

# Abilene Reporter News

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## COLUMNISTS

# Explore Texas nature from the comfort of home with these summer reading suggestions

**Annabelle Moore** Special to the Reporter-News

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Curling up with a good nature book and a glass of iced tea is a great way to beat the summer heat! Big Country chapter members of the Texas Master Naturalist program are always exploring new ways to learn about and share the wonder of nature around us.

When you're ready to leap from the page to in-person exploring, join us on one of our monthly master naturalist hikes at Lake Abilene and Cedar Creek Waterway. Or, come out for a star party as we unravel the mysteries of the galaxy at Abilene State Park. Delve into the books below to learn more about the crawling critters, soaring aviators and pollination masters that live in our home state of Texas.

► "Explore Texas: A Nature Travel Guide" by Mary O. Parker; Texas A&M University Press: [tamupress.com/book/9781623494032/explore-texas](https://tamupress.com/book/9781623494032/explore-texas)

Written with families in mind, this regional guide will help you find and easily access the dazzling diversity of wild creatures and places in Texas.

► "Mushrooms of the Gulf Coast States: A Field Guide to Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida" by Alan E. Bessette, Arleen F. Bessette and David P. Lewis; University of Texas Press: [utpress.utexas.edu/books/bessette-lewis-mushrooms-of-the-gulf-coast-states](https://utpress.utexas.edu/books/bessette-lewis-mushrooms-of-the-gulf-coast-states)

Find a fascinating mushroom in your yard after a good rainstorm? Use this identification guide featuring hundreds of colorful photos to discover delectable fungi near you.

► "The Wild Lives of Reptiles and Amphibians: A Young Herpetologist's Guide" by Michael A. Smith; Texas A&M University Press: [tamupress.com/book/9781623498733/the-wild-lives-of-reptiles-and-amphibians](https://tamupress.com/book/9781623498733/the-wild-lives-of-reptiles-and-amphibians)

Curious about the snakes, lizards and turtles you've seen at the local park? Learn all about reptile and amphibian daily life in this guide for young naturalists.

► "Parking Lot Birding: A Fun Guide to Discovering Birds in Texas" by Jennifer L. Bristol; Texas A&M University Press: [tamupress.com/book/9781623498511/parking-lot-birding](http://tamupress.com/book/9781623498511/parking-lot-birding)

Don't like hiking? Don't worry! This unique guide offers locations and species lists for accessible birding spots across the state.

► "Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies: A Field Guide" by Jim Weber, Lynne M. Weber and Roland H. Wauer; Texas A&M University Press: [tamupress.com/book/9781623496463/native-host-plants-for-texas-butterflies](http://tamupress.com/book/9781623496463/native-host-plants-for-texas-butterflies)

Butterflies need more than pretty flowers to succeed. For caterpillars to grow they also need unique native plants to eat and thrive on. With this guide, learn how to identify and grow Texas plants that will sustain butterflies through their whole life cycle.

► "The Writings of Ferdinand Lindheimer Texas Botanist, Texas Philosopher" by John E. Williams; Texas A&M University Press: [tamupress.com/book/9781623498764/the-writings-of-ferdinand-lindheimer](http://tamupress.com/book/9781623498764/the-writings-of-ferdinand-lindheimer)

Fans of plants and Texas natural history will be delighted by this newest English translation of the floral observations from "the father of Texas Botany."

► "Unnatural Texas? The Invasive Species Dilemma" by Robin W. Doughty and Matt Warnock Turner; Texas A&M University Press: [tamupress.com/book/9781623497057/unnatural-texas](http://tamupress.com/book/9781623497057/unnatural-texas)

What's native and what's new? This guide explores the complex natural history of invasive species across the state and how we navigate the tangled web of social and environmental relationships.

► "Native Host Plants for Texas Moths, A Field Guide" by Lynne M. Weber and Jim Weber; Texas A&M University Press: [tamupress.com/book/9781623499860/native-host-plants-for-texas-moths](http://tamupress.com/book/9781623499860/native-host-plants-for-texas-moths)

The nocturnal wingbeats of over 4,700 species of moths in Texas fly largely under our radar of awareness but with this guide, you can learn about these essential pollinators and the plants they need to succeed.

▶ "Texas Bug Book: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly, Revised Edition" by Howard Garrett and C. Malcolm Beck; University of Texas Press: [utpress.utexas.edu/books/gart2p](http://utpress.utexas.edu/books/gart2p)

Learn all about the life cycle of insects crawling around your garden with this colorful guide.

▶ "Remarkable Plants of Texas: Uncommon Accounts of Our Common Natives" by Matt Warnock Turner; University of Texas Press: [utpress.utexas.edu/books/turrem](http://utpress.utexas.edu/books/turrem)

Want to go beyond plant names and identification? In this guide, learn about the diverse relationships Texas plants have with wildlife and people throughout history and culture.

### **Upcoming Big Country Master Naturalist events:**

▶ July 16: Cedar Creek Waterway hike. Meet at the trailhead in the 100 block of E.S. 11th Street at 9 a.m.

▶ July 21: Big County Master Naturalist chapter meeting 6-8 p.m.

▶ July 26: Big Country Audubon birding field trip to Kirby Lake. Meet at 7:15 p.m. at the covered pavilion near the softball fields by the Maple Street entrance.

▶ July 30: Star Party at Abilene State Park 9-11 p.m. Meet in the grassy area across from the pool building.

▶ August 6: Lake Abilene hike, Abilene State Park 9 a.m. Obtain an entrance permit at the park headquarters and meet at the first parking lot by the lake entrance.

▶ August TBA: Keep an eye out for an upcoming announcement for our Fall 2022 Big Country Master Naturalist training! Visit us at [txmn.org/bc](http://txmn.org/bc) and on Facebook at [facebook.com/BCTXMN](https://facebook.com/BCTXMN).

If you're planning to attend hikes or star parties, be sure to check Facebook in advance for special directions, weather-related changes or COVID restrictions.

*Annabelle Moore is a member of the Big Country Master Naturalist chapter. All master naturalists are volunteers interested in the outdoors. Learn more about the Texas Master Naturalist program at [txmn.tamu.edu](http://txmn.tamu.edu).*