, a delight to know and for me and many of you...one of those rare friends you can call one of your favorites almost from the moment of introduction.

A few blue moons ago, I was teaching botany labs behind Dr. Sharon Gaston and this very persistent lady kept coming by the college to see Sharon and by happenstance captured me instead and insisted that I see some special weed and further insisted that I travel to some remote location down a dusty gravel road to some strangers property and take a look at this rare beauty in person. I'm not sure if it was her persistence or my curiosity that inspired me to take my first trek with Shirley but one spring day I agreed. I got in her Ford (you know she always preferred to drive).

So true. She had some car sickness issues but I always thought it was a little on the "I want to be in control" side of things. She also didn't really like how most people drove—too slow.

She always bought her Fords at Klement in Muenster. John Yosten was HER salesman and John loved Shirley. John also took great care of my mom. I buy Fords from John and will as long as I buy Fords and he sells them. I don't shop around, I just buy Fords from a man who took care of Shirley Lusk and my mother.

Off we went to the eastern part of Cooke County, dust flying behind us on a gravel road. She came to a sudden stop at the end of a bridge, we got out, climbed down the steep, sandy slope of a creek that had been littered with several years of trash and there it was—maiden hair fern in the dripping moisture of a spring. Ok, so I'd ridden across half of Cooke County, down gravel roads to see maiden hair fern. I'd seen maiden hair fern in creeks all of my life. And then she explained—the county was proposing a road construction project that would be detrimental to the spring and ultimately the plant community in the area.

It was on the ride back to town that Shirley Lusk inspired my mind to unfurl like the maturing fiddlehead of a fern.

Her passion and tenacity were for the ground beneath our own feet—not a rain forest or lands far away but for the rich, biological diversity of North Texas—and Shirley saw this not only worthy of her time but a cause beaconing to be advocated. And what a champion she was for our native plants!

Shirley truly changed my life. My B.S. degree is in molecular biology and my interest in botany, especially wildflowers was fairly low until I got to know Shirley. I grew up in North Texas and until Shirley made me actually see and appreciate the local area, I was blind and callous about how special our region is and how important it is ecologically. I was working on my master's degree when I met Shirley and I changed my thesis topic to a study of *Datura* as a result of Shirley. She introduced me to BRIT where I did a lot of library research. Ultimately, Tommy Thomsen found me as a result of that thesis and I landed another life-changing opportunity – Director of Thomsen Foundation. To take all this one step further, I earned a Ph.D. at TCU and studied under Dr. Tony Burgess. Dr. Burgess told me on the day that I passed my oral exams that my "job" was to be an ecological changing force in my local region – my immediate thought when he uttered those words to me was that I was to grow up and become Shirley Lusk.—I'll keep trying.

Shirley's passion for preservation of rare or unusual plants was infectious. She orchestrated land/plant sanctuaries with incredible grace. She would hear about a plant or a big tree, arrange for a visit through the land manager or property owner, bring the troops together and at the end of the day, everyone involved knew that there was something special to document, protect and share with others.

Once a property owner or manager met Miss Lusk and saw what they had on their land, they often became passionate about protecting the area of interest and became prideful in sharing stories of their special treasure going on and on to their neighbors and to their families about how Miss Lusk had been to their place and they had something of importance on their land. That might sound small but the long-term impact of habitat preservation was a powerful gift that Shirley Lusk bestowed on generations and for generations.

Absolutely! I have crossed paths with numerous farmers and rancher who have the greatest admiration for Mrs. Lusk. I used "Mrs." because that's what those all those kind of guys called her. Pete Dunn always said it, "Mizzrezz Lusk."

A botanical wizard; Shirley was our "go to" authority on plant identification. I'd call her up (as I'm sure many of you did from time to time) and describe something I had found.

She also called me sometimes and admittedly, I sometimes did not answer and called her back when I had plenty of time. It was my fault as much as hers because we talked forever when we got on the phone. The last time was just a few days before she passed. I am so thankful I answered. It was a differed call that day. I was on my drive home from Thomsen and I pulled over to the side of the road. She explained that she had several health issues going on and she was to see the doctor again soon. As always, she asked about Phil and Lyle and asked about Lyle's son and wife. I told her they were having another baby and she congratulated our family. She told me how far apart her kids were born and it was all about not feeling very well and our families ... but it was not about wildflowers. Sadly, I knew it would not be long.

Usually she would quickly call it by scientific name, tell me how many times the scientific name had been changed and where I would find it in Correll and Johnson as well as what page it was on in the Flora and 6 places it could be found growing in North Texas and then we would have a discussion on lumpers and splitters of plant identification.

On rare occasions, I stumped Shirley—well, I so poorly described a plant that she had to accompany me to the field to see the plant for identification. Whether an unusual plant was identified or not, Shirley was supportive of the cause. One of the greatest gifts Shirley taught many of us was that there are no disappointments in a wildflower investigation.

I am so thankful for Mary Curry for taking her in the field after she was unable to drive. I was most negligent. I went and picked her up a year or so ago and drove her out to Thomsen and Dixon. I kick myself for not doing it more.

Regardless of whether the shooting stars were still in rosette and there were no beautiful magenta blooms to see, you were in the field and something wonderful, inspiring and of interest was along the path. Even if the plant you found was nothing more than something common that you had not yet identified, there was value in learning a new plant name and her time and knowledge was always eagerly shared.

Shirley was not merely a valuable treasure to the local land owner, and struggling college professor, Shirley was a frequent visitor of BRIT, contributing numerous specimens to their internationally recognized collection, further advocating the value of plant diversity for the North Texas region.

Shirley was well-respected throughout the native plant community adding valuable insight and knowledge to plant organizations, research, publications and was honored with numerous awards recognizing her outstanding work in the native plant world.

With each tap on our brakes in response to a sighting of a wildflower, we will remember Shirley. Digging through the pages of reference manuals when we could have just called her on the phone we will remember Shirley.

To you, Mary, may all your backroad treks be riddled with memories of Shirley and may her knowledge live forever through you. To the family of Shirley Lusk, you were blessed with a gem. On behalf of all of us with a passion for native plants, our lives are much richer for having known Shirley, we share the sadness of your loss and we thank you sharing Shirley with us.

Although I shed some “Shirley Memory” tears on my keyboard while preparing to speak at her memorial service, I was honored to have been asked and proud to have been able to share some thoughts with all in attendance. Native plants lost a great ally and I lost one of my best friends.

—Lisa Bellows, North Central Texas College

Enthusiastic Friend.—I went on a couple of field trips with Shirley and Dorothy Thetford and a couple of others to Montague County. We went to find *Euthamia gymnospermoides* near the western end of its range. It was a lot of fun. She was always so enthusiastic.

—Connie Taylor

Lucky Me.—Shirley always wanted to know what we found when going out. It was a big prize to find something she was excited about. She'd always be happy to tell us about common plants and where she knew more were, but when she got excited about something we found you knew it had to be a good one. I particularly remember an obedient plant that was out of season and the blue mud-plantain on the national grasslands. She was also always eager to catch up with what I was going far afield, whether in Oklahoma or Canada, and was always

very encouraging and kind. She'd let me know what was blooming at home when I was far away and mention what a great time she had with my mother going out to the field. It was a good day when I was lucky enough to get to go out with them and hear Shirley's stories about the plants, the places we were stopping, and stories about her life.

—Claire Curry

Shirley's Yuccas.—I have Shirley yuccas. I have them because sometime more than 15 years ago she came out to my place out in Montague County for a NPSOT field trip. For some reason I vividly remember the two of us on the south side at the bottom of a hill looking at this clump of Arkansas yuccas. I do not remember her comments or if they were actually about another plant next to the yuccas. What struck me most was that here was a ~75 year young plant enthusiast who was able to hike up to the top of the hill with me, a 100 foot plus climb up slippery rocky terrain. I was 25 years younger. I decided that this remarkable lady was my shining star - I wanted to be like her! I have that picture of her on my mind every time I go by those same yuccas - I think they remember her too.

—Jeanne Erickson

Shirley Lusk and BRIT.—Those of us who had the great fortune to know and love Shirley Lusk understood her passion for Texas native plants and more specifically wildflowers. A charter member of the Native Plant Society of Texas, Shirley seemingly knew all of the wildflowers on a first name basis in her backyard which covered Cooke, Montague and surrounding counties. I had the privilege to spend many spring days with her as she introduced me to her many wildflower friends that lived in her backyard.

When she found a new plant or wildflower, she consulted her constant traveling companion, BRIT's *Shiners & Mahler's Illustrated Flora of North Central Texas*, for its identity. She not only knew the names of the plants, but many of the area's land owners. One particular landowner's property became her favorite place in the North Texas landscape, Hugh Garnett's Preserve in Montague County. Every excursion into the area included a visit to the Preserve. I think she considered this place to be her "heaven on earth" site. It is a peaceful place where both wildflowers and wildlife abound.

If I were asked to name her favorite wildflower, I believe it would be the Shooting Star. On one visit to a small remnant of a blackland prairie near Muenster, she handed me a gorgeous specimen to give to my wife. I photographed the cluster of eight blooms on one stem—an image that in my mind represented Shirley Lusk through beauty, action and engagement. When I see the cover of BRIT's masterpiece of the flora of North Texas with its painting of shooting stars, I think of Shirley being the cover girl on her favorite book.

Shirley loved BRIT, its people and its mission. Even late in her life, she volunteered her time to help where she could to promote BRIT's mission. Her love of her family, friends, the Native Plant Society of Texas and wildflowers was unqualified and obvious to all that knew her. We will miss her, and will always be grateful for her making a difference in the world around her.

We always enjoyed a visit from Shirley Lusk though it was only a few times. Marie Caillet was always very welcome as a member of the Caroline Dormon Foundation and special friend of Caroline Dormon through the years.

—Bill Lindemann

A Wildflower Friend and BRIT Supporter.—Shirley, you were a dear friend and supporter of me personally, the SMU herbarium, BRIT, *Sida*/BRIT, the Illustrated Texas Floras project, and of course a real champion for Texas Native Plants. I remember the Wildflower Days celebration at Texas Woman's University in Denton in April 1981. I was there with our mutual friend, Dr. Wm. F. Mahler. Since then I'm forever grateful and fortunate to have had your inspiration, friendship, and support over the years. You gave so much and expected nothing in return. Thank you for all you've done to support *Sida*, JBRIT, SMU, BRIT, the Herbarium and library, and of course for promoting and conserving the Texas flora. You have been a dear friend and supporter. How can I ever forget that you attended my poisonous plant lecture a dozen times or so over the years? Thank you for being an inspiration!

—Barney Lipscomb, Botanical Research Institute of Texas

Caroline Dormon Nature Preserve Friend.—We first met Shirley Lusk when she brought her aunt, Marie Caillet, over to spend the week-end with us at Caroline Dormon's home place, Briarwood. Marie was a longtime friend of Caroline, so had been to visit many times through the years. Saturday afternoon we took Shirley and Marie around on the golf cart to see everything including the log house, the trees, flowers and ended up at the Bay Garden famous for the planted Louisiana Irises growing in this natural low wet area. They were in full bloom, every color of the rainbow. Sunday morning Shirley was up early before sun-up to take pictures of each Louisiana Iris in bloom. It was a very special time and we have never forgotten that visit.

—Richard and Jessie Johnson former curators of Briarwood, the Caroline Dormon Nature Preserve

Shirley was a Wonderful Person and Dear Friend to Me and to So Many Others.—I met Shirley almost thirty years ago through the Native Plant Society of Texas. Shirley didn't just know her native plants she loved them, and was always generous to share her knowledge. She was always the person I asked when I couldn't identify something for myself or someone else. I can't count of the number of times I've said, "ask Shirley." Now I find myself thinking I wish I could ask Shirley. She will always be remembered fondly and greatly missed.

Shirley loved Starbucks frappuccinos and got the little four packs that come in glass bottles and a paper carrying carton. The little bottles worked great for displaying plants since all the containers were alike and the cartons made them easy to transport and store. Shirley and I used the little bottles many times to set up plant displays. I like to remember those times but even more I think of the times Shirley called to say she had more bottles and would bring them to me if had room to keep them. She would bring the bottles to me with the labels removed, washed and neatly stacked in a grocery bag. She was the collector and I was the keeper. I have to smile now when I open the cabinet and see all of them.

The shooting star was Shirley's favorite wildflower. Because it was so special to her, it's special to me. It doesn't grow in the area where I live; so, the only ones I've ever seen growing wild was on a field trip with Shirley when she lead us to a beautiful prairie full of shooting stars. Shirley would always tell me when she was "out in the field" and saw the shooting stars blooming. I'm attaching a couple of photos of a shooting star bloom that Shirley brought to me that I pressed and framed.

I have many memories of Shirley including being with her at her Aunt Marie's, Marie Caillet, to dig up passalong plants or see Marie's lovely Louisiana iris. I remember going with Shirley as a Master Naturalist to collect water samples in a local stream for benthic monitoring and then going to the lab at UNT to use the microscopes to identify the macroinvertebrates. Shirley was much better at using the microscopes than I was. In more recent times after she could no longer drive, I would pick her up to go to Master Naturalist meetings. Even though I told her she could wait inside, she would often be standing on the curb with her walker waiting when I arrived.

Shirley was a very special person that did so much to promote the conservation of Texas native plants. I'm sure everyone that knew her shares my admiration for her. Thank you,

—Marilyn Blanton

My Teacher and Friend.—Shirley was one of the first botanists who took an interest in helping me further my professional education after I joined the staff of the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge in 1993. My supervisor, Wayne Clark, introduced us early on and we spent hours in wild places around North Texas, especially roaming the beautiful prairies in Cooke, Montague, Denton and Wise Counties. Although the responsibilities of my job caused us to drift apart for several years I feel very fortunate to have been able to reconnect and spend a few more hours in the field with her during the last year of her life. Thank you for your kindness and mentorship, Shirley. I miss you very much.

—Suzanne Tuttle

What a Truly Amazing Person Shirley Lusk Was.—I first met Shirley at a Master Naturalist meeting in Denton in 2001. Little did I know then what a dear friend she would become. When I started the bird/nature hikes on the LBJ National Grasslands, Shirley agreed to come along as my plant expert. She came rain or shine or sleet. I was lucky to remember three or four plants from year to year (I was more into birds at the time). She was an

encyclopedia of knowledge: she knew all the plants and interesting tidbits of information about them. Of course, I had no idea what she was talking about, or how to pronounce the scientific names, let alone spell them. She was never too busy to repeat the information about a plant.

Shirley was 86 when I volunteered to drive her in the field so she could monitor her flowers. I had decided to start a book on wildflowers and I knew I could not have picked a better teacher and mentor. Shirley took me to all her special plants. Many were rare but a lot were just spots where she knew a particular plant grew that I wanted to include in the book. She would plan our trips to the field based on what was blooming from her careful notes that she had taken for many years. By the second week in January, we would be out looking for *Cymopterus macrorhizus*. Her knowledge of the plants was wide ranging. She would complain that she could not remember this or that. But one day I asked her if she knew where a *Clematis pitcheri* was located. She thought for a moment and said yes. She went on to say that it had been 25 years since she had been to the spot and it was in Gainesville. Well, we started towards it, but she was getting confused as to the location. I got out the map to help. Roads had been closed and a bridge had been put out of commission so no wonder her confusion. When we finally reached the right area, she pointed out how the fence had been along the road and the building used to be a little grocery store. Then she pointed. Look there, it might still be in that little fence row near the building. I jumped out of the car and there it was!

She gently guided me on the correct way to arrange the book in her opinion. She told me all the reasons that it had to be done in a particular order. Why I should not even consider doing it the way someone else had done. It caused her a lot of consternation about all the plants shifting from one family to another. What was a field botanist to do? All the splitting and lumping, my gosh it was not good for the field botanist. Shirley was a scientist and knew it had to be done; she just did not like it. She tried to keep up with all the changes.

BRIT was also a frequent topic of conversation. It was going through changes too and caused her much angst. She eventually gave up and said she could not worry about it anymore. But she did. We had planned to start going to the brown bag lectures in June. She was looking forward to new knowledge and seeing old and new friends.

Oh how I looked forward to our Thursdays in the field! I told everyone it was Shirley Day. She would tell me how much she enjoyed getting out of the house. When I went out of town, thankfully Bill Freiheit or Jeanne Erickson would step in to drive her. She always thanked me for taking her, but the truth of the matter (as I told her) is that I was so grateful and honored that she allowed me to take her. Even when I could see that she was hurting, she continued on. Nothing was going to stop her from being in the field. I gave her a four-wheeled walker which she enjoyed telling people with a twinkle in her eye that she had a four-wheeler. This helped her get out a little further from the car if the ground was not too rough for a while. When I first started driving her, she said I had to go slow because she got motion sickness. So I drove slowly at first but later as she trusted my driving I did get to go faster. Hey, we had a lot of flowers to see and daylight was burning.

Our Thursday outings started with a phone call on Sunday evenings. She would ask me what flower I still needed for the book. She would plan the route to get there and tell me about other flowers that would be blooming that I should include in the book. Later when Bill Freiheit joined our field days, she would plan for him as well. Bill was collecting seeds and plants for the LLELA nursery he runs. Shirley would call up her contacts so we could get access to whatever plant we needed. When something special was blooming or she thought we should see another of her special places, we would head there. Shirley was prepared. She had a cart filled with the necessities: a cooler filled with her V8, water, Mountain Dew's for her and Bill, and a Coke for me. She made sure she brought along enough potato chips so everyone could have a bag. Her Ford was also filled with everything a botanist would need: snippers, bags for plants or seeds, a cup to bring back live specimens for study or for a friend, a shovel, spray bottle of water (to clean dust off roadside plants), *Wildflowers of the Texas Hill Country*, and the *Flora of North Central Texas*. We would go looking till it was time for a late lunch in St. Jo, Muenster, or Gainesville. After lunch and Bob's Sweet Striped Peppermints, we would continue on the route of the day. If we stopped at the Forestburg Country Store, she was tickled to make sure we all knew about the life-sized cut-out of the three Stooges. Then we headed for home, but almost always having to make one more stop...ice cream. The dairyman's daughter had to have real ice cream; never soft-serve.

Shirley really enjoyed sharing with people. When we would stop at a country convenient store, she would tell them what we were doing. Then she proceeded to ask them if they knew so-and-so and how she had told them about their special wildflowers. She would light up when a new person or old friend came along on Thursday field days so she could share her knowledge and stories. I think it delighted her very much when she was passing the stories to a young person.

I enjoyed listening to her many stories of her life as we drove. One that sticks out is a childhood recollection of her father going to get her mother Trout Lilies for special occasions at the farm in Dallas. Nor did she forget her friends who could not get out anymore or they just needed to enjoy the wildflowers as much she did. We would gather Shooting-stars or Bluebells or Blue Funnel Lilies for friends or to take to a NPSOT meeting. Remembering her friends was one of her many special qualities.

I will always remember as I explore the back roads, this and that spot that Shirley would point out what grew there many years ago. It pained her to see a new fence being put in as it would take out a plant that she knew once grew there. Or the mowers that came and mowed the wildflowers alongside the road before they had gone to seed. She would take her case directly to the county commissioners or the person who actually did the mowing, she told me. Sometimes there was success, sometimes not, but she kept trying.

Wildflowering was in her blood till the day she passed. She was planning our next trip in the field a few days before. Our last day in the field together was a half day trip. She really was not sure she should go, as she was hurting, but she needed to gather and see the Shooting-stars before they finished for the year. Most Thursdays, it was hard to keep the pace with her. I would be totally bushed at the end of the day. After we got back to her apartment that last time, the doctor scolded her for going out. I am so glad now that we made it to the Becker Prairie one more time.

I will always treasure her as one of my dearest friends. She was a gift to North Texas botany and the world. I am deeply saddened by the loss of such a dear friend, but so glad that I got to share in a small way to be a part of her life. I will forever have so much gratitude to her for all her help and guidance for the book and her experiences and wisdom about life. I miss her deeply!

—Mary Curry

Met a New Friend in 2004.—I originally met Shirley at the first Native Plant Society Symposium of Texas (NPSOT) I attended in Longview, October 2004. We talked about bog plants and that I did not know of any bogs in Van Zandt County. She contacted a couple of people she knew in this area and sent me their contact information.

Unfortunately, I did not contact her friend, but I did go to the Arc Ridge Preserve in Ben Wheeler that she had told me about. It had a variety of plant communities, including two bogs, deep-sand-loving plants and many shrubs and trees. Shirley sent me a species list she had compiled in 1993 when Arc Ridge was owned by her friend.

We continued to see each at each NPSOT Symposium. She would call often to keep me up to date with her botanizing and sometimes to tell me about a plant she had seen. In one of those calls she asked me to visit a friend who wanted to have a tree identified. She gave me the address, which was around the corner from my house. I called her contact, drove over and identified a *Crataegus marshallii*, Parsley hawthorn for her friend.

She wanted me to come see the *Dodecatheon meadia*, but since I could not make it, she sent me a few flowers. She was so thoughtful. That was a very special treat for me to see this beautiful plant. A few years later, I went to see her and she spent the day taking me to all her favorite botanical areas to see some unique plants, including the *D. meadia*.

In June 2008 she and her son, Alan, drove down to Anderson County to visit Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area. In spite of living so far from each other we managed to have time together in person or on the phone.

I miss chatting with her and catching up on her weekly trips in the field with her friends.

—Somnia Hill

Wildflowers in Muenster, Texas.—Shirley took me to see incredible and rare roadside wildflowers up Muenster way. The shooting star trip up that way, on another occasion, let me see again the Shooting Stars I remembered seeing rarely in northeast Iowa as a youth. One other rare flower I remember from back then we called Grandpa's Whiskers. I recently looked it up on a Missouri website and found it under the name "Prairie Smoke." I've not found those in Texas.

—Fritz Poppe

A WOMAN OUT STANDING IN THE FIELD.—This phrase embodies my memories of Shirley Lusk. It reflects both her love of field work and her commitment to taxonomic endeavors. I first met her in 1990 when she attended at OSU a week-long Elderhostel titled *Wildflowers of the Midwest*. Her enthusiasm for taxonomy and field work was apparent from the very first day, when we took our first stroll among the spring wildflowers of a prairie near campus. Over the next two decades in subsequent Elderhostels and various wildflower outings, we explored numerous habitats in south-central Oklahoma and north-central Texas.



Dodecatheon meadia. One of Shirley's favorite plants, and one she enjoyed showing to friends in the field. Photo by Marilyn Blanton.



Shirley Lusk in the field with wildflowers in 2009. Photo by Alan Lusk.



Shirley Lusk in 2015. Photo by Alan Lusk.

Shirley was tireless when in the field. Even a blazing mid-summer sun didn't deter her when she was conducting surveys of her beloved prairies in Cooke and Montague Counties. I cried, "Uncle! Enough for today." more than once on our forays. Her work definitely contributed to our knowledge of the flora of north-central Texas.

Shirley had a keen eye for spotting rare species or unusual variation in commonly encountered ones. Her recognition that plants now known as *Liatris aestivalis* represented a species new to science and her tenacity in getting taxonomists to formally describe it reflects her taxonomic ability, despite her disclaimers of not being a taxonomist.

I was most fortunate to have had Shirley enroll in that first Elderhostel. By her presence, she made a contribution to both it and the following ones. By knowing her, I became a better teacher and taxonomist.

—Ronald J. Tyrl, Professor Emeritus of Botany, Oklahoma State University

Shirley's ashes were spread per her wish at the Garnett Preserve in Montague County. Her family and some of her wildflower friends gathered as her ashes were dispersed on top the mesa on one of her favorite prairies.