

# PROJECTS AT WORK—CONT'D



*Tony Benjamin*



*Kaye Jackson*



*Harriet Powell*



*Harriet, Sandy Stickane, Cecily, Becky, Kaye, Nicole, Brenda Maston*



*Nellie, Cecily, Dan Prins, Nicole*



*Becky, Cecily, Toni, Brenda, Sandy, Kaye, Nicole, Harriet*



*Nellie, Cecily, Nicole*



**Father and Daughter**

**A picture says a thousand words, and this one is proof that our project met its goal.**

**We are now educating people about Texas Wildflowers found in Denton**

**As a parting statement, when asked, “Well, Brenda, What are you going to do now that your project is over?”**

**My answer is simple: Find another subject to write about!**

# PROJECTS AT WORK—CONT'D

## Let's take a hike through Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center

Photos and commentary  
from **Marilyn Blanton**

**Photo of the day!**



*On* a beautiful spring morning, Dave Ford and I lead a home school group and their moms on a hike at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center. Jonathan Smith gave an introduction before we went started on the prairie trail. The kids were very interested in everything they saw and already knew some of the wildflowers and butterflies. Some of them brought their own magnifying glasses for closer observation and notebooks to sketch the flowers we talked about. Milkweeds, Indian blankets, Indian paintbrushes, Engelmann's daisies, sensitive briars, pink evening primroses, horsenettles and thistles were just a few of the flowers in bloom. The turtle was also a big hit. The moms and kids said they want to come back!



## PROJECTS AT WORK— CONT'D

Susan Pohlen and Jonathan Smith led a Clear Creek hike with cub scouts and their parents and siblings—photos from *Susan Pohlen*



## Hands on Science

Photo and article by Jan  
Frick Thompson

**O**n May 26 McNair School's 4th grade students had a personal experience with Nature. With the rainy weather lately, their classes at Clear Creek had to be cancelled. Jonathan Smith, Project Manager at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center, suggested I bring my collection of "critters", toads, garter snake, turtles and wolf spider.

I now reside in Indiana and visit Texas and bring my "critters" with me - dog goes to the kennel but I don't think there is a pet care center that would handle the spider or snake.

Back to the fun part. We arrived at McNair school and set up in a class room with three stations - Sherrill Campbell had the two turtles, George Kragle handled the two toads, and I had the snake (Snakey) and the female Wolf spider with an egg sack. Jonathan presented a lecture for the students about the nature center and nature information. He had half the group and we had the other half (80 students total divided in two groups).

When the students came into our classroom, they were divided into three groups, but, I must admit my group seemed the most noisy. Gee, a snake and a spider - and ya get to touch and hold them, wow! No ouches

Sherrill's group was so excited touching and close encounters with the two turtles. One little girl was so funny, she didn't want to hold the baby turtle because it peed or that's what she thought the turtle did - it had wet feet. They asked Sherrill how they get out of their shells - they considered the turtle's shell moveable housing. So she had to explain the body structure of the turtle.

In George's group the kids would touch the toads and then the toads would jump across the floor and under some kid's legs and then they would squeal with excitement! One toad escaped the group and hopped across the floor with the kids cheering on the toad. The kids liked when the toads hopped on them. What fun!



*Sherrill Campbell*

I presented the snake and the Wolf spider to the groups of children. Before they would sit down they were so excited to see a snake and to know they were going to be able to hold it. Some of the kids at first were a little anxious and then, as they watched the others react with the snake and realized how harmless and sweet the snake was, wanted to hold it more than just one time. And some wanted to hug the snake. Yes, I said hug the snake. So much fun! The Wolf spider was more of a visual and a little touch experience because spiders can be delicate. She did produce an egg sac, so the children held and touched it, but some really wanted to hold the spider too. It was an enjoyable experience for both the kids and us Master Naturalists.

*"What are little boys made of?  
Snips and snails, and puppy dogs tails ...!"  
"What are little girls made of?  
Sugar and spice and all things nice...!"*

**GIANT CONEFLOWER**

(Rudbeckia maxima)



# W

hen we think of tall wildflowers, we usually think of Maximilian sunflower (*Helianthus maximiliani*) or Tall Goldenrod (*Solidago altissima*) and, yes, they are usually eye-level for me at 5'6" tall. However, there is a giant among us. It's commonly called Giant coneflower, and earns its title easily. These native wildflowers grow as tall as 7 to 9 feet high, but when found in their normal growing conditions, may not ap-

pear to be the giants that they are.

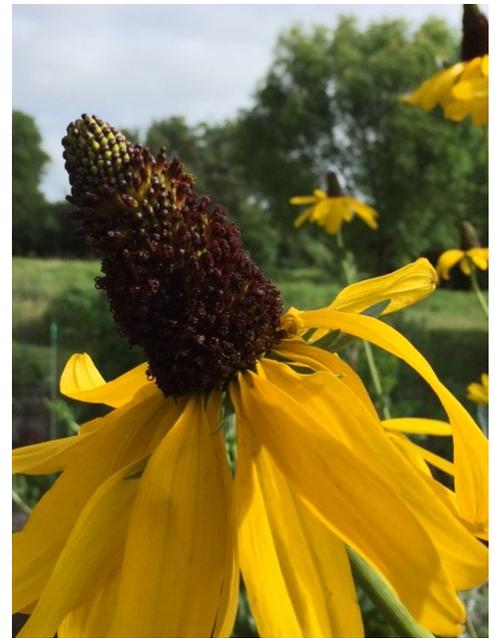
Their favorite growing conditions are in low areas and ditches where they survive and flourish in moist, heavy sandy or silty soils, and those areas are predominantly in the eastern edge of Texas and into the moist soils of Louisiana.

The flower head is extremely impressive with a diameter of approximately 6 inches with 10-20 bright yellow colored ray flowers, and the center brown disk flowers are compacted into an elongated 2 to 3 inch conelike, tubular structure.

This striking plant has glaucous leaves that appear to be bluish-green color because of a waxy or powdery coating, and are clasping or sessile (without petiole). The extremely tall stems are unusually stout and sturdy and can withstand very strong winds.

*Rudbeckia maxima* genus, also known as Great coneflower or Largest brown-eyed Susan, was named for the Swedish botanists Olaus Johannis Rudbeck (1630-1702) and his son, Olaus Olai Rudbeck (1660-1740).

Even though we are on the western edge of this perennial, you will find it blooming in May to June.



**Dorothy Thetford, MN Class 2001**