



Gaillardia

Oklahoma Native Plant Society

The purpose of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society is to encourage the study, protection, propagation, appreciation and use of Oklahoma's native plants.

Volume 39, Number 4
Winter 2024-25

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Gulf Fritillary
Butterfly on
Maximilian Sunflower
photo by Rebecca
Carlberg.

*(Editor's note: Gulf
Fritillary butterflies
were everywhere this
year!)*

Upcoming Events/Activities

(check the ONPS website or Facebook for more details)

- Dec 2** - NE Chapter meeting, 6:30 socializing and program at 7 pm, Tulsa Garden Center Helmerich Building.
- Dec 20** - Fabulous Wildflower Fridays (details below)
- Jan 17** - Fabulous Wildflower Fridays (details below)
- Feb 6** - Central Chapter meeting, 6:30 socializing and 7 pm program at OCU Dawson-Loeffler Building
- Feb 21** - Fabulous Wildflower Fridays (details below)
- Mar 3** - NE Chapter meeting, 6:30 socializing and program at 7 pm, Tulsa Garden Center Helmerich Building.
- Mar 6** - Central Chapter meeting, 6:30 socializing and 7 pm program at OCU Dawson-Loeffler Building
- Mar 21** - Fabulous Wildflower Fridays (details below)
- Mar 29** - Spring Field Trip Season starts. Watch for details at OKnativeplants.org and in the spring newsletter.
- Apr 3** - Central Chapter meeting, 6:30 socializing and 7 pm program at OCU Dawson-Loeffler Building
- Apr 12** - Save the Date. Norman STASH event. ONPN
- May 24** - SAVE the DATE T.O.N.Y event.

Central Chapter, 6:30 pm socializing and 7:00 pm meeting at Oklahoma City University in the Dawson-Loeffler Science Center, Room 208.

NE Chapter, 6:30 pm socializing and 7:00 pm meeting at Tulsa Garden Center, Helmerich Building, 2435 S Peoria Ave, Tulsa

Fabulous Wildflower Fridays, 3rd Friday monthly, 5:30 pm, casual, at Panera Bread, 5601 E 41st Street, Tulsa

Preview Chapter meeting topics inside. All members are invited to all meetings, including board meetings, and are encouraged to bring guests.

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President	Shalini Chitturi
Vice-president	Juliette Hulen
Secretary	Debbie Drinko
Treasurer	Mary Korthase
Past-President	Patrick Bell

Directors at Large:

2025: Nancy Truelove and Kathy Kuhns-Marino
2026: Andrea Schultz-Farriester & Joe Roberts
2027: Donna Horton and Jamie Rucker

Chapter Chairs:

Theresa Turner	Northeast
Micah Friedman	Central

Committee Chairs:

Historian	Fran Stallings
Publicity and Merchandise	Barbara Klein
Betty Kemm Award	Sue Amstutz
Awards	Constance Murray
Mailings/Printings	Sandy Graue
Membership	Sandy Graue
Native Plant Record	Gloria Caddell
Webmaster	Chris Schafer
Gaillardia Editor	Lynn Michael
Color Oklahoma	Monica Bartling

Conservation Committee and statewide Tulsa Garden
Center Liaison positions retired.

ONPS website:

www.oknativeplants.org

ONPS email:

ONPSinfo@gmail.com

Gaillardia News email:

ONPSGaillardia@gmail.com

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President's Message

By Shalini Chitturi, ONPS President

“Eventful fall”

This fall has already been very interesting and eventful with so many activities involving the



ONPS. I have been to the ‘Monarchs on the Mountain’ event in Tulsa. It was one of the most organized and fun filled events this year. It felt so inspiring to see the children releasing the tagged Monarchs. Many of us met for the ONPN Fall festival in September. It was a huge success. Knowing personally how difficult it was to buy native plants when I started my butterfly garden many years back, it made me hopeful seeing so many vendors at the ONPN event. I myself picked some of the coolest native plants for my garden. We also met for the Annual meeting at Roman Nose State Park in October. I have shared that unique experience in a separate article for you all to enjoy!

As I stroll in the park this fall, the canopies seem to shower me in yellows and reds. The fallen leaves are busy gossiping in rustling chuckles. The many critters are silently building their shelters in secret hideouts. The dried listless stems, holding their life sustaining seed pods, hold fast throughout the harsh winters. They know exactly when to let go and take on the meadows. I also cannot ignore the obvious changes happening, the rebelling ways of the winds lately, across the land and the seas. The altering patterns of the seasons, causing so many disruptions around. I feel like time has come to take these messages from Mother Earth seriously and do our little part in protecting the nature around us. What better way would there be, for ONPS members like us, than to create native biomes around us, and be able to save and support other life forms along with ourselves.

Fall is a perfect time to either sow seeds or plant trees. So I request you all to add a few more natives and replace a few more non natives. In return, we can protect pollinators and wildlife and also save on our energy expenditures. Happy Fall planting and seed sowing!

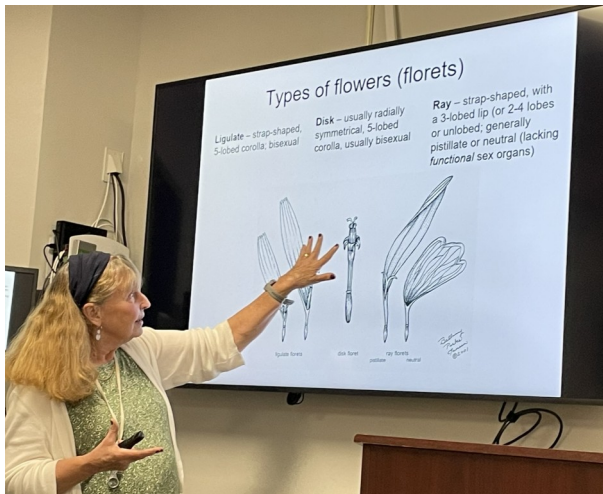
Central Chapter Update

Micah Friedman, Chapter Chair

The Central Chapter had two great presentations this fall! Gloria Caddell gave an Asteraceae identification workshop and Sam O'Dell presented his Oklahoma pollinator research.



We will be in hibernation mode for December and January. We will resume our monthly meetings in February.



Stay tuned for the 2025 schedule, which includes speakers, workshops, and field trips.



Northeast Chapter Update

Theresa Turner, Chapter Chair

December 2, 2024 meeting

We will have Cheryl Cheadle as our guest speaker, giving a presentation about the Blue Thumb Project. Cheryl works for the Oklahoma Conservation Commission. She is a Volunteer Coordinator and manages the Blue Thumb Water Quality Education Program. Also time for Chapter elections.



Compass
plant flowers,
Silphium
laciniatum

Photo by
Rebecca
Carlberg



Welcome New Members

Added 8/4/2024 thru 11/7/2024

David Seigle

Doug Whitley

Daniel & Ruth Pugh

Marie Kraus

Alexandria Szakacs

Kimberly Crosby

Mara Wheeler

Gina Wozencraft

Madeline Brown

Sherri Bruce

Mitch OFarrell & Family

Wendy Devine & Stephanie

Renewal - Life Memberships

Janet Stucky (changed to Individual, after Don's passing)

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions to General Fund

10/3/2024 Thomas W. Creider,

9/29/2024 Melissa & Isaac Young,

In Memory of Mark Wegrzynski



Fran Stallings receives the Betty Kemm Service Award, presented for ONPS by Awards Chairman Constance Murray. Photo by Sandy Graue



At left and bottom right: Field trip photos from the ONPS Annual Meeting at Roman Nose State Park, October 2024. Photos by Micah Friedman



Color Oklahoma Update

Article and photo by Monica Bartling, Committee Chair

The Color Oklahoma Committee Board of Directors continues to push forward with our mission to plant Oklahoma native wildflower seeds along Oklahoma's highways, turnpikes and other high-traffic public areas. Ten planting sites have been funded for 2024.

Areas selected to receive either grants or full funding for seeds are: Jefferson County Oklahoma along US Hwy 81 from Terral to the Stephens County line; Waurika, Oklahoma along US Hwy 81, OK Hwy 5 and OK Hwy 79; Duncan, OK US Hwy 81 North of Plato Rd; US Hwy 81 at the Rush Springs Intersection in Grady County; Cheyenne, OK; Pryor, OK, Okemah, OK, Stroud, OK and Bristow Parks.

The planting south of Stroud is our first grant request from a Tribal Nation. The Sac & Fox Nation sponsored the matching funds for a grant to plant wildflowers in front of their Oklahoma Tribal Nation Headquarters on Hwy 99 South of Stroud.

Color Oklahoma (CO) is a committee of the Oklahoma Native Plant Society. CO provides matching funding for non-profit organizations and municipalities. The organization was founded in 2001 and works with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation or the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority who plant the wildflower seeds. The matching funding is provided by the sale of wildflower license plates that are available at local tag offices or directly from the State of Oklahoma at [Oklahoma.gov](https://coloroklahoma.com/you-can-help/) or the form is available for download at <https://coloroklahoma.com/you-can-help/>.

Color Oklahoma is gearing up for photos at all our planting sites in December and early January and also for 2025 meetings. All are welcome to attend our virtual or on-site meetings and a schedule for 2025 meetings is available on our website.

We are pleased to have received our first application for 2025 plantings. The application is for a new planting site with matching funding provided by the City of Durant and the GFWC-OK Fortnightly Club of Durant. The 2025 Application is available for download from the Color Oklahoma website.



While the winter 2024 planting schedule has not been released as of publication by ODOT, this photo shows the December 2023 planting in one of Color Oklahoma's newest sites on I-40 in Okemah. Photo shows the ODOT local crew, Okemah city officials, members of the Creek Nation and Color Oklahoma Board members. The Okemah site will be planted again this year. The matching funding for this site is provided by the Okemah High School Class of 1974.

Color Oklahoma
with wildflowers

The ONPN Festival

Article and photos by Marilyn Stewart

Native plants were for sale everywhere! It was so exciting-- something that we had hoped to see for a long time! There were incredible numbers and varieties of trees, grasses, forbs. They were grown by people who know about the plants they are selling! So, not only could you buy them, you would learn about the plants and their benefits to wildlife.

We hope you were able to join us for the ONPN native plant event on September 28 at the OSU Extension Center. The weather was perfect, making it a great opportunity to connect with fellow native plant enthusiasts. This year, we welcomed 20 vendors, showcasing an impressive variety of quality native plants.

In addition to the plant growers, there were landscape designers, installers, and several non-profits, including Okies for Monarchs, Yard by Yard, the Oklahoma Native Plant Society, OKC Beautiful, the Young Naturalist's Club, and Master Gardeners.

Our ONPN booth featured new merchandise—hats, bumper stickers, bandanas, t-shirts, and a fun metal sign for outdoor display.

We also had a lineup of outstanding speakers who discussed the impact of native plants on local wildlife. These included Kaitlin Schmidt from the Dyck Arboretum, Olive Prichard from the Tulsa Botanic Garden, Erin Cord from Bat Conservation International, Brandon Gibson from the Tribal Alliance for Pollinators, Jena Donnell from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife, Karen Watkins from the Xerces Society, and Hal

Yochum from the Audubon Society. There was something for everyone to learn about how we can care for and improve our natural environment.

Did you miss the event? Or want to see something again? All of the speeches were videotaped and will be available online at ONPN.org this December. So, when it is cold and everyone is in hibernation, you can relive this great event. Special thanks to our videographer, Ryan West with Going West Productions. <https://www.instagram.com/goingwestproductions/?hl=en>

Mark your calendars for next year's event on September 27! We can't wait to see you there!



Ironweed

Article and photo by Sean Washington

In the realm of native plants that evoke a “fireworks display” in the garden, a few stand out: Basketflower, Beebalm, Blue Mistflower, and, for the adventurous gardener, any of our six native thistle species. However, in my experience, nothing rivals the spectacular and enduring show of Missouri Ironweed (*Vernonia missurica*) in my summer gardens.

Missouri Ironweed is a remarkable addition to any landscape. It thrives in a range of conditions, from full sun to partial shade, and adapts well to both damp loamy clay and drier sandy clay soils. Once established, it can reach heights of 2 to 6 feet - my plants typically average around 3 feet with leaves that are 3-6 inches long. They are perfect for filling gaps in your garden and providing a stunning midsummer focal point.

Blooming starts around mid-June, Missouri Ironweed offers a prolonged display of deep purple flowers that can last into August. The blooms of this flower look and time themselves perfectly for the 4th of July!

For those who enjoy sharing their gardening bounty, Missouri Ironweed is a great candidate for seed collection or plant exchanges. The seeds are typically ready for harvest by October, and I’ve happily gifted some of my Ironweed to friends and family, spreading the beauty of this native plant. While it can regenerate abundantly from its rhizomes, starting from seeds can be more challenging. In my experience, a single stem can produce five new stems in the second year and eight in the third.

One surprise I encountered with Missouri Ironweed was the early emergence of stems from the rhizomes. In late February and early March, you may find 2-3 inch red or pink spikes poking through the soil, inches from where the Ironweed was planted. These early stems won’t green up and develop leaves until after the April showers.

What I appreciate most about Missouri Ironweed is its hardiness. Despite the heatwaves and dry spells of the past three summers, I’ve only seen them appear desperate for water two times.

As a naturalist, I admire Missouri Ironweed for its role in supporting various insects. Its dense clusters of flowers attract American Bumblebees, Monarch butterflies, Gulf Fritillaries, and even Skippers that can’t resist the plant. Additionally, the leaves serve as a host for the small Red Groundling Moth, whose caterpillars blend in remarkably well, looking like tiny brown twigs. Rest assured, these caterpillars won’t harm your plants; Missouri Ironweed is adept at producing new leaves and growing taller to outpace their feeding.

Missouri Ironweed has quickly become a favorite in my gardens. Its rich royal purple blooms brighten the midsummer lull, its drought tolerance makes it a reliable choice, and the diversity of insects it attracts is truly a delight. Without a doubt, this is one of my top five plants for 2024!



ONPS ANNUAL MEETING 2024

Article and Photos by Shailini Chitturi

Our ONPS Annual meeting was held at Roman Nose State Park October 4-6, 2024 in conjunction with the Oklahoma Academy of Science. We have been doing this successfully for the last couple of years.

Ram and I started our drive after work that Friday. The large sculpture of the Native Chief welcomed us into the state park. The winding roads, showing off the well kept golf courses and the park premises, led us to our Group campgrounds. We were greeted by a lot of ONPS and OAS members in our dining area. After registration and dinner, we settled down to hear a fascinating presentation by Laura Hulbert about her research on Northern Saw-whet Owls. It was really admirable to know about these tiny owls and her commitment towards them.



In our initial efforts to make ONPS events eco-friendly, many members brought their own mess kits which remarkably decreased the use of plastics and Styrofoam products. A well organized washing station helped clean the mess kits afterwards. As we were parting, information about the next day's field trips was shared by the leaders, and Fran Stallings mentioned that we may be able to see the Northern Lights due to the high solar storms in the forecast.

The next day began with a lot of bird sounds at the main lodge where Ram and I were staying. Curious, I grabbed a cup of coffee and walked out the nearby back door. A dimly lit path beside the swimming pool tempted me to the trees

ahead where I enjoyed the wakening dawn along with the avian banter. At the Group Campground, the sun was peeping through the canopies of Osage Oranges while the ground level was covered in Cowpen daisies, solidagos and native grasses.

After a delicious breakfast and initial indecision about which field trip to take, some of us chose to go with the Herpetologist, Renan Bosque. As much as I am terrified of snakes, I also wanted to know more about them. Our team had many youngsters who were equally excited to find some snakes that morning.

We walked a long way looking under stones and logs. At a higher point, the abandoned stairs led to a wilder area scattered with rocks and logs, but still no snakes. Renan shared their habitats and behaviors and related that it was still quite chilly for them to be out. To add to my fear, he told us that they had caught a snake the day before and it was still in his tent.

We kept walking and went up a small hill with the most stunning view of the park. Framed amongst the beautiful Bur Oaks, the winds from the Osage Orange and hackberries made this area most mesmerizing. On the hilltop, I also came to know about the coolest bug called Cochineal. One would ignore it, as it is an ugly white fungus-like stuff growing on cactus pads. The group taught me that it's a tiny, cactus-dwelling insect that when crushed, produces a vibrant red pigment that stained our hands. This is one of the natural dyes that the Native tribes have used in their textiles for ages. As we were walking back, some of us were distracted and ended up joining a larger group botanizing with Gloria Caddell.

There was also a Dendrologist and an Entomologist in that group. Busy learning about many amazing plants, we did not realize our direction and ended up at the lodge instead of the group campgrounds. After rest and



(ONPS continued on Page 9)

(ONPS continued from Page 8)

hydration, three of us started back on the long exhausting walk back to the group camp in scorching sun. I noted that the steps on my iPhone app went up suddenly by two extra miles.

Lunch was served, which was much needed. As we were discussing the morning trips, I noticed that Renan had brought the live snake. I admired it from afar only! After a discussion with a very patient Patrick about the details of the ONPS General meeting for the evening, I decided to stay in and prepare. Just before the meeting, I took some time to enjoy the long corridors of the lodge that were filled with photographs depicting



the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes and the initial developments of the Watonga town.

We all met in the dining room. Its long windows and the attached patio showcased the lovely lake outside. After the Zoom devices were arranged by Gordon and the dinner was served, the general meeting began. The Betty Kemm Award was presented to Fran Stallings by Connie Murray, Awards Chair. Donna Horton and Jamie Rucker were elected as the two new Directors at Large for the 2027 term. I made sure to conduct a brief and effective meeting as we didn't want to miss out on the "Astronomy Observations" held by Joshua Hakala. He brought in a few telescopes, for all of us to enjoy the cosmic visual gifts that would be unveiled that night! We met in a clearing beside the main camp building, under a starkly dark night with no clouds and not even the moon. One could feel the awe from the exclamations of the

silhouettes, standing there and starrng at the skies. We took turns to look into the big telescope lens and admired amazing Venus, the Saturn rings, a couple of nebulas, and also the gorgeous Andromeda galaxy. The most fascinating gift of the night was our own Milky Way. Initially it was like a faint linear smear of stars above us. As we got adapted to the night sky, we could see it more clearly. It was our Milky Way, decorated in a billion stars, giving us company that night. We learned that it was better viewed when we took a picture of it in the night mode. There were a few shooting stars as well. I could not take my eyes off of the sky that night. It was so divine! We talked a lot about our neighboring planets, the Milky Way and how Andromeda could engulf us one day. There were brief comments about Non-permanence and how miniscule we are as humans in these cycles of cosmos, and yet we act with the most narcissistic egos.

As I went into the kitchen to grab some cookies, one of the entomologists showed me another cool thing that night. He switched on a light attached to his keys. To my shock, on the ground, the fluorescent lime green light spotlighted many scorpions. It was very creepy and scary to know that so many nocturnal creatures are strolling beside us. It was an interesting thought that the earth discreetly hosts as many insects on the ground as there are stars in the skies.

The next morning was busy with preparations for the board meeting. After a quick breakfast, all the board members assembled at the lodge. The meeting proceeded with discussions about the budget, dates and places for next year's events, ways to reach out to more teachers about the Harriet Barclay Award, the new plans by ONPN for their tax filings. We also discussed about the most exciting event "Tour Oklahoma Native Yards" (T.O.N.Y.) that will be hosted by Central Chapter and others. We completed all the important discussions without deviating too much from the allocated time. Ram was already waiting for me in the lobby and after some final checks on follow-ups and goodbyes, we started our journey home. Our hearts were filled with lovely memories and a promise to have many more of such meaningful events in future!



MEET THE MEMBERS: Sandy Graue

By Fran Stallings, Historian

How do horses, bicycles, and computer-aided drafting (CAD) connect with native plants?

Sandy Graue knows. She says that growing up, she wasn't interested in plants. Her family moved a lot, living mostly in Oklahoma, and didn't garden. They didn't hike and rarely camped.

Sandy's background was CAD and clerical, not botanical! She is now retired after thirty-five years in environmental CAD and clerical work. For thirty-five years she worked region-wide assisting colleagues with regulatory compliance under environmental guidelines. Twenty-five of those years she had the same colleagues through several changes of company names and ownership. Some of her colleagues became frustrated with delays and the way European investors were handling company procedures and finances, so they decided to start their own local company, partnering with another small company which had been their sub-contractor drilling the water monitoring wells they needed. This became Equus Environmental in 2018. Sandy didn't do the field work and surveys or evaluate the analytical results for compliance but assisted with creating the graphic representations of their findings, putting the reports together and sending pdf's of the reports to governmental agencies and private petroleum industry clients. She also worked as a life insurance Policyholder Service clerk, an HR secretary, and for several years did self-employed contract work after closing the local office for the first environmental company. Native plants were seldom mentioned.

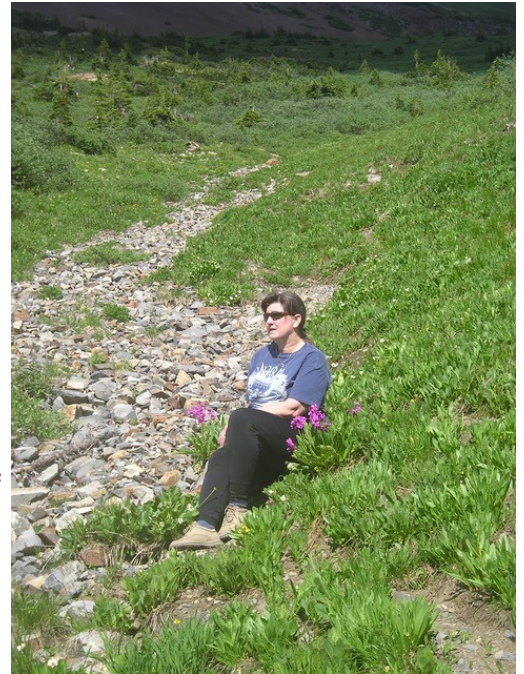
But in 1985 when she and her husband started participating in Freewheel bike rides across the breadth of Oklahoma, they couldn't help noticing the plants that grew along country roads. Their interest was further piqued by a trip to Crested Butte, CO to ride horseback with friends in the "Wildflower Capital of Colorado." They began vacationing in Colorado each summer to enjoy the cooler summer weather, go mountain biking, and take photos of the flowers. They began to learn the local plant names.

Back in Oklahoma, and wanting to figure out what might grow in their yard of clay soil under an elm tree, she attended an ONPS wildflower workshop held in Tahlequah spring of 2000, with relevant speakers and plants for sale. Sandy joined the Tulsa chapter and soon teamed up with Lynn Michael. "The rest is history."

Sandy's interest in field trips was mainly for taking photos. She and Lynn (later President of ONPS) started traveling to events together. Lynn convinced Sandy that the Secretary's job was "just taking notes" since she was already attending meetings... ONPS voted her in as Secretary at the meeting at WahShahShe Girl Scout Camp in 2010, and she took over immediately.

ONPS continues to benefit from Sandy's experience! Working with Gloria Caddell, she electronically "pulls together" the articles for our annual *Native Plant Journal* in Word, creates the pdf document and uploads it to the OSU digital library where it is archived and available for download. She manages the printing and mailing of our *Gaillardia* quarterly newsletter, while her computer skills juggle the membership data base from which the mailing labels are printed. She also sends regular membership file updates to board members and keeps the Mailchimp email account updated.

Sandy says she's gotten out of the biking habit and no longer rides horses. Her knees are still good but her stamina has lapsed; ONPS' gentle field trips are a good fit. And we're fortunate that she's still willing to mess with computers to keep our publications and databases running!



For joining or renewing use this form

Fill out this form or supply the same information. Make checks payable to Oklahoma Native Plant Society and mail to: Oklahoma Native Plant Society, PO Box 14274, Tulsa, OK 74159.

Membership is for Jan. 1 – Dec. 31 of current year and dues include subscription to *Gaillardia*.

(Please Print Clearly) _____ **RENEWAL** _____ **NEW MEMBER** (All dues are tax deductible)

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 ____ Family Individual (\$350)
 ____ Student (\$10) (free with faculty sponsor)

Chapter affiliation:

- ____ Central (OKC area)
 ____ Northeast (Tulsa area)

You may sign up for multiple chapters if you like, to receive field trip and meeting notices from that chapter.

Need more details email: ONPSinfo@gmail.com

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Winter 2024-25 Issue

2025 Dues are due beginning Jan 1, 2025.

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DEADLINE
FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE IS Feb 5, 2025**

Save the Date: First annual backyard native plant habitat tour and plant sales in the Oklahoma City area. Watch for more details.

