

March 2026



Naturalist Notes

Upcoming

Thu, Apr 2nd – Monthly Chapter Meeting at HANC, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm.

Sat, Apr 18th – Nature Journaling Workshop, Eleanor Tinsley Park. Registration required.

Fri, Apr 24th – Mon, Apr 27th, City Nature Challenge

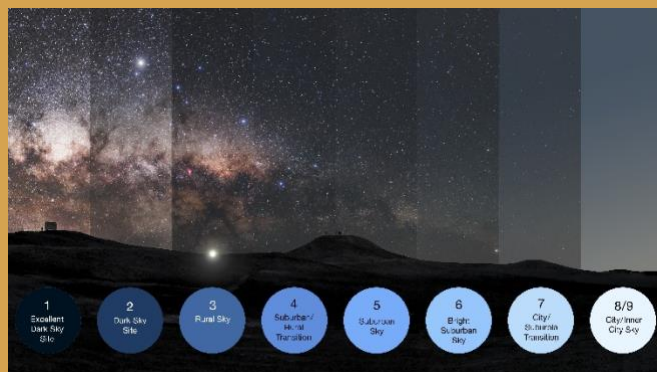
Sat, May 2nd – Native Plant Sale, Audubon Nursery, Edith L. Moore.

Spring Equinox

Officially March 20th, the day when the Sun crosses the celestial equator, resulting in almost equal day and night. Days continue to grow longer until the summer solstice on June 21st.

Bortle Scale for Night Sky

Published by John Bortle in 2001, this scale is divided into 9 sections, 1 being the darkest sky on Earth, 9 being inner city sky. Which stars, planets and other sky objects are visible to the naked eye determine the classification.



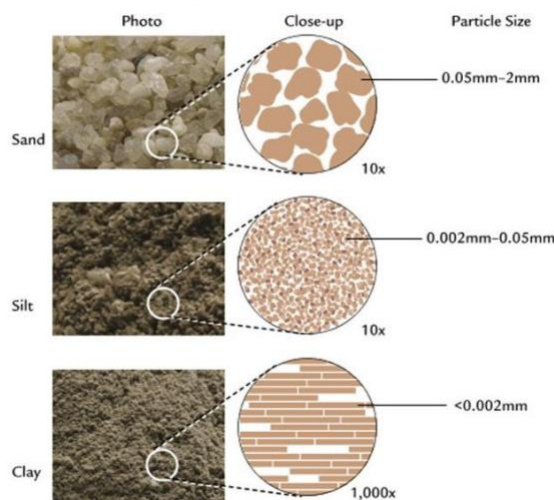


Soil - Silt

Silt is a granular, sedimentary material with particle size between sand and clay. Formed by physical erosion of rock by glaciers, freeze/thaw cycles, or wind, it is frequently carried along by rivers. The silt in our area was deposited by rivers during the late Pleistocene era.

Silt feels powdery or floury when dry. It feels smooth or slippery when wet, not sticky. Silt is a key component of soil fertility, enhancing both moisture retention and nutrient content.

Sand, Silt, and Clay



Book Review – The Wild Dark: Finding the Night Sky in the Age of Light

Craig Childs, 2025. Available at Houston Public library.

The journey begins in Las Vegas, where “The world’s largest globe-shaped building is at the bottom projecting the Moon like a great hologram,...” and ends with “The Milky Way is dancing, showing off. It has topography.” Craig and his friend Irvin encounter progressively darker skies as they bicycle north into the desert. Both become more comfortable as they leave interstates and bright lights behind. Part travelogue, part astronomy lesson, the book is an easy and interesting read. If you enjoy this combination, I recommend checking out this book.

FYI: Houston is Bortle 8-9. The closest dark sky communities include Dripping Springs, Fredericksburg, and Horseshoe Bay in the Hill Country.

Organisms of the Month

Philadelphia Fleabane (*Erigeron philadelphicus*) & Yellow Nutsedge Moth (*Diploschizia impigritella*)

Philadelphia Fleabane is a member of the Asteraceae family. It grows along roadside, in fields and woodlands, and in our backyard. This biennial can be up to 32 inches tall, but often much shorter. Stems grow drooping and straighten as the flowers mature. Multi-branched stems hold flower heads composed of about 150 white ray flowers and 5-toothed yellow disc flowers.

Philadelphia Fleabane grows well in part shade and reseeds readily. As an early blooming wildflower, it attracts early pollinators.



Although still awaiting community ID, the small reddish brown and white insect is most likely a Yellow Nutsedge Moth. Its larval host is *Cyperus esculentus*. Adults have a wingspan of 7-9 mm. Rarely seen in March, adults are most common from early May to early November.



Cardinals

Red birds are special

Some countries do not have them

See them and find joy

Katy Emde