

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™
Cross Timbers



Earth Day Issue!

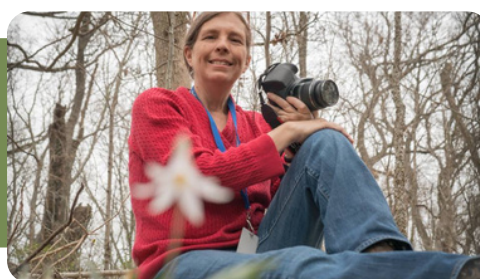


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In this Issue:



Month Speaker

Carol Clark explores diverse historical uses of North Texas native plants—from food and medicine to rituals, dyes, and pollution detection—in this engaging presentation.

Current Events

May 2025 features birding walks, plant surveys, native prairie tours, and workshops across North Texas, hosted by Fort Worth Audubon Society, NPAT, and local naturalists like Jeff Quayle.



Short Stories

Naturalists share their stories of reducing, reusing, and recycling, including insights on composting, creative ways to repurpose materials like glass, and the surprising impact of small changes on waste reduction. Happy Earth Day!



CTMN Announcements



Virtual Volunteer Fair –

Discover how to earn volunteer hours online! Recordings available. [!\[\]\(99f58673407353e96a019fbca558fd72_img.jpg\) Details & Access](#)

Texas City Nature Challenge – April 25–28

Join this statewide community science event! Make and upload observations through May 4 to contribute data and support biodiversity.

[!\[\]\(a870788d6ed9b8fd294b7654a8c8526b_img.jpg\) Info & Upload](#)

Nature Con – April 26, Fort Worth Nature Center

A fun day of conservation-themed activities, learning, and BioBlitzing!

 10 AM—3 PM

 9601 Fossil Ridge Rd, Fort Worth, TX 76135

Just for Fun: Earth Day 2025 – April 22

Check out worldwide Earth Day events and ideas for celebrating!

[!\[\]\(e3275251d0893157c3584e20c81dc3ba_img.jpg\) Earth Day Activities](#)

North Texas Mycology Association is now in the VMS!

Stay connected with the Cross Timbers Chapter for updates and event info:

[!\[\]\(235bfe13ebf007ce2eea9e689707fac7_img.jpg\) Cross Timbers TMN](#)

**Join us for NTMA's
3rd Annual MushFest
@ Red Wolf
Intentional
Community, Outside
Bonham, TX**

- Eight Presentations
- Guided Forays
- Mushroom Cultivation & Workshops
- Mushroom Cooking Demonstrations
- Live music, Entertainment & Camping... and more!



**Scan me for
more info!**

North Texas Mushroom Festival 2025 aka MushFest!

**Friday, May 16 through
Sunday May 18, 2025**

**Caddo Grasslands Fungal
Biodiversity Survey**



@NorthCentral_npsot



Native
Plant
Society
of Texas

SAVE THE DATE!

NORTH CENTRAL • NATIVE PLANT SALE
Saturday May 3rd 2025
Randol Mill Park Pavilion
Arlington, Texas



Cataloging 1.5M plant species allows Fort Worth herbarium to grow its conservation efforts

The Botanical Research Institute of Texas is home to the nation's ninth largest herbarium, an epicenter for plant research and investigation.

Fort Worth Report / Apr 22



Speakers

May Speaker



**CTMN Chapter Meeting/Presentation –
May 19, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.**

Fort Worth Botanic Garden

**Carol Clark, Blackland Prairie Chapter Texas
Master Naturalist, Native Plant Society of
Texas Member, Monarch Watch
Conservation Specialist**

Historical Uses of North Texas Plants

Historic Uses of North Texas Plants covers the interesting and sometimes surprising uses of our native plants over the years—from prehistoric times to modern day. Beyond the obvious uses of food, clothing and shelter, native plants have been used as dyes, medicines, industrial materials, toys, for rituals, theatre effects, pollution detectors and more.

Carol Clark is an amateur botany enthusiast, a Texas Master Naturalist, and longtime member of the Native Plant Society of Texas. She and her husband own and operate Clark Haven, a wildlife preserve and custom wildflower seed business in Cooke County. She enjoys leading discovery walks in local natural areas, and finding and photographing interesting plants.

Member Milestones



Congratulations to everyone who completed their initial certification and double-certified, or those who recertified and got their Texas Ecoregions pin! Don't forget the upcoming year's certification can get you a 2025 GREATER ROADRUNNER pin!



Photos by Eleanor Pate





Native of the Month



Castilleja spp. (re-published/edited from April 2024)

by Eleanor Pate



Photos by Eleanor Pate

Spring is here, and fields are covered with wildflowers. Among the bluebonnets, one can see flashes of red or purple. These are *Castilleja*. Its most common color is red, as stated above, but it can also be a lot of different colors, depending on the species and subspecies. Genus *Castilleja* is a member of the parasitic family Orobanchaceae, which includes over 200 species, seven of which are native to Texas.

The colorful components of *Castilleja* are actually specialized bracts, rather than actual petals, and surround small, modestly-colored flowers. *Castilleja* are hemiparasites that do photosynthesize, but also draw water and nutrients from host plants by penetrating the roots of those plants with specialized roots called haustoria.



Because of this, *Castilleja* does not thrive in isolation. Depending on the composition of a botanical community, *Castilleja* can increase or decrease biodiversity by either parasitizing more dominant or secondary plants.



Featured Project

City Nature Challenge IdentifyBlitz



When: April 29th- May 4nd

Where: DFW City Nature Challenge 2025 iNat Project

What: Identify as many organisms as you can positively identify.

This Featured Project highlights the identification part of the BioBlitz, which often goes unnoticed! While the main CNC happens April 25 - 28, I wanted to emphasize the important of the identification part of the City Nature Challenge.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!

Years ago, I watched two eye-opening shows - one where a person kept all their trash (cleaned out) in their apartment for a year (to see how much accumulated) and another where experts sorted through people's garbage, revealing how much could have been recycled or composted. It was shocking and changed the way I handle waste in my own home. Now, my neighbors joke that I never have trash because my bin is never out! It's amazing how small changes can make a big impact! Happy Earth Day! -Teddi Zonker

***Compost**

***Recycle**

***Reducing Waste**

***Reuse/Repurpose**



Wow, what a surprise!
This babydogge has
taught herself to
compost. You should be
more like her! Without
the tail-sniffing, of
course.

continued ->

Interview: Chemist & Horticulture Officianado

Madison Cover: I'm here with my ~significant other~ who is a no-waste guru, an analytical chemist, and graduated from Texas A&M with a double major Chemistry & Horticulture degrees - James Semper!

MG: What, in your experience, is a good composition for a compost bin?

James Semper: So ideally, you are layering compost with what people call "browns" and "greens."

Browns are materials that have lost some of their water content and nitrogen—they're dried out.

Greens are still fresh and have a lot of nutrients available to be broken down, especially proteins.

If you keep a lot of greens together—especially if there's enough oxygen getting to your bin—you can end up with very smelly decomposition. That kind of smell can attract pests, and it's generally not desired.

Now, I tend to lean more toward the "green-heavy" side of composting just because of the materials I usually have on hand. But if you look at my bin, you'll notice it has a lot of wood chips in it—that's on purpose, to help balance it out.

On the flip side, if your bin has too much brown material—too many dried things—it can compost very slowly. Like, really slow. It's kind of like wood mulch: it can take a year or more to fully break down.

When you mix greens and browns, you get a decomposition process that's more controlled and usually doesn't smell.

continued ->

JS: I would say for your general browns—and mind you, browns when referencing leaves and referencing wood chips are not the same. You need easily a tenth of woodchips as opposed to leaves. But I would say, for the average person using leaves, you would probably want about two parts brown material to one part green material. And specifically referencing, like, your kitchen scraps or yard clippings as green. You want to find a ratio that doesn't involve a lot of bad smells.

MG: Okay, next question. I noticed you collect all of your glass bottles. I remember you bought sieves for an experiment. What is that about?

JS: I was grinding and sifting glass to try and make sand to amend the backyard soil from being so clay-ey.

Grinding glass isn't practical unless you have something that blends it well or access to a lot of bottles. If you were getting hundreds from a bar, maybe. But hand-grinding? No. It's dangerous, and the dust can cause serious eye and lung damage.

If you can do it safely, and you've got clean bottles, grinding them into powders works great for art projects. When ground small enough, colored glass isn't sharp and becomes like sand. You can even sell it to glass manufacturers, but that's only if it's clean.

At the end of the day, you're turning it into sand, using it in a potting mix, making art with it, or sending it off for reprocessing.

But unless you've got a big supply, like running a nonprofit, it's not practical. On an individual level, the rock tumbler is the best option.

Where's Waldo or Rather; Where's the Woodpecker?

by Rudy Escobar

As birders, we spend countless and rewarding hours looking at birds. There is something fascinating about seeing birds in their natural habitat. Sometimes, it is just a quick glance, and then we rack our brains and other resources to identify what it was. Other times, they are in full view and we just enjoy looking at these magnificent avian. And there are other times, when they are in the trees hiding from our prying eyes. Seems like they are teasing us by jumping from one tree limb to another, just out of sight. Now it becomes a question of the bird's version of "Where's Waldo"?

I have several bird feeders in my back yard that attract different birds such as doves, finches, sparrows, wrens, etc, and my favorite: woodpeckers. I usually sit on my back yard swing or breakfast nook waiting for them to show up. To my delight, a Downy woodpecker alights on the suet feeder I had set up. I marvel at the way it is attacking the suet.



Downy Woodpecker on suet feeder

A sudden movement by me makes the woodpecker take off for the nearest tree. Now it becomes a game of find the bird. I keep looking but to no avail. Then, I noticed something moving from one tree limb to another. It halts very suddenly.

Finally, I see it but very well hidden. I get my camera to take a picture. I lose sight of it again! So, who's going to win this game of "find me if you can"? As I concentrate in one particular branch, I think it's finally in view, maybe? I bring the camera to my eye and take several pictures. The question for you is this: Can you find Waldo (the Downy Woodpecker)

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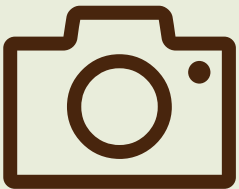


Where is the Downy Woodpecker?



There it is! Hiding out!

I could spend hours watching birds and trying to identify them—every day can be a new day of hide-and-seek.



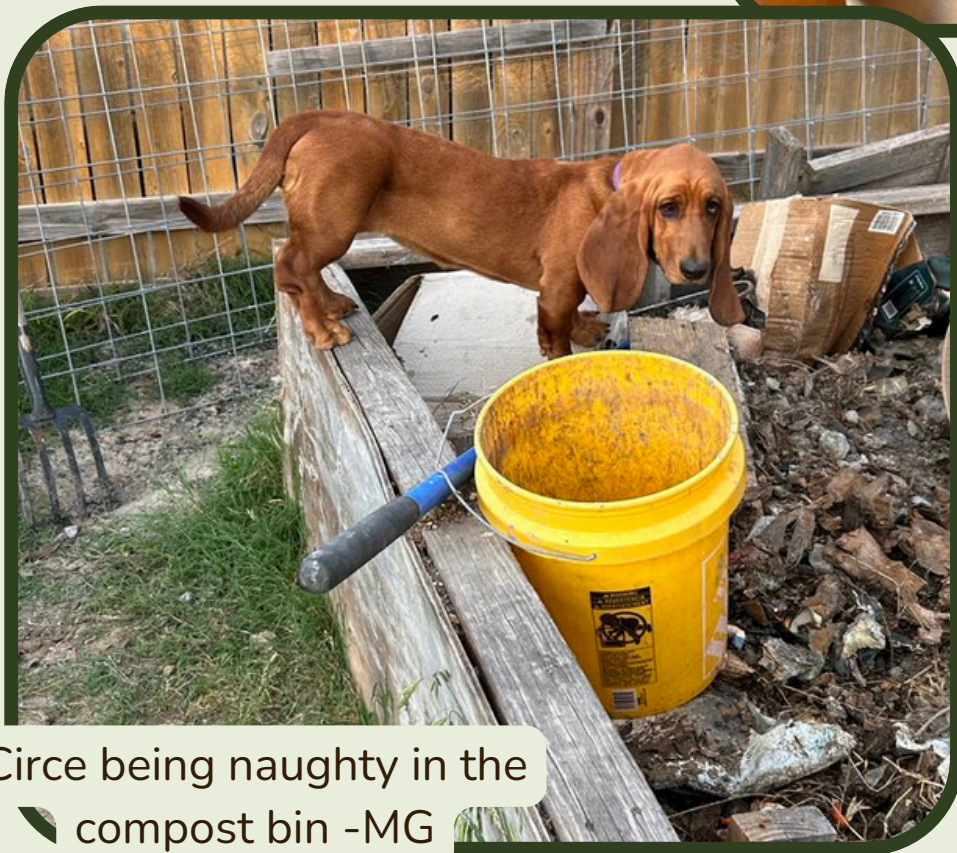
Art & Photography Gallery



Glass for recycling -MG



Kitchen scraps-MG



Circe being naughty in the
compost bin -MG



Current Events

Lake Proctor (Comanche Co)

Jeff Quayle - squaylei2000@gmail.com

Saturday, 5/3, 9am

Plant Survey Dates

Chalk Mountain Ranch (Walnut

Springs/Somervell County)

Jeff Quayle - squaylei2000@gmail.com

Tuesday, 5/6, 9am

Stewart Ranch tour in Graham

Tour offered by donations (NPAT)

Jeff Quayle - squaylei2000@gmail.com

Saturday, 5/10, 9am

Fort Worth Audubon Society

Earbirding with your phone workshop

Debbie Branch, djbranch2@yahoo.com

5/10, 730am

Plant Survey Dates

Stewart Ranch (Graham/Young County)

Jeff Quayle - squaylei2000@gmail.com

Monday, 5/12, 9am

LBJ Natl Grasslands - unit #31

Jeff Quayle - squaylei2000@gmail.com

Saturday, 5/17, 9am

Chalk Mountain Ranch Plant Survey

Tour offered by donations (NPAT)

Jeff Quayle - squaylei2000@gmail.com

Monday, 5/19, 9:00 AM

Fort Worth Audubon Society

Oliver Park, Mansfield

Tom Haase; tom.haase@sbcglobal.net

Tuesday, 5/20, 8:30 AM

BioBlitz at Rock Creek Ranch Park

Tour offered by donations (NPAT)

Jeff Quayle, squaylei2000@gmail.com

Saturday, 5/24, 8:30 AM

Stewart Ranch Plant Survey

Jeff Quayle, squaylei2000@gmail.com

Monday, 5/26, 9:00 AM



Board Members

CTMN Board Members

- Mary Beth Lampe - President
- Teddi Zonker - Vice President
 - Bill Collins - Secretary
- Dee Ann McGinnis- Treasurer

CTMN Directors

- Carol Marcotte - Membership
- Sharon Hamilton - Past President
 - Erika Swyryn - Training
- Theresa Thomas - VMS Admin & Vol and AT Hours
 - Sandy Thornburgh - Hospitality
 - Theresa Thomas - Records
 - Madison Gover - Newsletter
- Frank Keeney - Announcement eblasts
- Mary Beth Lampe - Webmaster
- Julio Corralejo - Class of 2024 Rep.
- Erika Swyryn - Education Director

For submissions, nominations or announcements, please put the subject line as the newsletter category you are entering for and email to newsletter@ctmn.org

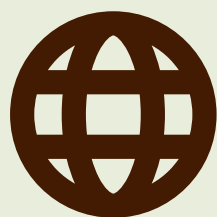


Inclusivity:

Together we can make the newsletter inclusive to the visually impaired. Consider providing a text description of your photos for screen-reader software.



**Cross Timbers
Master Naturalists
Facebook Group**



**Cross Timbers
Master Naturalists
Website**

CTMN Sponsors

- **Rachel Richter**, TPWD, Urban Biologist,
Rachel.Richter@tpwd.texas.gov
- **Jacklyn Jones Doyle**, Texas AgriLife, County Extension Agent – Agriculture and Natural Resources,
jacklyn.jones@ag.tamu.edu
- **Michael Perez**, Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge
michael.perez@fortworthtexas.gov