

# TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



## CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER Chapter News – August 2004 Editor, Mary Helen Israel

### **AUGUST FIELD TRIP**

Don't forget the field trip at Brazos Bend on Wednesday, August 11 at 9:00 a.m. Topic for the morning will be dragonflies.

### **REMINDER FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN, TOMMIE HOLT**

Reports from our various activities indicate that our membership has been very active this first half of 2004. However, I've received AT and Volunteer hours from less than half the membership. Please, folks, turn in your hours. We have reports to make to state, and it doesn't look very good for our chapter to have so few hours when we know how active our group is.

Many thanks to those who have submitted their hours.

### **NEW TRAINING CLASS STARTS IN SEPTEMBER**

Barbara Burkhardt, Training Chairman, reminds us that the 2004 training class will start on September 8 in the Extension Office Conference Room, and will continue on for 11 weeks. You might check with Barbara to see if there is anything you can do to help.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING**

There are two opportunities for volunteer activities coming up in September.

On Saturday, September 11 from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. the Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravaganza will be held at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. There are many activities which will need volunteer help that day. For information, call 979-480-0999.

The next week, Saturday, September 18 is Adopt-a-Beach day. Activities at Quintana Beach will be from 9:00 a.m. until noon. A gourmet lunch (hot dogs and trimmings) will be served, and there are tentative plans for entertainment. To sign up, call the Extension Office, 979-864-1558, 979-388-1558 or 281-756-1558, ext. 112.

### **THIRD ANNUAL SOUTHEAST TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST FAIR**

The 3rd Annual Southeast Texas Master Naturalist Fair hosted by the Galveston Bay Area TMN Chapter was held recently at Armand Bayou, Pasadena, TX. Advanced training opportunities are designed to provide

tools and examples of how Master Naturalists can educate the public about natural resources including Birding by Boat and Bird Hikes, Bayou Studies, Dragonfly & Damselfly Studies, Trail Interpretation, Prairie Studies, Wetland Studies and "Something Fishy." John Tveten was the keynote speaker.

About 10 members from the Cradle of Texas attended. There were about 109 people registered for the event. Our own Justina Dent won a grand prize in the photography contest. A copy of her winning picture will be in our chapter scrapbook.

### CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

**August 11**, 9:00 am - Field trip, Dragonflies @ Brazos Bend

**September 1** – General Meeting, 9:00 am, Oysters, Rich Tillman

**October 28** – Lecture at Brazos Bend on Grasses by Flo Hannah, followed by field trip to Nash Prairie

**November 17** – General Meeting, 9:00 am, Texas Mushrooms, Susan Metzler

**December ?** – Field trip at GCBO, Grassland Birds, Sumita Prasad

### ARTICLE OF INTEREST SUBMITTED BY TOMMIK HOLT

The following is from the July 26, 2004 issue of "Bottom Line Daily Health News"

#### LEAVES OF THREE

My neighbor loves to garden, but this year she is having someone else do her weeding due to her increasing sensitivity to poison ivy. She didn't want to risk having to take another round of *prednisone*, the standard treatment for serious cases.

What can you do to avoid this outdoor nuisance?

#### PREVENTION IS THE BEST REMEDY

According to William L. Epstein, MD, professor emeritus of dermatology at the University of California at San Francisco, it is easier to prevent poison ivy than to cure it.

First off, be an herbologist. Know that it's the oil in poison ivy plants -- *urushiol* -- that causes the rash. You can develop a rash by touching the plant... touching something (such as clothing, sports equipment or your dog) that the oil has touched... or by particles in the air touching your skin (which is why you should never try to get rid of poison ivy by burning it).

To prevent poison ivy, Dr. Epstein recommends...

- **Leaves of three, let them be.** Learn to recognize three-leaved, low-to-the-ground poison ivy plants, and avoid them. Teach your children to avoid them, too.

Three-leaved poison oak also grows as a low plant or bush. Its leaves resemble oak leaves. Poison sumac bushes or trees are most common in wet, marshy areas. Each leaf has seven to 13 shiny, smooth-edged leaflets.

- **If you can't avoid contact, protect yourself** by wearing long pants, socks and a long-sleeved shirt. A special technique that Dr. Epstein developed for members of the USDA Forest Service is to spray the arms and legs with deodorant. An additive in the spray prevents the oil from

entering the skin. A product called Ivy Block is based on this same deodorant-barrier concept, so applying either to your skin provides protection that lasts up to 24 hours.

- **As soon as possible following exposure, wash off urushiol with soap and water.** According to Dr. Epstein, you don't have to buy anything special to wash it off -- just wash as quickly as you can after contact. *Best:* Within 15 minutes or less. *Daily Health News* contributing editor Andrew L. Rubman, ND, says that good old-fashioned lye soap is especially effective.
- **Keep in mind that urushiol remains active for a long time.** It doesn't die in winter. My husband got poison ivy when he cut down our Christmas tree one year. Be sure to wash any clothing that has come into contact with the oil, such as gardening gloves, as well as any camping, fishing or sporting gear.

## POISON IVY TREATMENTS

Once exposure occurs, a rash will develop in one to two days. At this point, the focus is on relieving symptoms, calming inflammation, preventing infection and helping blisters heal.

Dr. Epstein advises...

- **Learn to recognize the early warning signs of a poison ivy rash.** Six to 12 hours after exposure, you will develop what looks like little insect bites. At this point, Dr. Epstein

recommends prompt pre-emptive action. Apply a prescription topical corticosteroid medication, such as Temovate. After application, let the skin air dry. Do not cover with a bandage or band-aid.

- **Over-the-counter (OTC) treatment options include calamine lotion and low-dose hydrocortisone cream.** However, when it comes to poison ivy, Dr. Epstein says that topical OTC medications generally don't work very well.
- **OTC oral antihistamines,** such as *chlorpheniramine* (Chlortrimeton) and *diphenhydramine* (Benadryl), help control itching.
- **Take cool showers and lukewarm baths to relieve the itch.** Adding oatmeal and baking soda to baths can help dry up any oozing blisters. Ice and cool compresses also are soothing.
- **Severe cases in very sensitive people, as when the rash is all over the body or on the face, call for more serious interventions,** such as prescription oral corticosteroids or a corticosteroid injection. Antibiotics are required if a secondary infection develops.

## FROM A NATUROPATHIC POINT OF VIEW

Of course, corticosteroids have numerous side effects (from increased appetite and weight gain to decreased ability to fight infection and poor wound healing), so you

don't want to use them unless absolutely necessary. To learn about natural treatment alternatives, I also spoke with Jamison Starbuck, ND, a licensed naturopathic and homeopathic physician who practices natural and holistic medicine in Missoula, Montana.

Dr. Starbuck recommends...

- As soon as possible after exposure, take one of two homeopathic remedies -- homeopathic poison ivy (*Rhus tox*) or sulphur. Homeopathic poison ivy (*Rhus tox*) should not be taken by people who are extremely sensitive to poison ivy.
- The immediate application of calendula salve after exposure

can help prevent a rash from developing. If a rash appears, topical calendula succus in a spray form is soothing and helps relieve the itch.

- Stimulate the body's own cortisone system to fight off an attack of poison ivy. To that end, Dr. Starbuck recommends large doses of vitamin C (up to 3,000 mg daily). *Daily Health News* contributing editor Andrew Rubman, ND, suggests a high-potency multi B (typically 100 mg or 150 mg), two or three capsules a day. Reduce your dosage of vitamin C if diarrhea develops.

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