

The Harvestman – A long legged arachnid

The harvestman is often called a Daddy Long Legs. It is a cousin to spiders. It is in the Order Opiliones in the Class Arachnida. Unlike a spider, Opiliones have a broad connection between the cephalothorax and abdomen. This makes it look like there is one small body surrounded by the long legs. Opiliones do not have any venom glands.



Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influence of the earth. —Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*



Where The Buffalo Roam

by Brenda Maston

I was drawn to visit Caprock Canyons State Park because it is the home of the descendants from Charles Goodnight's bison herd. I was not disappointed! Driving through the rolling prairies of the Panhandle did not offer much for scenery except miles of wind turbines, slowly turning to supply alternative electrical power for Texas. As I entered the Visitor Center, I was greeted by graceful Desert Willows, with their blooming clusters of small fragrant lavender flowers. These trees are native replacements for the non-indigenous Crepe Myrtle.



Since it was morning, the Park Ranger indicated that bison would be drinking water at Lake Theo. Following the directions from the map and the Park Ranger, I found the herd at the shores of the lake. I drove to about 50 yards from where they were gathered, stepped out of my car and started snapping photos. As I got back into my car, the herd had begun to move across the road in front of me. I stopped to let them pass and found myself completely surrounded by bison. The closer they pressed, the harder my heart pounded. "Don't Get Out of the Car"!



My next wildlife encounter was a colony of prairie dogs. As I entered the Honey Flats camping area, the Slow Down For Prairie Dogs sign definitely got my full attention. Before I could blink, these cute little furry sentinels were scurrying across the road, running in and out of their bunkers and sitting at attention, paws folded, barking orders to the neighborhood. Quite fascinating!

Both the North American Bison and Black-Tail Prairie Dog, once exterminated from the High Plains of Texas, have been reintroduced to the grasslands with a goal of restoring the natural habitat for plants and wildlife. Seeing these wonderful creatures in their native habitat, roaming free, is a memory I will cherish for a lifetime.





Photos & information from Dorothy Thetford

Rain-lily (*Cooperia pedunculata*) usually pops up a few days after a rain shower. And, yes, they are visible along all the roadsides and prairies right now. So delicate and pretty. Within a day or two, they will expire, the white petals turn a pale tangerine color and then fall off, leaving a seed pod of 3 cubicles to mature later. Seeds will be black, paper-thin, flat structures that are packed side-by-side into each cubicle. When seeds are mature, a parchment type/onion skin type/fine covering will split and expose the seeds for dispersal. Nature at its best!

Snow-on-the-mountain (*Euphorbia marginata*) — Risa Bender



Liatris elegans aka
Pink-scale Gayfeather
comes from Susan Pohlen
who found it growing on
her property. She
states that according
to Mary Curry, former
MN member, and Shirley
Lusk, it is rare for
this area



Mary Curry—Liatris aspera
Tall Gayfeather closeup



Mary captured the full
plant, *Liatris elegans*,
prior to blooming.