

Biosketch

Steve Houser

Owner/President of a leading Dallas-Fort Worth area tree care firm

Certified Texas Master Gardener, Instructor, Speaker, Dallas County

Certified Texas Master Naturalist, Instructor, Speaker, North Texas Chapter

Certified Arborist, International Society of Arboriculture, TX 0107

Chair Emeritus, Founding Member, Speaker, City of Dallas Urban Forest Advisory Committee

Past President, Founding Member, Speaker, Dallas Historic Tree Coalition

Board of Trustees, Founding Member, Speaker, Texas Historic Tree Coalition

Board of Advisors, Speaker, Vision North Texas

Board Member, Founding Member, Speaker, Friends of Reverchon Park

Founding Member, Speaker, Texas Tree Trails

Past Treasurer, Texas Urban Forestry Council

Founding Member, City of Dallas Citizen Forester Program

Writer, Neil Sperry's *E-Gardens Newsletter* (monthly) and frequent contributor to many of the newsletters produced by the groups listed above.

Life in the tree care business for Dallas native Steve Houser began while he was in college, attending classes each morning and maintaining the trees at Brookhaven Country Club in Farmers Branch, Texas, until late afternoon. Nights and weekends found him feeding his passion for flying, as he became a licensed FAA aviation mechanic, attended Pilot Ground School, and scored 100% on the Federal Aviation Administration exam, a rare feat.

Steve was among the first arborists to become certified in Texas. Today, he is Owner/President of a Dallas-Fort Worth area tree care expert firm that employs many of the top consulting arborists and tree climbers in the state. Consulting arborists include degreed plant pathologists, horticulturists, foresters, and native plant experts. The firm's tree climbers have won the annual state tree climbing competitions an unprecedented 19 different years in the past and they represented the state in national and international competitions.

In his "spare" time, Steve contributes over 1,000 volunteer hours each year toward worthwhile tree-related causes educating the public about trees and natural resource-related issues. He teaches forest ecology to Master Naturalists and biology and arboriculture to Master Gardeners in Dallas and surrounding counties. He has been an advisor for Vision North Texas since its inception and works diligently to encourage responsible and sustainable land use. He is also a part of the public speaker's bureau for various groups. In addition, awards and recognition from his peers and others are solid evidence of the respect he has earned as expert in his field. His awards and recognitions include:

Preservation Project Award (1996), National Arbor Day Foundation

Outstanding Service Award,--Historic Dealey Plaza Tree Clean-up (1996), City of Dallas Parks and Recreation Department

Outstanding Service Award, Reverchon Park Restoration Project (1998), City of Dallas Parks and Recreation Department

Tree Preservation Award (1998), International Society of Arboriculture, Texas Chapter

Outstanding Texas Community Volunteer (2000), International Society of Arboriculture, Texas Chapter; Texas Urban Forestry Council, and Texas Forest Service

Award of Merit (2001), "in appreciation for his continuing commitment and inestimable contribution to the Texas Tree Climbing Championships", International Society of Arboriculture, Texas Chapter

Steve Houser Award of Excellence (aka "**The Houser Cup**") (2001), awarded each year to the Texas state tree-climbing champion by the International Society of Arboriculture, Texas Chapter

Outstanding Professional of the Year (2001), International Society of Arboriculture, Texas Chapter, Texas Urban Forestry Council

Special Recognition, Office of the Mayor/City of Dallas (2003), proclamation by Mayor Laura Miller extending "special recognition to Steve Houser and the 2003 Texas Tree Climbing Championship for their efforts to preserve and promote a better environment"

Award of Merit (2004), for "inestimable time" dedicated to the chapter, International Society of Arboriculture, Texas Chapter

United States President's Call to Service Award (2008), provided by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, for accumulating 5,000 volunteer hours through the Texas Master Naturalist Program. He also has received a resolution from the Texas State House of Representatives commemorating his volunteer service.

Award of Appreciation (2008), for "many years of technical support and godfathering" regarding past Texas Tree Climbing Competitions, International Society of Arboriculture, Texas Chapter

Presidents Award of Recognition (2012), for extensive efforts to work with Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners to provide public presentations as well as educational materials during the Earth Day Dallas event. Stephanie Timko, President of the Texas Master Naturalist Program, North Texas Chapter, provided the recognition during their annual holiday party in December.



"By all these lovely tokens
September days are here,
With summer's best of weather
And autumn's best of cheer."
-Helen Hunt Jackson, *September*,
1830-1885

“FIELD NOTES IN FOCUS”



*Squirrel with Hibiscus flower— from the gallery of
Dale Meyer*

*Featuring Master Naturalist photographers—
flora and fauna as you see them*

If you would like a "last word", please
send to wodum10043@reagan.com

— LAST WORD —

Q. What do you call it when worms take over the world? A. Global Warming



EARTHWORMS — INTERESTING FACTS

From: [EcoWatch's BIODIVERSITY website and University of Illinois Extension]

> An earthworm can grow only so long. A well-fed adult will depend on what kind of worm it is, how many segments it has, how old it is and how well fed it is. An *Lumbricus terrestris* will be from 90-300 millimeters long.

> There are approximately 2,700 different kinds of earthworms.

> In one acre of land, there can be more than a million earthworms.



> Charles Darwin spent 39 years studying earthworms more than 100 years ago. Worms are cold-blooded animals.

Earthworm egg cases look like tiny lemons. When earthworms hatch, they look like tiny adults. Photo courtesy: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

> Earthworms have the ability to replace or replicate lost segments. This ability varies greatly depending on the species of worm you have, the amount of damage to the worm and where it is cut. It may be easy for a worm to replace a lost tail, but may be very difficult or impossible to replace a lost head if things are not just right.

> The Australian Gippsland Earthworm grows to 12 feet long and can weigh 1-1/2 pounds.

> Worms can eat their weight each day.

> Worm movements within the Earth create burrows that encourage the passage of air and a loosening of the soil. Good things, right? **Well, maybe not . . .**

— The northern forest evolved after the glaciers retreated, yielding an ecosystem that does not benefit from earthworms. These forests require a deep layer of slowly decomposing leaves and other organic matter called "duff" that overlays the soil. When earthworms invade these forests, they quickly eat up the duff, with the result that nutrients become less available to young, growing plants and the soil, instead of aerating and loosening, becomes more compact.

— As duff disappears, so do the insects and other small creatures that depend on it for survival, with the result that animals such as salamanders lose a key food source and face population declines. Earthworm burrows also may speed the passage of water through forest soil, another change that might be a benefit to farmland or a garden with compacted soil but that is a negative in a northern forest.



There are more than 180 earthworm species found in the U.S. and Canada. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock



Earthworm movements within the earth create burrows that encourage the passage of air and loosening of the soil.

Your editor — class 2005 says:



Thank you all for
contributing this
month.



Texas Master Naturalist
Elm Fork Chapter
Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension
Joseph A. Carroll Building
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Denton, TX 76201-9026

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*Education, Conservation,
Preservation, Restoration*

WE'RE ON THE WEB

www.txmn.org/elmfork

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*Red-shouldered hawk after brazenly visiting back yard bird bath
turned camera shy—from Dorothy Thetford*

OUR MISSION . . . *"to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our community"*

Monthly Chapter Meetings

9:30 a.m. preceded by a social time at 9:00 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month. Chapter meetings are open to the public.

Meeting September 18, 2014—Indian Marker Trees, Steve Houser and LeeAnn Weaver (Jernigan)

Meeting October 16, 2014—Texas Parks and Wildlife Bobcat Study, Derek Broman

**Location: Joseph A. Carroll Bldg., 401 W. Hickory Street,
Denton, TX 76201-9026**

Board Meetings

The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m. The Board last met September 11, 2014. Next meeting October 9, 2014.

Board meetings are open to members.