

The GLC Tidings

APRIL 2024

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T E X A S

Master
Naturalist
Gideon Linsecum
Chapter



<https://txmn.org/glc>
glctmnmkt@gmail.com

Our Mission

Volunteers dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources through education, outreach, and service in our community.

Newsletter Entry Deadlines

1st day of even Months

Send articles or photos to

glcnwsltr@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATES

Board Meeting – Apr 26, 2024

Chapter Meeting – May 18, 2024

From the President



Sheri Wilcox

Writing this message for every newsletter always is an opportunity to slow down and reflect on what we have accomplished and what lies ahead. What stands out in my mind today is the value of the partnerships that we have strengthened this year. By combining with other like-minded organizations, our reach is expanded.

This spring we can see the impact of those partnerships on the students in our communities. On March 22nd, the entire 5th grade of Giddings ISD was able to spend a day drawing connections between what they learn in school and the world outside of the classroom. Those of you who were involved know that an event of this size doesn't happen in an instant. It takes months of planning and many people working together as a team. We connected with early members of this chapter, James and Jonelle Parker, who opened their beautiful ranch near Giddings for the event. We partnered with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Biologists, Agrilife Extension agents, Texas Brigades students, Giddings community leaders, and many of our own chapter members to make this a memorable day for these students. We even were able to debut our new rainfall simulator, which is yet another example of partnership, having been purchased with funds donated to our chapter by the Fayette Prairie chapter of Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT).

We have two more large field day events upcoming. On April 23, 2024, we will be participating in the Brenham Land, Water, & Wildlife Expedition in which 380 7th grade students will spend a day on the Kolkhorst Ranch near Brenham. Our last big event of the spring will be our third on-campus field day for Giddings ISD 4th graders, May 20th, 7:00 am-2:00 pm.

Thank you to each of you who has helped or who will help with these events. If you have not volunteered for a field day, I challenge you to give it a try. Yes, you will come home tired, but with a sense of accomplishment in knowing that you were part of something wonderful.

From the President (continued)

Big events often get all the attention, but I would be remiss if I failed to mention some of the many other volunteer opportunities.

- Pollinator habitats are trending. With the changing demographics of our five-county area, more and more people are interested in creating pollinator habitats, both small and large. Whether you prefer to have your hands in the dirt or prefer to introduce others to our native pollinators and pollinator plants, check the website calendar for workdays and educational opportunities. Our pollinator habitat presentation sponsored by the Lee County Wildlife Association (another partnership with potential) was well received. We will be speaking at the Fayette County Lunch & Learn sponsored by the Bluebonnet Master Gardeners and have been asked to make several presentations to student groups.
- Spring is the season for celebrations. Our bird feeders were a big hit at the Independence, Texas Historic Homes Tour. We will have informal educational displays at the Attwater Prairie Chicken Festival, the Burton Cotton Gin Festival, Monument Hill's Earth Day celebration, and the Honey Bee Jubilee.
- Citizen Science offers many opportunities to contribute. CoCoRaHS allows you to collect weather data from the comfort of your own backyard. Texas Nature Trackers is coordinating the kickoff of the Bat Monitoring project, the goal of which is to gather long-term data on the species of bats present in Texas to inform better conservation decisions. While many details remain to be decided in this first year of this multi-year project, acoustical monitors will be deployed by participating chapter members in the upcoming months. And if you need another citizen science project to consider, check out the March TMN Tuesday recording about the Texas Raptor Monitoring Network.
- Our Gideon Lindecum Chapter's (GLC) Texas Waters group is off to a good start. In addition to working our way through the Texas Waters Specialist curriculum, we have begun to discuss volunteer projects that we can undertake either as a group or individually.
- Our partnership with San Felipe de Austin Historic Site continues to grow. Another birding event is being planned for the fall migration. In the meantime, we are rolling out a nature walk program to help visitors to the historic site understand the connections between the human and natural history of the site.

No wonder my calendar is jam-packed.

None of these events can take place without each of you. Your willingness to share your time and knowledge is the greatest gift. I hope to see each of you soon out doing what we do best, leaving the world a little better place than we found it.

Sheri

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING

State Information



#TMNTuesdays 2024



May 14, 2024 12-1 PM Topic TBA

#TMNTuesday [#TMNTuesdays \(tamupress.com/tmntuesdays\)](https://tamupress.com/tmntuesdays)

[Register Here](#)



TMN Annual Meeting
October 24-27, 2024
San Marcos, Texas

Requests for classroom presentations and field sessions are now open and abstracts are due by May 15. For more information and submission forms available at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2024-annual-meeting/>



TMN License Plate - Order YOURS Today!!!

ANYONE can purchase this plate and **\$22** of each **\$30** annual plate fee comes directly back to the Texas Master Naturalist Program for continuing our mission.

The plate is available for purchase on the website:

Personalized plate (\$70): <https://www.myplates.com/design/personalized/passenger/texas-master-naturalist/>

Non-Personalized plate (\$30): <https://www.myplates.com/design/background/passenger/texas-master-naturalist/>

Membership Memo



By Chris Morrison, Membership Director

Question: What is the “**Administrative Work**” opportunity title in VMS all about?

Answer: This opportunity covers **work done to keep the chapter running**. The screen you use to record your hours includes a dropdown box with sub-categories of more specific work such as attending chapter meetings, board/committee work, treasurer duties, hours management, updating the website or monitoring social media, project management, recruiting new members, or helping put on the training classes. Hours reported here are volunteer service. The opportunity falls under the federal category of Chapter & Program Support, Business, and Administration.

AT: Webinars is no longer an active opportunity for recording AT hours. Please use one of the more specific opportunity titles that goes with the sponsor or presenter of an AT program. If you have previously entered hours under this opportunity, those hours are still there and still count.

TMN Tuesdays expanded from their initial year of presentations on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Now they also occur on other days. Please log hours for watching the programs or the recordings under **AT: TMN Tuesdays**, regardless of the topic covered or whether it was a 2nd Tuesday program or another day. If it's on the TMN Tuesday page of the state website, use AT:TMN Tuesdays.

New opportunity in VMS – Watershed and Waterway Protection

Work with watershed protection initiatives within our chapter area to assist in identification and remediation of sources and causes of impairments and threats to surface and ground water resources to improve overall quality of Texas streams, lakes, and rivers. Examples of approved initiatives are Mill Creek Watershed Initiative, Middle Yegua Creek Watershed Protection Planning and Project, GLC Texas Waters Group, etc. This will include participating in the creation of a water protection plan and stream/watershed cleanup work. This does not include water sampling (log as Citizen Science other) or a waterway that has its own VMS opportunity (Colorado River Watch). This opportunity falls under the federal reporting category “Natural Resource Management”.

Awards announced at the March 16 chapter meeting:

- **Recertification for 2024 (Rattlesnake pin)** – B. R. Koehler, Charlene Koehler, Betsy Palkowsky, Swee Leng Rapatz, and Sheri Wilcox
- **250 All-Time Hours (Bronze Dragonfly pin)** – Frank Michel
- **1,000 All-Time Hours (Gold Dragonfly pin)** – Linda Esco

Chapter Meeting Highlights – March 2024

- Corey Rich, photographer from Houston, TX gave tips and tricks for photographing birds and other wildlife
- Wanda Anglin, Class of 2024, presented information on ‘Species of Greatest Concern’ in the TMN GLC area

Education Team News



By Karen Gardner, Education Director

We have started our busy Spring season with educational events arranged for school districts in our chapter area and public events. Please check our calendar on the GLC website.

Sheri Wilcox did a presentation at the Lunch and Learn program in Lee County on *Native Habitats for Pollinator Gardening* and Frank Michel has initiated training for people to become docents for nature walks at San Felipe de Austin Historic Site. We had a Birding Day there last fall and they are very interested in repeating the event again this year. They are developing content on the value of the environment and habitats at San Felipe and its importance to the historical significance of this area. Frank has a training day scheduled for April 14th from 2 to 3:30 pm at San Felipe. Please contact Frank directly if you are interested: frankmichel33@gmail.com.

Our Chapter has become the proud owner of a tabletop version of the Rainfall Simulator, and we got to use it for the first time at the field day for Giddings ISD 5th graders held at Parker Ranch in Lee County. Mary Pearl Meuth from TMN and Sheri Wilcox were the primary organizers for the Master Naturalists. We focused on activities associated with the water cycle. We had a good turnout of volunteers: Lori Buffum, Georgia Canfield, John Gardner, Karen Gardner, Frank Michel, Cindy McMorran, Chris Morrison, Sheri Wilcox, Nita Tiemann, Carey Soderstrom and Jon Watkins.

The Rainfall Simulator demonstrated the effects of 1" of rain on 4 different surfaces: impermeable (house, road, etc.), native grasses, turf grasses and disturbed soil. The students were divided into teams: the Rainmakers added the water to each column/surface, the Scientists measured the amounts of infiltration – when rain permeates the surface and runoff – when rain is lost. And one student was the Scorekeeper to record and report the results.

The other activity for our chapter was experiencing the results of erosion, deposition, and delta formation of a course of a river or potential flood. We used a Stream Trailer that is a portable box on wheels with its own plumbing. It contains very tiny plastic beads that look like colored sand but help form the land surfaces. The GLC Activity Leaders would scrape a large, wiggly river into the plastic beads and then the students would place models of buildings, homes, farm animals, dinosaurs, heavy equipment, and more. Then the water would be turned on and the river would begin to flow. The students learned how water can cause erosion and potentially damage their landscape design and they could see where the land material could be deposited in other areas based on the shape and flow of the river.

Then at the end of the trailer a delta would form and the GLC volunteers would discuss the 3 concepts with the students to help them understand a portion of the water cycle.

The teachers from Giddings ISD said that this field experience was a very successful day, and the volunteers were essential to its success.

There is more coming, please check out our calendar or contact me directly: Karen Gardner glctmnedu@gmail.com.

Volunteer Highlights



Blue Bird Boxes Donation

From Swee Leng Rapatz, Vice-President

On March 16, Jim Weatherly donated four Bluebird nest boxes to TMN-GLC to be used as gifts for speakers who present at our Chapter Meetings. Jim had built the boxes and they even included instructions for their installations. TMN-GLC is grateful for Jim's support, generosity, and thoughtfulness.



Cindy Rodibaugh

Fayette Co. AgriLife Bldg. Native Plant Landscape Project Leader

I'd like to thank the volunteers that helped at the La Grange Agrilife Building Landscape on March 19, 2024. We were able to accomplish a lot. The bed looks good-just an unbiased opinion, of course 😊.

The workers were Cindy Rodibaugh, Vickie Green, Tim Rackley (Kneeling), and Bill Fisher.



I will be meeting Swee Leng Rapatz this weekend to receive native plants that the chapter has 'grown out' and will plan to put them in the landscape bed.

I recently watched a webinar provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension titled LANDSCAPING FOR WILDLIFE, presented by John Davis. John's emphasis was the value of planting native plants and I'm always impressed by the activity of birds, butterflies, bees, frogs, spiders, snails, and ants we seem to have attracted to our project. A few months ago, we even noticed a large hole burrowed under the weed cloth. A rabbit was seen hurrying away from the bed as we arrived one morning to work. I'm not sure that hole was its habitat or not. Whatever was living in there, we never saw it exit the hole, but rejoiced in the fact that whatever was hiding in it managed to find a safe place behind the Fall Aster and between the Texas sage and the Esperanza in our landscape.

After listening to Mr. Davis, I would like to add some Mexican hats (*Ratibida columnifera*) to our bed because I learned from Mr. Davis, good bee pollinators will sleep under the petals of the flower that is hanging down. He also reminded me that 70% of bees are ground nesters so it is important to leave a little bare soil.

Native plants offer a food court as well as shelter to many wildlife species. Thank you for helping maintain this project.

Giddings ISD Field Day at Parker Ranch in Lee County.

Thanks to Lori Buffum, Georgia Canfield, John Gardner, Karen Gardner, Frank Michel, Cindy McMorran, Chris Morrison, Sheri Wilcox, Nita Tiemann, Carey Soderstrom and Jon Watkins for helping with the Rainfall Simulator and Stream Trailer. *(Editor's note: faces of children have been blurred for privacy)*



Historic Texas Buildings Tour, Independence Historical Society, March 23 & 30, 2024

GLC Facebook posting by Denise Turner

Volunteers Linda Esco, Carol Gaskamp, Sheril Smith, Carey Soderstrom, and Denise Turner helped visitors make pinecone bird feeders during the Historic Homes Tour at Independence.

Pictured here are Sheril Smith and Carey Soderstrom.

Brenham Jr High March 27, 2024 Pig Pluck Volunteers

GLC Facebook posting by Bill Fisher

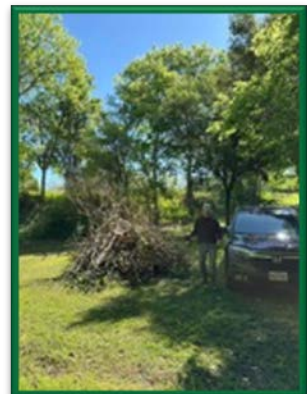
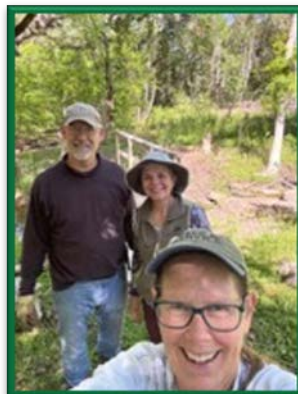
The Class of 2024 was well represented at the Brenham Junior High Pig Pluck today. Experienced Master Naturalists from previous years led the charge with a local veterinarian and two enthusiastic 8th grade science teachers creating a memorable day for all involved.



Indian Creek Workday

GLC Facebook posting by Ann Ray

Jim, CJ, and I got things back to normal at Indian Creek and had fun doing it! We built up a new burn pile rather high, too! Great teamwork!



eBird // Great Backyard Bird Count 2024

From Nancy Dunnahoe



1- *Ardea herodias* // Great blue heron (1 count)

Saw one of my favorite friends at a small wetland area on Centerhill Rd. We occasionally have a visit from a blue heron in our prairie

2- *Falco sparverius* // American Kestrel (5 count+)

We've seen plentiful kestrels this year – a great sign! These friends have been on the decline (an estimated 50%, according to Audubon). We also witnessed this tiny raptor hunt a songbird during the GBBC week, which surprised us! Although sad to see the natural order, let's hope it was an invasive house sparrow.

3- *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* // Bald eagle

How could we not end with a chance sighting of this magnificent bird! Bonus shot of the crow (or is it a raven?) up top.



Adventures & Observations



Nature Walk

From Judy Deaton

Dakota Mock Vervain or Prairie Verbena
Glandularia bipinnatifida

I walk daily in Hohlt Park in Brenham. It is wonderful to take the newly improved nature trail over the bridge and lose myself for a while in the quiet little enclave. The city has seeded wildflowers and planted interesting trees and this Spring the trail was joyfully surrounded by a sudden profusion of Prairie Verbena that I have never seen before. It was covered in butterflies, principally giant swallowtails, sulfurs, and hairstreaks. I understand monarchs, fritillaries, buckeyes, and painted ladies could also arrive. I will list as many as I find on my daily walk. Prairie verbena is a perennial, but it is suggested to let it go to seed as well. This is a useful site to read about this lovely wildflower that is one of my favorites as my mother adored all verbenas and it brings back happy times in my childhood.



<https://www.gardenia.net/plant/glandularia-bipinnatifida>



Postcards from the Prairie

By Nancy Dunnahoe



Greetings to the Southcentral Texas Gideon Linsecum Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists and 2024 cohort in training from Tonkawa land in Bellville, Texas. Since becoming property owners in 2020, we've seen the seven acres we steward transform through seasonal extremes, from the great freeze and snowstorm of February 2021 to the record drought and flash floods that followed. More than a pandemic escape and exodus from Houston, our current land is only three miles away as the crow flies from where I grew up – so, this has been a journey home. We're fortunate to live on a gentle slope that rises from a ripple on the landscape that I just know lies atop some hidden springs. If you drill a foot down – and we did when testing our soil – you hit water. My dream is that this low spot someday surprises us by turning into more than just a vernal pool in wet weather – a black-bellied whistling duck pond, if we're lucky! Our property is mostly open prairie flanked by pines, and we plan to burn and continuously restore those grasslands thanks to the teachings we've taken from the TMN sages. What I'm most interested in sharing this month, though, are recent observations of blooms and birds. Wildflowers grow wild and free on this land thanks to our NO MOW policy, and we've seen more pollinators than we can count and log into iNaturalist. Here's a selection for your viewing pleasure. Thanks for welcoming us in this collective and sharing in our love of what grows wild and free, from one prairie to another.

***Houstonia pusilla* // Tiny Bluet or Star Violet**

First wildflowers to bloom this year on our newly constructed gravel road – though delicate in bloom, these plants seem resilient and tough having sprung up from clay and rocks! They're edible, too.



***Phlox drummondii* // Wild phylox**

First native Texas wildflower bloom on the prairie in sandy loam and what a showing of the brightest pink petals.



***Castilleja indivisa* // Texas Indian Paintbrush**

My favorite vibrant wildflower to see radiate among grasses – and given this year’s abundance in our area, I’m recording 2024 as the “year of the paintbrush.”



***Lupinus subcarnosus* // Sandyland Bluebonnet (aka Buffalo Clover)**

A beloved field of bluebonnets – this is as Texas as it gets. Bluebonnets are special to our family. Tayvis’ aunt Pauline was a famous Texas landscape artist who painted under the name C.P. Montague and whose bluebonnet paintings were a favorite of LBJ and Lady Bird.



***Salvia texana* // Texas Sage in our pollinator gardens**

Planted several of these rain-dancing friends in our pollinator gardens – according to folklore, Texas’ native shrub can predict rain on the way.



Pressing this wildflower bunch as a gift for my mother-in-law who turns 81 this April – she misses going on road trips to see Texas wildflowers.



Editor’s note: One of Nancy’s photos is used in the newsletter heading banner

How to Get Started with eBird, Merlin, & iNaturalist

By Wanda Anglin



As part of the 2024 TMN GLC Class, we were given the opportunity to earn AT by completing 3 observations on iNaturalist and a checklist on eBird. This class and its AT homework opportunity coincided with the Great Backyard Bird Count so there was additional motivation.

I leapt at the opportunity to make myself learn the apps because I had used iNaturalist for several years, but never did one observation (I believe that is a "lurker" status on social media...LOL). I wanted to overcome my fear of doing something wrong in these apps, so I figured I needed to break that habit with iNaturalist and not let that happen with eBird. Once I was in eBird, I realized that it was integrated with Merlin Bird ID app that I had used for years just to identify bird calls. You will want to explore that one as well.

Below I share what I did to overcome the challenges in hopes it will help you one day soon to enjoy this bit of citizen science in support of birds.

Getting to Know the Apps

I have heard several of my TMN GLC classmates say that they felt a bit lost in the technology. It is not a surprise as many (most? all?) of us are NOT digital natives being born into an ever-connected, constantly changing state of technology. It is only natural for things to not be intuitive.

Hopefully these resources will smooth the pathway to acquiring the skills to overcome the confusion and, if you have it as I did, the fear of getting started with these apps. Remember, learning any new skill from riding your bike no-hands to tying nautical knots, once you get past the technical bits by practicing, you experience the joy of it all.



Video Resources

My advice is to find one or two of these videos that seem helpful and "your style" and watch them, then go out and use the app. Get lost? Watch them again or search online for your exact problem like "how to upload media on eBird".

eBird:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCGAxW7YFVQ&list=PLgSpqOFj1Ta4lgTH4LD2N5VeN8QLbuZ7F&index=5> - a good overview of getting started on eBird after you have created your account
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfyyn3GgWe8> - an avid birder shows you exactly what it is like to do a checklist (first thing I learned was what a checklist was!!!!) This was my favorite for understanding how to use the eBird app on my phone.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCGAxW7YFVQ> - this is a quick overview (about a minute long) that gives insight on top-level functionality of eBird on your computer.
- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgSpqOFj1Ta4lgTH4LD2N5VeN8QLbuZ7F> - This is not a video, but a collection of videos (a playlist) called eBird Essentials Bird Academy published by

Cornell Lab of Ornithology...perfect to look around for what you are trying to do then finding a short clear video on the subject.

Merlin Bird ID:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Woe_Q6S8oyw&pp=ygUVaG93IHRvIHVzZSBtZXJsaW4gYXBw - same avid birder as one of the eBird videos above on using Merlin Bird ID
- https://youtu.be/J1C-Q-z_np0?list=PLgSpqOFj1Ta4lgTH4LD2N5VeN8QLbuZ7F - great overview of how to id a bird from Cornell Lab of Ornithology

iNaturalist:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eS_9KpXgPdk - detailed video for using INaturalist on computer from signing up for an account to submitting your observations
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUyFBeTz1zM> - how to use iNaturalist app on your phone

Begin to Use the Apps

Start by visiting the apps' websites as setting up your account and its profile information is easier on the computer than on the phone:

- <https://ebird.org/home> (click the Get Started button), good news is that ebird and Merlin Bird ID share accounts...so just one account for 2 apps!
- <https://www.inaturalist.org/> (click SignUp)

Once you create your accounts, put in your profile information and, if you want, a picture of yourself by logging into your new accounts on your computer and selecting "Profile":

- eBird – At top right corner, click on your username, then click Profile in the drop-down menu that appears.
- iNaturalist – At top right corner, click on the arrow to the right of the circle and near the bottom of the drop-down menu, click Profile.

Once your profiles are completed, download each phone app from Apple or Google app stores. Then log in on your phone using the account credentials you just created.

Then work on learning one app at a time. Say, try using Merlin just to ID birds. Watch a video or two, then go out and give it a try. Remember to search online for any problem you are having then return to the app and keep trying. Then try eBird. These 2 apps are integrated, in fact, eBird is Merlin's data source. Once you are feeling confident with eBird/Merlin, give iNaturalist a try.

Tip: In my career, I helped people build businesses and introduce complex changes into established businesses and learning something like an app is similar. My tip that helped many of my clients start moving forward towards their goals is to schedule 30 minutes on your calendar weekly. Schedule a meeting with yourself on your calendar to try this new thing. Maybe the first "meeting" with yourself will be just about setting up your account and putting in your profile information for that account then downloading the app. The next "meeting" might be to watch a video on using the app, then going outside to give it a try. Then the next "meeting" to spend outside making observations/checklists. Then the next to learn another app. See? Putting it on your calendar is a commitment to you gaining skills systematically so that during next year's Great Backyard Bird Count, you



will be the one giving advice! But, mostly, you will be equipped to be able to share the citizen science of your outdoor explorations you enjoy.

Give it a try! I know I am glad I did as I was able to help record an observation for the (pictured above) 450 red-winged blackbirds I saw during our chapter's Great Backyard Bird Count group event this past February.

Oh, and here is the report I did for class as I used the apps for the first time:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rZSC7-Npu5qRf0iJdL7m9AIX2SZqpr2u/view?usp=sharing>.

Yaupon Holly

From Facebook posting by Sam Maddox

Yaupon hollies (*Ilex vomitoria*) are blooming. In the fall, some of the yaupon will have many red berries. Some will not have any. Hollies are dioecious, which is to say that there are separate female and male plants. Only the female yaupons will produce berries.

When yaupons are blooming in the spring, you can examine the flowers to determine the sex of the plant. The flowers are white and quite small.



Male flowers have prominent stamens usually loaded with pollen on the tips.



Female flowers feature a very noticeable green stigma (ovary) in the center.

This and That



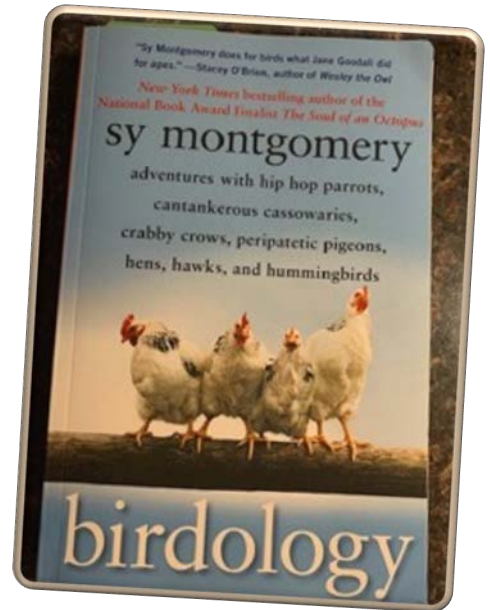
Book Review from Carey Soderstrom

Birdology, By Sy Montgomery

I discovered the work of Sy Montgomery recently while reading a novel for my book club. The novelist referenced Montgomery's book, *The Soul of An Octopus*, as her inspiration for the main character and many events in her novel (*Remarkably Bright Creatures*, by Shelby Van Pelt). On impulse, I ordered the book on Amazon and fell in love with the work of this naturalist, author, and documentary scriptwriter. I want to read everything she's written (including the children's books), and this book review reflects my next step towards that goal.

Birdology is a delightful collection of seven chapters, each telling the story of Montgomery's encounters, research, and experiences with a different species of bird (Chickens, Hawks, Crows, Pigeons, Parrots, Cassowaries, and Hummingbirds). Her book highlights that birds are individuals with intellectual abilities like humans; she points out that although birds are the only wild animals most people see every day, they are alien creatures who last shared an ancestor with humans about 350 million years ago.

Filled with fun facts, extensively researched, and beautifully written, this book renders poignant portraits of individual birds, such as Elizabeth, Snowball, Alex, and Jazz. After reading this book, I can only aspire to being called a "bird brain."

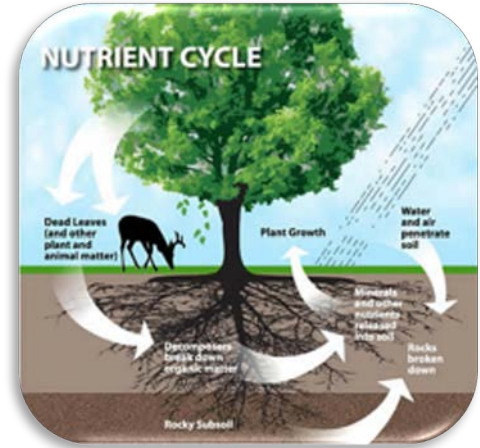




Relationship Management by Betsy Palkowsky

Healthy plants have been growing effortlessly for millions of years. Left to their own devices the results are amazing from rainforests across the globe and beautiful meadows found right here in Texas and elsewhere. Nature’s ability to grow plants is amazing.

Plants have adapted over time to the various systems in place that help them grow the best they can. One system that I find intriguing is the relationship between plants and soils and how plants get and share nutrients with the soil. Many of you have probably noticed that different plants thrive in different areas of your property. Sometimes this is due to available sunlight, water, or fertilizer (i.e. artificial or natural nutrients). Other times it has to do with the varying soil types across the land (even when it’s only a few feet away).



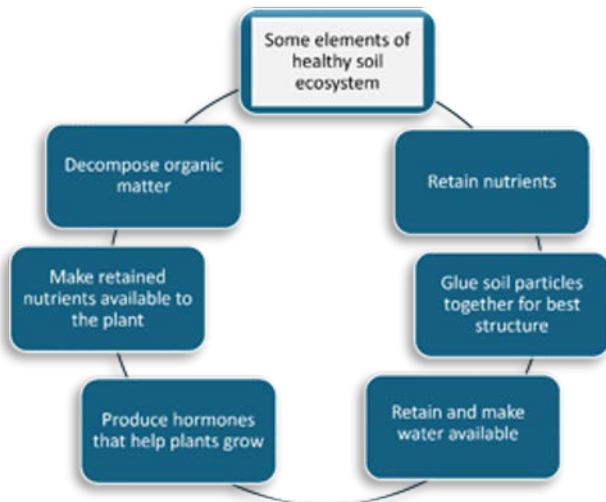
Why do some plants show signs of nutrient deficiency and not others? Why do agricultural soils require huge amounts of fertilizer to grow crops? It’s all about relationship management between plants, microbes, and soil.

Plants produce carbohydrates via photosynthesis. Like us, they can’t thrive only on carbohydrates. Using their roots like straws they draw up water from the soil which contains dissolved nutrients. A challenge for plants is that if all the nutrients were water soluble, they would have been washed away millions of years ago. Luckily, nature came up with a way to retain some of the nutrients, the microbes in soil.

Organic matter, bedrock and sediments create a tight bond with nutrients making them hard to access. Microbes ([detritivores](#)) such as bacteria, viruses, algae, and fungi help open these bonds. Insects, invertebrates, and small mammals also assist with breaking down materials in the soil. The plants and microbes team up to make nutrients available. By managing this relationship, the microbes get carbohydrates they can’t create, and plants get nutrients they need.

How does this relationship work?

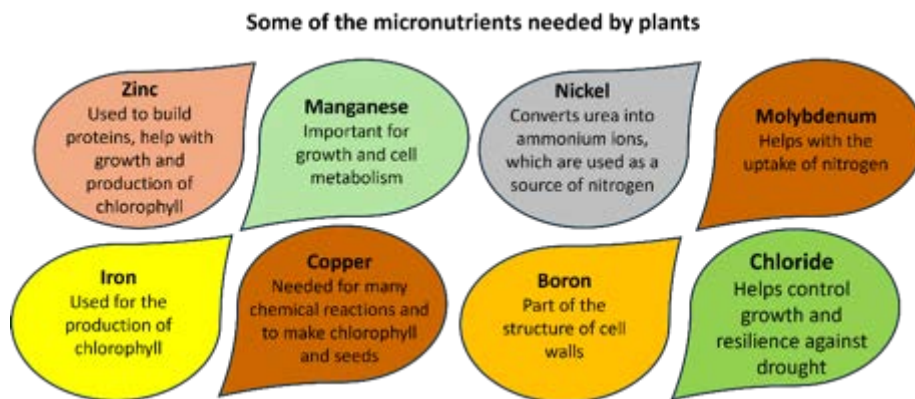
Like so many things in nature and life the process is more complicated than I can explain in a few words. Essentially, plants drop organic material to the ground which is then broken down by the detritivores which starts the remineralization process.



To attract the microbes, plants release special compounds (root exudates) through their roots into the soil. Adjustments to the special mix attracts different microbes so that the plant gets what it needs when it needs it. The microbes get what they need as they feast on the special mix sent by the plants. Other benefits to plants through this relationship is disease and pest control and of course improved soil structure.

Without this relationship the plants, microbes and soils become unbalanced which results in unhealthy plants and soils without microbes.

Fertilizers are often used to “help” plants. However, fertilizers typically contain the macronutrients, nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. They rarely contain all the micronutrients a plant needs. Additionally, plants get fooled into thinking they have a better source of food so they can stop sending their special mixes to the microbes and soil. It becomes a bad cycle as we humans try to fix the problem by using other products to manage the resulting disease and pest problems caused using non-organic fertilizer.



We can help nature help itself by using organic fertilizers, leaving the leaves and reduce soil disturbance. This not only benefits the plants but in turn benefits the ecosystem they plants are in.

Resources

www.Gardenworld.com

www.Preppin.com (image)

[How to feed plants while polluting less? - Encyclopedia of the Environment \(encyclopedie-environnement.org\)](http://encyclopedie-environnement.org)

Solar Eclipse Glasses Recycling

By Carol Gaskamp

Husband Greg shared a Facebook posting with me on where to recycle solar eclipse glasses. While you may want to hang on to yours (they don't expire), others in the world can enjoy using them, too.

Organizations collecting solar eclipse glasses to be used by others for future eclipses:

- Astronomers Without Borders <https://astronomerswithoutborders.org/programs/solar-glasses-distribution>
 - Eclipse Glasses USA Give Back program <https://eclipse23.com/pages/donate-eclipse-glasses>
 - Eclipse Glasses USA is sending eclipse glasses to Latin America for children to view the August 2024 eclipse. Send by August 1 to Eclipse Glasses USA LLC, PO Box 50571, Provo, UT, 84605
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Events Calendar Snapshot

APRIL

Date	Event
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- | | |
|----|---|
| 16 | Texas Agrilife 2024 Aquatic Webinar Series 6-7:30 PM
GLC Texas Waters group meeting 6-7 PM |
| 19 | Elder Prairie Plant Walk 10 AM – 12 PM |
| 20 | Burton Cotton Gin Festival 8 AM – 5 PM |
| 23 | Land, Water, and Wildlife Expedition – Brenham 8 AM – 5 PM |
| 26 | Chapter Board Meeting 9:30-11:30 |
| 29 | Banik Remnant Prairie Walk (Only One Sky Farm) 10 AM -12 Noon |



MAY

- | | |
|----|--|
| 4 | Honey Bee Jubilee, New Ulm 8 AM – 5 PM |
| 10 | Giddings ISD 4th grade field day 7 AM – 2 PM |
| 14 | TMN Tuesday 12-1 pm |
| 17 | Backyard bug hunt webinar series by Wizzie Brown 10-11 AM |
| 18 | GLC Chapter meeting, Winedale 9:30 am – 12 pm
Texas Agrilife Aquatic Webinars 6-7:30 pm
GLC Water Specialists Meeting 6-7 pm |
| 21 | Texas Agrilife 2024 Aquatic Webinar Series 6-7:30 PM
GLC Texas Waters group meeting 6-7 PM |

See the [Event Calendar](#) for more details on events and workdays at various project sites

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Books

- National Wildlife Federation(R): Attracting Birds, Butterflies, and Other Backyard Wildlife, Expanded Second Edition, by David Mizejewski
- Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies: a Field Guide, by Jim Weber, Lynne Weber, and Roland H. Wauer (There is also one for moths)
- Native Texas Plants: Landscaping Region by Region, by Sally Wasowski and Andy Wasowski
- Wild Edible Plants of Texas: A Pocket Guide to the Identification, Collection, Preparation, & Use of 60 Wild Plants of the Lone Star State, by Charles W. Kane (This includes non-natives)

Online Resources

- Bumble Bee Watch: <https://www.bumblebeewatch.org/>
- Ecoregions of North America: <https://www.epa.gov/eco-research/ecoregions-north-america>
- Ecoregions of Texas: https://tpwd.texas.gov/.../pwd_pl_w7000_1187a/media/1.pdf
- The Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center: <https://www.wildflower.org/>
- Fayette Prairie Chapter – NPAT [Fayette Prairie Chapter – NPAT \(texasprairie.org\)](https://www.texasprairie.org/)
- National Wildlife Federation: <https://www.nwf.org/>
- Native American Seed: <https://www.seedsource.com/Default.asp>
- Native Plants by State: <https://nativebackyards.com/native-plants-by-state/>
- Native Plant Society of Texas: <http://npsot.org/wp/>
- Native Plant Society of Texas - Plant Lists by Region: <https://www.npsot.org/our-work/class-schedule/plant-lists-by-ecoregion/>
- Native Prairies Association of Texas: <https://texasprairie.org/>
- Plants for Birds – Audubon <https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>
- South Central Texas Prescribed Burn Association (SCTPBA) <https://sctpba.org/>
- Texas Butterfly Ranch: <https://texasbutterflyranch.com>
- Texas Invasives: <https://www.texasinvasives.org/>
- Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation: <https://xerces.org/>

Editor's note: The list of 'Helpful Resources' will be migrating to the GLC webpage. If you have any print or online resources to add to the list, please send to glcnwsltr@gmail.com

GLC Tidings Newsletter Index

<https://txmn.org/glc/whats-new/newsletters/>

Find information about articles for newsletter issues from 2018 through the most recent. For each article, the index cites the subject, title, author, and the hyperlink directly to the issue published on the chapter website.

Chapter Resources

Officers for 2023

President – [Sheri Wilcox](#)

Vice President – [Swee Leng Rapatz](#)

Secretary – [Betty Scardino](#)

Treasurer – [Karen Dean](#)

Board Members

Advanced Training Director – [Swee Leng Rapatz](#)

Communications Director – [Lori Buffum](#)

Marketing Director – [Ken English](#)

Membership Director – [Chris Morrison](#)

Training Class Director – [Connie Shortes](#)

Volunteer Service Projects Director – [Jaci Elliott](#)

Education Director – [Karen Gardner](#)

Chapter State Representative – Sheri Wilcox

Immediate Past President – Betsy Palkowsky

Advisor – [Kara Matheney](#) (Washington County Texas AgriLife)

Committees and Contacts

Hospitality Chair – Nita Tiemann

Newsletter Editor – [Carol Gaskamp](#)

Website Editor – Sheri Wilcox

Grants and Donations Chair – open

Volunteer Project Leaders

Adopt-a-Highway – Jaci Elliott

Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR – Susan Vanderworth

Family Science Nights – Lori Buffum

Fayetteville Native Plant Project – Karen Bookout

Indian Creek Nature Area – Ann Ray

LaGrange AgriLife Building Native Plant Landscape –
Cindy Rodibaugh

Monument Hill State Historic Site – Karen Woods

Prescribed Burning – Mark Brown and B.R. Koehler

Schubert House Pollinator Project – Karen Woods

Stephen F. Austin State Park – B.R. & Charlene Koehler

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site – Julie Itz
and David Itz

Winedale Trails and Pollinator Garden – CJ Claverie and
Carey Soderstrom

Sponsor Contact

Each county has its own TPWD Biologist and Texas AgriLife Extension agent. We work closely with these sponsors.

Use the following links to access the main county contacts working with our chapter.

[Austin County](#)

[Colorado County](#)

[Fayette County](#)

[Washington County](#)

[Lee County](#)



- **Our Chapter Website** <http://txmn.org/glc>
- **GLC Facebook Group** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/21969044537/>
- **Volunteer Management System**; log your hours <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/tmn-vms-users>
- **Texas Master Naturalist Program Website** <https://txmn.tamu.edu/>
- **Texas Master Naturalist Listserv**; get notices about activities across the state <mailto:TMN@LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU> [LISTSERV - Subscription Management - LISTSERV.TAMU.EDU](#)

Contact Us

1305 East Blue Bell Road
Suite 104
Brenham, TX 77833
(979) 277-6212