

Prairie Notes

March 30, 2007

Subject: Prairie Notes

1) Fort Worth Prairie Fest is 30 days away. April 28, to be exact. Keep checking the website for updated info.

2) The wildflowers should be in full force by then BUT some things can't wait. I suggest you visit Tandy Hills nature Area ASAP to see a stunning show of Wild Hyacinth (*Camassia scilloides*). (see photo)

These sweet scented, lavender colored perennials grow about about 12" - 18" tall from a deep bulb on a leafless stem. They are one of the few flowers blooming right now, and fairly easy to spot in scattered, dense colonies, surrounded by their grass-like leaves.

My book says the bulbs of wild hyacinth were an important food source for Indians and explorers. I say they are worth a special trip to THNA for the smell alone. (note: With all the rain, lots of other flowers will be popping up any day now.)

3) Another spring ritual for nature lovers is wild asparagus. Don't laugh until you try it. Right now, and only for a few more days, fresh spears are shooting up all over the park. They are so tasty, fresh out of the prairie soil, you won't need any butter or salt. Get 'em while they're young. (Growing nearby are wild onions which make a nice side dish.)

4) The April, 2007 issue of National Geographic has a great article on the vast, tall grass prairie of Kansas, titled, Splendor in the Grass. The Flint Hills prairie is the largest swath of tall grass prairie left in the nation. The photos are enough to make a grass hugger swoon. Read more here:

<http://www7.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0704/index.html>

Friends of Tandy Hills Nature Area
P.O. Box 470041
Fort Worth, TX 76147
817-731-2787
<http://www.fortworthprairiefest.org>

