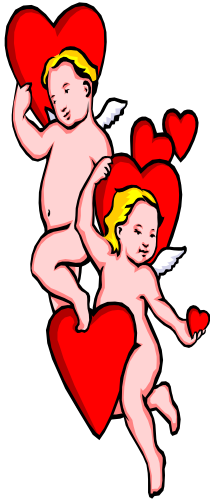


WOODDUCK WHISTLER



Volume 8 Issue 2
February 2012

Greetings and Happy New Year



I'd like to talk about habitat this month. I spent a few days down at my brother's deer lease south of San Antonio and I saw a new sight on the land. The land had been bulldozed six lanes wide to lay a new pipeline transecting the ranch property. The ranch property is bordered at the north by the San Miguel Creek which has a large flood plain. The rest of the ranch property is bordered by "south Texas mesquite forests," a term used for the huge areas of mainly single age mesquite trees and underbrush. Another aspect is the oil and gas roads crisscross, creating numerous islands of land, in various size and shapes, in sections of the ranch. This makes for a very interesting range of habitat.

As evening approached, the first thing I noted was the calls of the Sand-Hill Cranes coming from the North part of the ranch. Just as the sun had set the coyotes began calling to one another in what seemed to be from all directions. I know that a few coyotes gathered together can sound like more than there actually are. I don't think they have a shortage of coyotes at the ranch.

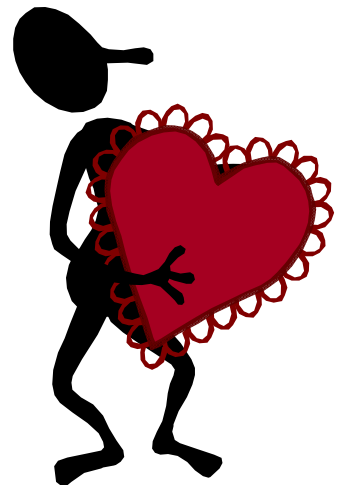
Another critter with no shortage is the wild hogs or pigs. The guys on the lease and their sons have pledged to take out as many hogs as they can each season. When hogs are hunted there will be meat on the grill at camp. Hogs, as most people know, are bad for most of the habitats they inhabit and are often the cause of habitat loss.

Healthy habitat knowledge is important to all naturalists alike because it helps us understand the elements of good habitat. That's like knowing that Sand-Hill Crane's calls are good to hear in the wild, because you know the habitat is supporting them. They are really cool birds and can make a lot of racket in a large flock. That's about all for now folks. Stay tuned and stay healthy.

Neal

Special Points of Interest

Presidents Message	1
NEWS ~	2
Trees	3
American Holly	4
Tentative Class Schedule	5-6
Bird Feeding Update	7
Web/Officers./Address	8



**HEY WE ARE ON
FACEBOOK!**

East Texas Chapter Master Naturalist Advanced Training & Volunteer Opportunities

**Jan 21 Sat 09:00 AM TMN SEMINAR Geology of Soils by Steve Lange @ Tyler Nature Center
0900 \$10 non ETCMN members AT approved**

Jan 26 Thurs TMN Monthly Meeting

Jan 28 Sat 08:00-4PM EAGLEFEST Emory, Texas 8:00

**We will have booth and talk to the public about Eagles and what ETCMN chapter is all about.
Volunteer hrs approved**

*

**We also need to let everyone know that you East Texas Chapter dues need to be in
by end of February 2012.**

They have been increased to \$20 for individuals, and \$35.00 for couples.

*

Our January 26 meeting TBD 6:45pm @ Tyler Nature Centersee you there.....

Also, currently looking for someone to do the East Texas Master Naturalist Newsletter.....

No experience necessary...training available.....good way to get

4 hours + a month volunteer hours!!!! Email: tmn.editor@gmail.com

Wipe Out Wasps

This trick trap works like a charm!

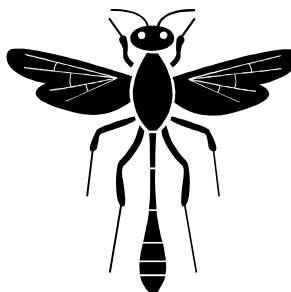
**1/2 cup of sugar 1/2 cup of water
1 cup of apple cider vinegar 1 banana peel**

Dissolve the sugar and water in a 1/2 gallon jug, then add the vinegar and banana peel.

Add more water to fill the jug 1/2 way, then screw on the cap and shake well.

Remove the cap, and hang the trap by the handle from a tree branch.

Laura





The Indian Mound Oak

From Famous Trees of Texas by the Texas Forest Service

This towering southern red oak jealously guards the last of four prehistoric Indian mounds which were located near the center of Nacogdoches.

Deep in the mists of unrecorded history, an unknown tribe of Indians whose origin and destiny are lost, constructed this mound. With sticks and stones, animal bones and clam shells, they loosened and carried soil to the selected sites in baskets and other receptacles.

Some of the larger mounds required several years to build, however this one is only about six feet tall and probably required much less time.

People have theorized that the mounds were built for ceremonial purposes, as a place of refuge during floods, as a place of abode, or as a burial spot. One can only wonder about the secrets contained within this mound and the tales the venerable oak might reveal, if it could talk, about the more recent visits of DeSoto, LaSalle and DeLeon.

When Nacogdoches University was built in 1856, three companion mounds, located to the west of this tree, were not recognized for their historic value and were leveled to make way for the university buildings. The old university campus is now occupied by the Nacogdoches High School.

The mound and its guardian oak are located on the east side of the 500 block of Mound Street, across from the Nacogdoches High School.

American Holly (*Ilex opaca*)

I am trying to find something bright, colorful and cheerful during the dreary months of winter. Right now in my backyard the only things that are colorful are my garden art and the American Holly tree. Everyone knows that holly is one of the symbols of Christmas but I wanted to know more about “stand out in the crowd tree.”

American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) can often grow to 40-50 feet tall with a diameter in excess of 1 foot. Hollies aren't particularly tough trees or fond of drought although the hollies in my area seem to be surviving. The bark is finely textured and either white, light gray to black. The wood has been used for black piano keys and violin pegs.

The evergreen leaves, which drop after three years on the tree, are spiny along the margins, measure 2-4 inches long, rather oval, thick and leathery. In home gardens they can be an essential element of shelter for birds and small mammals by serving as the top layer of an evergreen habitat area. They tolerate shade very well, though fruiting is more pronounced when the trees receive a bit of sun. Like all hollies, both a male and a female are necessary to fruit production. Holly gurus recommend one male to three female trees. Fruits ripen between September and December and stay on the trees most of the winter unless they are consumed by wildlife. Even though I relish the bright red color of the berries, I know foliage is valuable as well during the winter. Evergreens provide protection during storms and from predators year-round, and nesting sites during spring/summer.

Back in Pagan times, it is said that the Druids of British history believed the holly was a scared tree. They brought holly plants into their homes to give refuge to the woodland spirits and fairies left homeless when the leaves of autumn begin to fall. Another superstition held by these early Europeans included the belief that if prickly hollies were brought into the house, then the husband was in control, but if smooth-edged hollies were brought in, the wife was in command. Memo to self, next holiday season search for smooth-edged hollies.

Ann Reynolds



**EAST TEXAS CHAPTER—TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM
CLASS SCHEDULE—SPRING 2012**

CLASS 1— SATURDAY, MARCH 3 THE NATURE CENTER, TYLER

Morning Session 9 AM to 12 Noon:
Introduction to the TMN Program--Chapter Information--Class of 2012 CD
Neal Stilley, Chapter President, Presiding
(10:00) "What is a Naturalist"—Barney Lipscomb, Botanical Research
Institute of Texas (BRIT), Ft. Worth
Lunch
Afternoon Session 1:00 to 4:00 PM
Geology and Soils of Texas---Steve Lange, TPWD, Tyler

CLASS 2—SATURDAY, MARCH 10 THE NATURE CENTER, TYLER

Morning Session 9 AM to 12 Noon
Weather and Climate--Steve Lange, TPWD Natural Resource Specialist
Lunch
Afternoon Session 1:00 to 4:00 PM
Ecological Regions of Texas—Steve Lange, TPWD Tyler

CLASS 3—SATURDAY, MARCH 17 THE NATURE CENTER, TYLER

Morning Session 9 AM to 12 Noon
Mammology--Kevin Herriman, TPWD, Northeast Texas Ecosystem Project
Lunch
Afternoon Session 1:00 to 4:00 PM
Ecological concepts and ecological management—David Sierra, TPWD Wildlife Biologist, Tyler

*** CHAPTER MEETING – THURSDAY, MARCH 22 6:45PM, THE NATURE CENTER**

CLASS 4---SATURDAY, MARCH 24 CADDOAN MOUNDS, ALTO, TX

Morning Session 9 AM to 12 Noon, First Methodist Church, Alto
Archeology---Neal Stilley, East Texas Chapter, TMN Program
Lunch
Afternoon Session 1:00 to 4:00 PM
Field Visit to Caddoan Mounds Historical Site, Hwy 21 South out of Alto

CLASS 5—SATURDAY, MARCH 31 THE NATURE CENTER, TYLER

Morning Session 9 AM to 12 Noon
Ornithology---Jeff Kopachena, PhD., Texas A & M, Commerce, Wildlife Conservation Science Program
Lunch
Afternoon Session 1:00 to 4:00 PM
Entomology – Allen Smith, Texas Forest Service, Longview

CLASS 6---SATURDAY, APRIL 14, THE NATURE CENTER, TYLER

Morning Session 9:00 AM to 12 Noon
9:00 to 10:30 Ichthyology – Rick Ott, PhD., TPWD, Tyler
10:45 to 12:30 Plant Taxonomy – Ruth Loper, Retired, UTT Botany Faculty
Lunch
Afternoon Session 1:00 to 4:00 PM
Field Activity—Ruth Loper and Sonnia Hill (Volunteer Botanist)

**EAST TEXAS CHAPTER—TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM
CLASS SCHEDULE—SPRING 2012 (Continued)**

CLASS 7---SATURDAY, APRIL 21 FIELD TRIP TO CLYMER MEADOW

All day activity, arrive at Clymer Meadow by 9 AM. Bring sack lunch.
Jim Eidson, Texas Nature Conservancy, Celeste, Texas

CHAPTER MEETING --- THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 6:45, THE NATURE CENTER

CLASS 8—SATURDAY, APRIL 28 OLD SABINE BOTTOM WILDLIFE

MANAGEMENT AREA, LINDALE (All day activity, bring sack lunch)
Wetland Ecology and Management—Scott Bosworth, TPWD, OSB-WMA
Herpetology—Kevin Herriman & David Sierra, TPWD, Tyler

**CLASS 9---SATURDAY, MAY 5 THE NATURE CENTER, TYLER
CHAPTER ACTIVITY DAY**

Morning Session 9 AM to 12 Noon
Forest Ecology and Tree Identification – Daniel Duncum, Texas Forest Service
Lunch
Afternoon Session 1:00 to 4:00 PM
Urban Systems---Brett Johnson, TPWD, Biologist

CLASS 10 —SATURDAY, MAY 12 THE NATURE CENTER

9 AM to Noon
Threatened and Endangered Species—Aron Flanders, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Wildlife Biologist,
Sulphur Springs
Noon: Graduation and awards/picnic.
Afternoon: Chapter Information (Forms, Chapter, Operating Handbook,
Questions) -- Board

- **These dates are our monthly meeting, and we encourage you to attend these!**



Bird Feeding Update

We still feed the birds although some people question the activity. I also usually end all my radio shows with "Don't forget to feed the birds." Some say it makes the birds lazy or "it isn't natural." Adding seed and berry-producing plants to provide natural food in the garden is certainly good to do, but supplementing with bird seed mixes is also a helpful addition to their diets and an effective way to attract more birds to the garden. My recommendation to feed the birds started as an attempt to get people to slow down and take time to enjoy nature, but wild birds are also helpful at controlling insects. Bird feeding is easy, doesn't take much time, doesn't cost much, and isn't harmful to birds in any way. Providing food is simply a supplement to their natural diet. Most bird experts will tell you the same. A good book on the subject of bird feeding is *Attracting Birds to Southern Gardens* by Thomas Pope, Neil Odenwald, and Charles Fryling Jr.

Birds will appreciate your help more during the winter and summer than in the spring and fall months. You should feed birds year round, but don't expect to see as many cardinals, sparrows, doves, and others in the spring when the juicy insects are plentiful or in the fall while plants are producing plenty of berries and seed.

Because of their different feeding habits, various birds are attracted to different foods. Some birds are almost exclusively seed eaters while others eat both insects and seeds. Among the seed eaters are cardinals, chickadees, finches, nuthatches, titmice, sparrows, juncos, jays, doves, pheasant, and quail. To attract juncos, doves, and other ground feeders, put sunflower seed and smaller seed on the ground or in dishes. Finches, on the other hand, prefer hanging feeders filled with black thistle seed. If sprouting occurs under feeders as a result of feeding birdseed and this is a nuisance, try using safflower or peanut hearts. These seed will not germinate under feeders, and birds love them. Many birds love sunflower seed, but be aware that the raw, uncomposted hulls are toxic to plant growth. Expect a dead spot under the feeder (or put the feeder over a paved or mulched area). Cardinals, chickadees, and even finches like safflower seed. Squirrels, jays and grackles don't like safflower seed. Most sparrows don't either.

Probably the best way to feed the birds is to plant or conserve plant varieties that produce edible seed, berries or nectar. Good choices include yaupon holly, elderberry, serviceberry, camphor tree, hawthorn, dogwood, persimmon, loquat, fig, eastern red cedar, magnolia, crabapple, mulberry, wax myrtle, Mexican plum, black cherry, hog plum, Carolina buckthorn, barberry, burning bush, cotoneaster, American beautyberry, hollies, mahonia, Chinese photinia, roses, rusty blackhaw, viburnum, coral vine, sunflowers, hibiscus, lantana, Turk's cap, coral honeysuckle, poke sallet, blackberries, and nasturtiums. The mockingbirds in my garden definitely have a favorite food - it is chile pequin. They eat the small, hot red peppers like jelly beans as fast as they mature. Chile pequin is a perennial in most of Texas and the Gulf Coast. Burning bush (*Euonymus elata*) is another favorite of several bird species.

Read more in the library: *Attracting Birds to the Garden Newsletter*; *Bird Feeding*; *Bird Feeding Suet Recipes Shop* in the Green Living Store for all of the products I recommend in the Organic Program. Products are also available in the Dirt Doctor's Corner of your favorite Garden Center.

To discuss this newsletter or any other topic, tune in 8am -11am CST to the Dirt Doctor Radio Show.

The call-in phone number is 1-866-444-3478. Listen on the internet or click here to find a station in your area.

Please share this newsletter with everyone in your address book and all your friends on Facebook and Twitter to help me spread the word on organics.

Naturally yours,

Howard Garrett

P.S. The Organic Club of America is a community of people with a passion for natural organic gardening and living. If you aren't a member yet, we hope you will join us today.

Thanks to Gloria Rognlie who submitted this article.



**EAST TEXAS CHAPTER MASTER NATURALISTS
P.O. BOX 131184
TYLER, TEXAS 75713
PHYSICAL ADDRESS TO TEXAS NATURE CENTER:
OFF LOOP 323 ON STATE HWY 248(OR IT'S
CALLED UNIVERSITY BLVD). RIGHT ON FM 848
(BASCOM ROAD) ON THE RIGHT.....**

I encourage everyone to submit articles, photos, quotes, (with permission web links , and other forms of submission with written consent).

TMN.EDITOR@GMAIL.COM
Deadline is 15th of every month!!

HEY WE ARE ON FACEBOOK!

** East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists*



We're on the WEB!!

<http://txmn.org/etwd/>



Our Officers, Committee Chairs, & Meeting Dates

The East Texas Chapter Master Naturalists meetings are on the 4th Thursday of every month @ 6:45 pm. Texas Nature Center

**Neal Stilley - President
Janet Cook - Secretary
Cindi McCullough - Database Mgr**

**Mike Price – Vice President
Laura Wilson - Treasurer
Helen Mar Parkin - Membership Mgr.**

Our Advisors:

Kevin Herriman Chad Gulley

