



We are a group of trained volunteers who share our appreciation and knowledge of nature with the community through outreach, education and conservation/restoration projects

Crossbone Corns Snake Program *By Lynn Trenta*

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Chapter events and nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter need to be sent to [Lynn](#) by the 25th of the month. Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome. Thanks.

Lynn Trenta,
Courier Editor



Photos by Amber Leung

On August 2nd at our regular program, Adrian and Laura Berg of Crossbone Corns presented an amazing program about snakes. We also got to experience some live snakes they brought. We had a record crowd of over 70 people, including members and the public, who attended this program. This was the result of an extensive publicity campaign headed by Margo Johnson. The use of social media certainly played a part in this.

The Bergs corrected many common misconceptions about snakes in their presentation, including one that cottonmouths will chase you. They stated that snakes want to escape contact with people and that snake bites are rarely fatal. Also, they stated that rattling is a defensive behavior. It is a misconception that the shape of a snake's pupils (elliptical versus round) can indicate whether or not the snake is venomous. Another misconception is that only venomous snakes have a triangular-shaped head. Some nonvenomous snakes flatten out their head to make it appear triangular when threatened.

Differences between cottonmouths and common water snakes were delineated. Cottonmouths are usually in shallow water, on land, or in tree hollows and their eyes are not on the top of their heads as in the common water snakes. Cottonmouths have a thick body and are usually less than 3 feet long. Water snakes are often over 3 feet long and slender.

Continued on the next page-----

Crossbone Corns Snake Program (Continued)

Other snakes were discussed such as the fast-moving coachwhip snake, the ribbon snake which glides on top of water and has live births, the small Texas brown snakes, kingsnakes that eat other snakes, Eastern hognose snakes with their upturned nose who plays dead to escape predators, and the Texas coral snake, which is not as venomous as often thought. The rare canebrake rattlesnake is a protected species. The most common snake is the Texas rat snake.

Our group and visitors from the public both enjoyed a delightful and educational evening!



Photos from the Crossbone Corns Facebook

Chapter Program on September 6th about Pollinators

Do you like fruit? Without honeybees and native pollinators, our tables would be bare of fruit and many vegetables. Bee Harmony Director Ed Erwin will share his passion for pollinators and the native plant gardens that encourage them.

The program will be held at the Rosenberg Civic Center, with social time at 6:30pm and the program at 7pm. A short chapter meeting will take place following the program

The Texas Master Naturalists are sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. For additional information call [281.633.7033](tel:281.633.7033) or email mmcdowell@ag.tamu.edu



Plan B: Alternate Bee Pollinators *By Catherine M. Allchin (The New York Times)*

Aug. 21, 2018

OMAK, Wash. — Jim Freese grows apples, pears and cherries on 45 acres in the north-central part of this state, on sagebrush-studded land his grandfather bought in 1910. Walking among trees laden with shiny red cherries, Mr. Freese recalled that four years ago his trees were not producing well, and his farm was financially struggling. Like many growers, he had been relying on rented honeybees to pollinate his cherry trees every spring, along with wild bees and other insects. But that year, spring was expected to be cool. “Honeybees will just sit in the hive in cooler weather,” Mr. Freese said. He needed a way to ensure more flowers would develop into fruit than in the past.

At a horticulture meeting, he learned that blue orchard bees — a native species that doesn’t make honey or live in hives — could be used to supplement honeybee pollination. Blue orchard bees will fly at cooler temperatures. Mr. Freese bought 12,000 cocoons and set them in his orchard to emerge when the trees bloomed. His investment paid off. “We doubled our cherry production from any previous record year,” he said. His wife, Sandee Freese, said: “The little bees have been a godsend.”

The Freese orchard is one of many commercial agricultural operations around the United States considering pollination with alternative bee species now that the honeybee is beset by problems.

The honeybee, *Apis mellifera*, has been the dominant pollinator for decades but now is threatened by pesticides, pathogens, parasites and poor nutrition. Last year, beekeepers in the United States lost an estimated 40 percent of their managed honeybee colonies, according to the Bee Informed Partnership, a nonprofit that advises beekeepers. Some years that number is even higher, according to Mark Winston, a professor of apiculture at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia and author of several books on bees. “Is there another agricultural enterprise that accepts an annual loss of 40 to 45 percent of its animals?” he asked.



Heidi Younger





Bumblebee

Heidi Younger

Alternate Bee Pollinators (Continued)

These losses drive up prices for farmers who rent honeybees to pollinate their crops, straining their businesses. Honeybee prices have nearly quadrupled since 2004, even as demand for pollination services is growing. These losses drive up prices for farmers who rent honeybees to pollinate their crops, straining their businesses. Honeybee prices have nearly quadrupled since 2004, even as demand for pollination services is growing.

One-third of our food — including almonds, apples, blueberries, pears and tomatoes — must be pollinated in order to grow. Some scientists warn of risks to agricultural food supplies if there aren't enough pollinators. As honeybee prices continue to rise, farmers are turning to other types of bees — like the blue orchard bee, the bumblebee and alfalfa leafcutter — that have proven to be effective pollinators of some crops in certain settings.

"It's a question of having the right bee at the right time," said Theresa Pitts-Singer, a research entomologist at the Department of Agriculture's Logan Bee Lab. Dr. Pitts-Singer and researchers across the country have been studying how so-called integrated crop pollination — or combinations of varying bee species — can help growers ensure reliable pollination.

The Integrated Crop Pollination Project, a public-private partnership funded by the Department of Agriculture, has explored habitat enhancement for wild bees, improving farm management practices, and the use of diverse or "alternative" bee species.

Of the thousands of species of bees in North America, just four other than the honeybee are already used or almost ready for use on a commercial scale in the United States, according to [a review published last year in Basic and Applied Ecology](#). (Wild bees also make important contributions to crop pollination.)

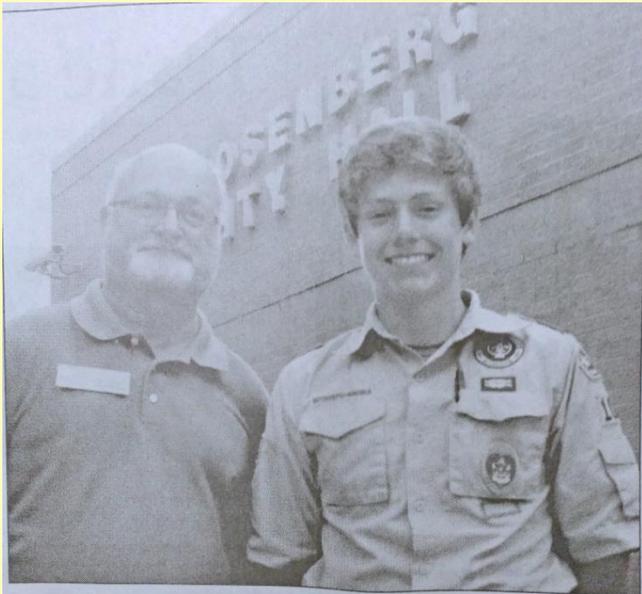
*The bumblebee, *Bombus impatiens*, can be an effective alternative to honeybees for pollinating watermelons and lowbush blueberries. The alfalfa leafcutter bee, *Megachile rotundata*, is responsible for pollinating most of the alfalfa grown for seed production.*

*The ground-nesting alkali bee, *Nomia melanderi*, also pollinates alfalfa, and the blue orchard bee, *Osmia lignaria*, is effective for tree fruits and nuts.*

For more of this article go to: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/21/science/bees-pollination-farming.html?action=click&module=Well&pgtype=Homepage§ion=Science>

Seabourne Eagle Scout Project in FB Herald

The Fort Bend Herald had news from our MN Group in recent issues. In the paper were articles about Eagle Scout Nathan Spencer presenting his Seabourne Creek Nature Park project at the Rosenberg City Council. Garrett Engelhardt is his sponsor and also helped him get his Citizenship Patch. Amber Leung's photographs of our August chapter meeting made the front page also (see program article)



HERALD PHOTO BY AVERIL GLEASON

Scouting

Texas Master Naturalist Garrett Engelhardt and Boy Scout Nathan Spencer attended the Rosenberg City Council meeting on Tuesday. Nathan attended the meeting to help him earn his citizenship merit badge.



HERALD PHOTO BY AVERIL GLEASON

Boy Scout Nathan Spencer led the Rosenberg City Council in the Pledge of Allegiance at the regular council meeting on Tuesday. Pictured from left are council member Isaac Davila and Spencer.

Eagle Scout project presented at council

BY AVERIL GLEASON
agleason@fbherald.com

It's not every day a Boy Scout makes the effort to become an Eagle Scout.

It's a long process, often taking years to complete.

And on Tuesday, 15-year-old Nathan Spencer of Troop 1000 proposed his Eagle Scout project to the Rosenberg City Council members.

Spencer presented a proposal to construct a pedestrian trail bridge in Seabourne Creek Nature Park.

Once the project is completed, he will earn the rank of Eagle Scout.

"What I'll be doing is creating an access point bridge for families to come and access the (nature pond and demo garden)," Spencer said.

"The bridge will meet (American with Disabilities Act) regulations and it will be a permanent structure. Six cement holes will be dug, creating support and stability for the bridge."

Working under the guidance of Garrett Englehardt and the Coastal Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists, the pedestrian bridge will connect the Prairie Restoration area with the trail system in the park.

"I will be completing the cement holes on Aug. 19 and the project itself on the 25th," Spencer told council.

The project is estimated to cost \$700. Spencer revealed that he has not yet

raised all the money to complete the project, but is relying on local businesses, family and friends to donate.

Once the bridge is completed, the parks department will add decomposed granite gravel to complete the trail connection.

"Safety for the volunteers I'll be working with is pretty important to me," Spencer continued. "The weight is on my shoulders and I feel really responsible for what happens to the volunteers."

Spencer noted that he will provide a first aid kit, snacks, water, bug spray and sunscreen for volunteers.

"I want to personally thank you so much for coming here to do this project to better enhance our parks and to serve our community," council member Jacob Balderas told Spencer.

"It takes a lot of courage to stand up there when you are in front of seven strangers and present this. There are adults that have issues doing that."

"I'm very proud of you. You're a remarkable young man. Go forth and a lot of great things are in your future."

Council members Lisa Wallingford, Isaac Davila, Steven DeGregorio, Amanda Barta and Richard Olson thanked Spencer for coming to Rosenberg to complete his Eagle Scout project.

"Eagle Scouts are leaders and they are our culture and our country," Mayor Bill Benton said.

"Thank you for wanting to improve our parks."

The Monthly Bird Spotter *By Jade Hems*

- *The Loggerhead Shrike is a predatory songbird, with the bill and behavior of a raptor!*
- *Loggerhead Shrike like open habitats, with scattered small trees for nesting and from which to hunt.*
- *Seabourne Prairie and the open trails at Seabourne Creek Nature Park are great shrike habitat! Loggerhead Shrike are resident year-round in the park and nest in and hunt from the small trees adjacent to the trails by the parking lot.*
- *Launching from their perch, they capture their prey of insects, birds, lizards and small mammals, with a paralyzing stab of their hooked bill.*
- *Loggerhead Shrike do not have talons, rather they skewer their prey on thorns or barbed wire and fill a “larder” with food cached for later consumption.*
- *They can capture and kill prey as large as themselves!*
- *Noxious prey such as Monarch Butterflies are stored in the “larder” for up to three days, this allows the poisons to break down, before consumption.*
- *The name “Loggerhead” refers to the unusually large size of a shrike’s head in proportion to its body.*
- *Males perform a ritual courtship dance and flight display. They also attract a mate with a well-stocked “larder”.*
- *The 2014 State of the Birds Report lists Loggerhead Shrike as a Common Bird in Steep Decline. North American Breeding Bird Survey data shows a cumulative population decline of 76% from 1966 to 2015. Loss of habitat to urban development may be a leading cause of this decline.*



Photo by John Donaho



TMN 20th Anniversary Annual Meeting Registration OPEN!

<https://txmn.org/2018-annual-meeting/> Join us for our Texas Master Naturalist Program Annual Meeting to gather, learn and celebrate our 20th Anniversary. This year's event will kick off Friday October 26th and run through the weekend to October 28th. It is being hosted at the Sheraton Georgetown Hotel and Conference Center.

This year's agenda is PACKED with over 150+ sessions – more than we've ever had before. As in years past, registration includes signing up for technical sessions and field session attendance as many of the classrooms and space available on the field sessions is limited. Please prepare before registering with your preferred attendance at sessions. Our field sessions typically fill up very quickly!

As an added BONUS this year, we have 30 – THIRTY – off site field sessions throughout the Georgetown and surrounding county areas. These are all in ADDITION to our typical concurrent technical session happening on site at the Sheraton Georgetown throughout the weekend. These field sessions are scattered from Thursday through Monday and we have developed a "Get Outside Guide" to be used for learning about these unique opportunities. All sessions contained in this guide will require pre-registration through the event registration page.. *Note – not all of the field sessions count for Advanced Training or have transportation provided. Pay special attention to the key on the pages to see what's included or needed for each session.

[Get Outside Guide!](#)

All hotel room reservations for the meeting dates (Friday night & Saturday night) will be made through the TMN Annual Meeting Registration Page. Please DO NOT call the Sheraton Georgetown.

Links for the Annual Meeting

[-About Georgetown](#)

[-Agenda](#)

[-Registration](#)

[-Lodging](#)

[-20th Anniversary Gala](#)

[-Annual Meeting Contests](#)

[-Sponsorship Requests](#)

[-Silent Auction](#)

[-Texas Waters Day](#)

[-Texas Wildlife Association](#)

[-Call for Proposals](#)



Texas Medical Center News

Center for Health & Nature to Launch at Methodist *Sent in by Lynn Trenta*

By Maggie Galehouse | May 3, 2018

A new Center for Health & Nature to be housed at [Houston Methodist Hospital](#) will be anchored by the belief that nature is essential to healing and well-being.

“There’s a gap in research regarding what nature factors lead to increased health, what exposure to nature means and how much exposure is needed,” said former first lady Laura Bush on Wednesday, during a celebration to launch the project at Methodist’s new Walter Tower. “So, I’m thrilled to be here today to announce the Center for Health & Nature, which will help fill these research gaps by partnering with one of the best academic institutions and one of the best health care institutions in our great state.”

Marc Boom, M.D., president and CEO of Houston Methodist Hospital, with former first lady Laura Bush.

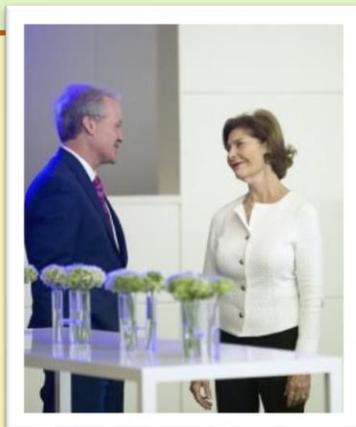
Houston Methodist Hospital, the [Texas A&M University System](#) and [Texan by Nature](#), a nonprofit conservation group founded by Laura Bush, will work together on the center’s four goals:

-Creating a Health & Nature Healing Garden at Houston Methodist to give patients and caregivers access to nature within their health care environment.

-Convening an annual Health & Nature Symposium that gathers national and international research experts to explore the effects of nature on human health and healing.

-Launching a pilot research program that will explore the health effects of nature on cardiovascular wellness and healing. The first research project will study the effect of the exposure to nature on women 65 and older with certain types of heart failure. For more of this article go to:

<http://www.tmc.edu/news/2018/05/center-for-health-nature-to-launch-at-methodist/>



The Sierra Club Visits Seabourne *By Jim Butcher*

On August 11th 35 members of the Sierra Club in Houston braved the heat and visited the Seabourne Creek Nature Park. One of their members, our own Pauline Zinn, announced the date in advance and Diane Russell, Karl Baumgartner and Jim Butcher served as interpretative guides. Erik Wolf shadowed one group with the intent to become a future guide at the Park.

The Sierra Club was founded in 1892 by John Muir. It boasts 3 million members and their mission is to defend wild places, keep air and water clean, curb climate change, and pressure politicians to ensure safe and healthy communities.

Their leader, Brandt Mannchen, made introductions and divided the members into 3 groups. After a walk around the lake and butterfly garden we went to the prairie demonstration garden for an introduction to native plants and some prairie restoration talk. The group was very understanding of the natural world and appreciative of our efforts to improve the park.



Cornell Webinar on Building a Birding/Nature Club



Cornell Lab of Ornithology has several webinars online. One that may be helpful is one about building a birding or nature club. For more information go to <http://www.birdsleuth.org/free-webinars/#club>

In this webinar, learn essential tips for starting a birding or nature club. With a club, you have ultimate flexibility to tailor learning to the needs and interests of students. Engage in activities such as birding, improving local habitat, and educating the public. Clubs are a great way to get kids interested in science and exploring the outdoors, while giving them the chance to apply the skills and science concepts learned in class to the world around them.

In this webinar, educators will:

Learn the top three tips for starting a new club.

Discover free activities to support beginner birders around bird ID.

This webinar is free and open to all educators — both formal and informal, but the content is targeted to educators working with 2-6 grade students. Choose the date that works for you and register for this webinar below.

Dates and Times

[Tuesday, September 4, 2018 @ 6:00pm ET](#)

[Thursday, September 6, 2018 @ 8:00pm ET](#)

Plant of the Month, Snow on the Prairie (*Euphorbia bicolor*)

By Mark Morgenstern

Our featured plant this month is snow on the prairie. The scientific name is Euphorbia bicolor. This annual starts off green then as it matures it enters its bicolor phase. The lower leaves are green. The upper portion, green with white edging are actually numerous leaflike bracts. This plant range includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. It is sometimes confused with Euphorbia marginata or Snow on the Mountain, native to central Texas north to Montana and south into Mexico.

The milky sap from a broken stem can cause skin irritations in some people so be careful. There are many positive attributes for this plant. If you see it during a full moon it actually lights up! (I'm going to view mine tonight!) The variegated foliage is gorgeous, and it blooms July through October. It loves poor soil, hard clay and wet or dry conditions! You can view it in the demonstration beds at Seabourne Creek Nature Park. Now I would like to challenge the photographers in our group to get some moonlight pictures of this awesome plant!



In Our Own Backyards and Other Places

Walking Sticks *By Diane Eismont*

This insect is a Walking Stick I saw gripping a board on the side of our barn. It is 6 inches long plus 3 additional inches for the antennae. Walking sticks eat plants and feed at night.

I saw 3 others this summer, all of which were brown. Color, & their nocturnal lifestyle, is their camouflage. They don't bite or fly. They have sticky toe pads and non-sticky heel pads for gripping. Wikipedia has lots of information on walking sticks and says people can keep them as pets, feeding them lettuce!



Jade Hems' caught this photo of a hummingbird at her feeder. Nice catch!

Seabourne Nature Fest (formerly Prairie Heritage Festival) *By Lynn Trenta*

The Seabourne Nature Fest Committee headed by Jim Butcher, is hard at work preparing for our yearly signature project that takes place November 3rd, Saturday.

This is a fun project and we are in the process of getting exhibits and speakers lined up and producing publicity for the event.

Diane Russell designed the eye-catching flyer and Erik Wolf found us a great deal on printing these out. Margo Johnson is heading up the publicity, getting information into the Chronicle and many other publications.

Diane Russell is in charge of crafts and activities.

Kelli Adiaheno is heading up the exhibits and speakers. if you have any ideas for exhibits or speakers, contact [Kelli](#). Ramona Ridge is also working on this and some publicity as well.

Lea Hyman is in charge of tents and other physical necessities for the event.

The flyers will be available at the September program for distribution.

This is a great opportunity for chapter members to get VSP and have fun at the same time! SignUpGenius will be coming out soon with volunteer opportunities

7th Annual
SEABOURNE NATURE FEST
November 3, 2018, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Seabourne Creek Nature Park
3831 Highway 36 South, Rosenberg TX 77471

Butterflies & Caterpillars
Alligators & Snakes
Hawks & Owls
Bee Keepers
Native Plant Sale
Edible Plant Display
Children's Crafts
Face Painting
Nature Talks
Food Trucks
Prairie Walks
Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides

FREE ADMISSION

RAIN OR SHINE

Hosted by
Coastal Prairie Chapter Texas Master Naturalists
<http://txmn.org/coastal/>
281-633-7033

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Seabourne Nature Fest (Continued)

One way to publicize SNF is to share the following information on your Facebook, Twitter, or Next-Door accounts. Margo Johnson has developed the follow short blurb for everyone to share on their social media. You can attach the png flyer attached to the Courier to your social media entry.

Seabourne Nature Fest

Saturday, November 3 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
**Seabourne Creek Nature Park, 3831 Texas 36 South,
Rosenberg 77471**

There will be lots of activities for kids and families! See butterflies and caterpillars, alligators and snakes, hawks and owls, beekeepers, and more. There will be a native plant sale, edible plant display, children's crafts, a petting zoo, face painting, nature talks, prairie walks and horse-drawn wagon rides.

The nature festival entry and events are free. There will also be a variety of food truck vendors.

Free and Open to the Public
Conducted by Coastal Prairie Chapter – Texas Master Naturalists

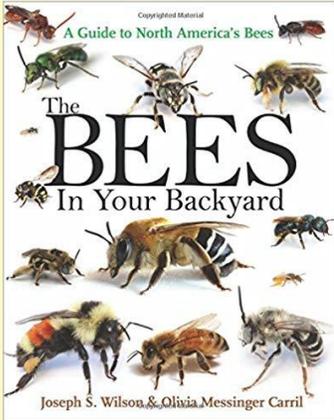
The Texas Master Naturalists are sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. For additional information call 281-633-7033 or email mmcdowell@ag.tamu.edu

Website: <https://txmn.org/coastal/>

FACEBOOK <https://www.facebook.com/TXMNCoastal/>



Book Corner



The Bees In Your Backyard

By Joseph Wilson & Olivia Messenger Carril



***The Bees in Your Backyard* provides an engaging introduction to the roughly 4,000 different bee species found in the United States and Canada, dispelling common myths about bees while offering essential tips for telling them apart in the field.**

The book features more than 900 stunning color photos of the bees living all around us—in our gardens and parks, along nature trails, and in the wild spaces between. It describes their natural history, including where they live, how they gather food, their role as pollinators, and even how to attract them to your own backyard. Ideal for amateur naturalists and experts alike, it gives detailed accounts of every bee family and genus in North America, describing key identification features, distributions, diets, nesting habits, and more.

- **Provides the most comprehensive and accessible guide to all bees in the United States and Canada**
- **Features more than 900 full-color photos**
- **Offers helpful identification tips and pointers for studying bees**
- **Includes a full chapter on how to attract bees to your backyard**

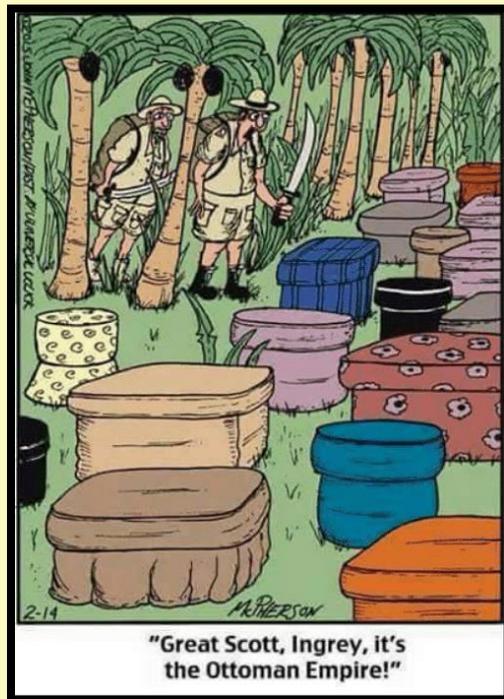
Here is a link to a fascinating video of the blue orchard bee

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=298&v=oPbH1YhsdP8

The Lighter Side



Thanks to John Donaho (Facebook)



"Great Scott, Ingrey, it's the Ottoman Empire!"

Thanks to Julie Gentry (Facebook)



CPTMN 2018 Board Members

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- Communication--Vacant
- Publicity [Margo Johnson](#)
- Volunteer Service Projects [Cheryl Garcia](#)
- Advanced Training [Ramona Ridge](#)
- Membership [Michelle Sullivan](#)
- New Class [Carol Hawkins](#)
- New Class Representative--Vacant
- State Representative [Carol Schwartz](#)
- Seabourne—[Jerry Trenta](#)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://txmn.org/coastal>

Fun Native Bee Fact *By Elena Suglia*

Some bees are generalists, while others specialize on certain flower species. Bumblebees often pollinate all different flowers, while some groups of bees specialize on certain flower groups or species. Squash bees pollinate cucurbit plants like zucchini, pumpkin, or squash. Macropis bees only forage on loosestrife, and Anthemurgus passiflorae is a highly specialized bee that only visits flowers of the species yellow passionflower, Passiflora lutea. Some of this is based on the bee shape and size "matching" with flower shape and size- only long-tongued bees and tiny bees can access nectar at the bottoms of long, narrow flowers, while almost all bees can reap the nectar and pollen rewards of sunflowers and other asters.

This was taken from an article found at <https://esuglia.wordpress.com/2017/06/07/fun-facts-about-native-bees-for-national-pollinator-month/>

Check out our Facebook Page at
[TXMN Coastal Prairie Chapter Facebook](#)

To post photos and information, email
[John Donaho](#)

Also, share our chapter Facebook entries with your friends on your Facebook Page



COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

1402 Band Rd
 Extension Office
 Rosenberg, TX 77471—8678
 Phone: 281-633-7033

*We also have a **Chapter-Only** Facebook Page that allows chapter members to post items. You can join by going to the website below and clicking on "Join". The administrator will allow you access. This is for chapter members only.*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1882734648662315/?ref=bookmarks>