

TEXAS PRAIRIE

FROM THE NATIVE PRAIRIES ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS

Blaze

April 2, 2018

PRAIRIE CONSERVATION AWARENESS

PRAIRIE OF THE MONTH: Kirchoff Family Farm

200 acres of Blackland Prairie and South Texas Brush Country in Willson Co., TX. Native prairie habitat has been restored on the blackland prairie of the Kirchoff Family Farm. Their "Farm to Native Prairie" philosophy is a working example of how native prairie will become invaluable. [Read more!](#)

"BEAUTY IN WINTER DORMANCY"

Don Kirchoff reflects on the prairie in early March, just weeks before Spring!

Photos of Honey Mesquite and understory by Don Kirchoff



"How beautiful are nature's sculptures: dormant trees & bushes of Texas prairies!"

The bare mesquite trees resemble lightning reaching from the ground and spreading across the sky to the heavens!

If only their bark glowed white instead of the winter mesquite black."

"The understory is a mix primarily of **Granjeno** *Celtis ehrenbergiana*, **Brasil** *Condalia hookeri*, **Lotebush** *Ziziphus obtusifolia*, **Catclaw** *mimosa* *Mimosa aculeaticarpa*, and **Agarita** *Mahonia trifoliolata*," still dormant at the beginning of March, 2018.

"There are groves of an evergreen, called **Guayacan** *Guaiacum angustifolium*, mixed in with the dormant trees (mesquites -no oaks). One could make a scrap book of the beautiful dormant winter images of the trees sleeping through a cold, harsh



"Bird, Wildflower & Grass-of-the-Month"
Each has been surveyed on the Kirchoff Family Farm.



BIRD OF THE MONTH:

Northern Bobwhite *Colinus virginianus*

The most well-known Quail species in Texas with its distinctive 'bob white' whistle roams in a covey & forages for seeds on bare ground. [Read more:](#) **Bobwhite Quail is in Decline** due to rapidly disappearing habitats of Quail & many other associated wildlife species.

Photo [TAMU](#)

WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH: Zizotes milkweed *Asclepias oenotheroides*

Read about the Kirchoffs' blooming Zizotes, transplanted from plugs. They thrive in full sun & tolerate sandy, dry soils. Milkweed are well-known as "larval hosts for Monarch butterflies" ([more data](#)).

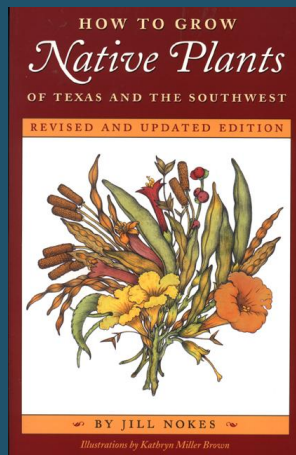
GRASS OF THE MONTH: Switchgrass *Panicum virgatum*

Switchgrass: one of the dominant species of prairie tallgrass: 3-6 ft., rhizomatous, loose sod former with a large, open, finely textured, reddish-purple seedhead. Fall color is pale yellow.

Kirchoffs' 'Milkweed Seed Plot'



Don standing in Switchgrass planted 6 years prior



BOOK OF THE MONTH:

How to Grow Native Plants of Texas and the Southwest

by Jill Nokes

Published by University of Texas Press

Recommended by Don Kirchoff

APRIL at NPAT

**Check your calendar! We hope you will join other prairie enthusiasts!
NPAT MEMBERSHIP NOT REQUIRED -- ADMISSION IS FREE!!!**

Tuesday, April 3, San Antonio Chapter (7-8:30pm) Martin Reid,

"Bird, Butterfly, and Dragonfly Populations in South Texas Prairies".

Wednesday, April 4, CenTex Chapter (6:30-8:30pm - Georgetown) Glenn Merkord,

"Collecting Native Forb & Grass Seeds for Restoration and Native Landscaping"

Saturday, April 7, Blackland (Dallas) Chapter *Field Trip/Workday @ Maddin Prairie Preserve, Email: [Lee Anne Ellis](mailto:LeeAnneEllis@blacklandprairie.com).*

Monday, April 9, Fort Worth Chapter (6:30-8pm) Don Wilhelm, USFWS: *"Federal partnership programs to increase conservation of grasslands via the enhancement of pollinator habitat".*

Thursday, April 25, Houston Chapter (6:30-8:30pm) HNPAT Program Meeting



Support NPAT

"Strong Commitment to Public Trust and Conservation Excellence"