



A CONSERVATION NOTEBOOK by Homer Stevens

Good golly! How time flies! There have been approximately 13 of these articles. It hardly seems possible. Getting feedback and commentary regarding their content is always gratifying. One comment recently was somewhat surprising. It was pointed out that the political views were intriguing.

This writing has never meant to be political, only educational. However, if believing that the best route to better lives for individuals or our population as a whole is education that enables folks to determine what's best for not only themselves but the people that are affected by their actions, then here lies guilt.



This article's general topic is Big Tooth Maple trees. First, let's look at what others have to say.

Howard Garrett's "Texas Trees". This is a wonderful tree that should be planted more.

Sally and Andy Wasowski "Native Texas Plants". This maple is so gorgeous in McKittrick Canyon in the Guadalupe Mountains, and Lost Maples on the Edwards Plateau, that Texans make pilgrimages at the end

of each October to ooh and aah. Benny J. Simpson "A Field Guide to Texas Trees". Big Tooth Maple is one of the most active and interesting Texas trees. In the heart of the Hill Country, Big Tooth Maple occurs near Vanderpool in Bandera County in the Sabinal River valley along with its feeder canyons. Big Tooth Maple possible occupied a much larger area of the Edwards Plateau before the end of the last great ice age 8,000 to 12,000 years ago. As temperatures increased and moisture became limited, Big Tooth Maple remained in only some of the deeper, well watered canyons in Bandera, Kerr, Kendall, Real, and Uvalde counties.

The above statements can all be confirmed here on The Farm. None of these trees are known to have grown here under natural circumstances. The half dozen or so survivors from nursery transplants generate more notice and favorable comments regarding their fall beauty than any other species.

Please note the reference to survivors because several of the originally planted trees of this species reached a height of as much as 20' and just blew over. The winds that caused this reaction were especially strong, but other species in the same vicinity did not fall. Speculation attributes the problems to planting on shallow caliche clay soil and planting in raised beds where the roots were unable to spread or penetrate.

Recommendations therefore are there is definitely a place for planting Big Tooth Maples in almost any landscape. They are beautiful in the fall. When making these plantings, be sure that the area where they are to grow has good drainage and that the roots have room to spread.

Special note might be taken of the reference to climate change in the Simpson guide to Native Trees. Climate changes have been occurring since the beginning of earth. Shouldn't laws related to this phenomenon be seriously the result of intense study and shouldn't there be compromise between prevention and adjustment.

More thoughts on this subject may occur in later articles. For now, let's agree that planting and nurturing anything that holds soil in place, provides beauty, shade, and carries on photosynthesis to free oxygen to the atmosphere is a good thing. "BIG TOOTH MAPLE!!!!!"

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