

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



HIGHLAND LAKES CHAPTER



March 2017

Volume 8, Issue 1

MISSION

The Texas Master Naturalist program is a natural resource-based volunteer training and development program sponsored statewide by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The mission of the program is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the state of Texas

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MESSAGE FROM CATHY

by Cathy Hill

Well it is two months into my presidency and I can honestly say it has been both a joy and a challenge. I look forward to enjoying another great year for our chapter. As I write this our newest project, the Granite Shoals Wildlife Viewing Station is more than just off the ground, it is nearing completion! I regret that I have not been able to contribute very much to this effort. Many thanks to all of you who have spent many hours on both the planning and actual labor involved.

At our February meeting we were introduced to the twenty enthusiastic people in our 2017 training class. Today I attended their first meeting where they met with their mentors and began their classes. I'm sure under Marcy's and Ann's leadership they will soon be able to join us in our various volunteer activities. Please be sure and introduce yourselves and get to know them better.

I would like to express my thanks again to Martelle Luedecke and Becky Breazeale for taking on the task of continuing our chapter online newsletter, The Steward. Due to their planned publishing schedule, unlike previous Presidents, I only have to come up with an article quarterly. Whew! I was advised by a fellow member that this message should be "cerebral and full of portent!" Hoping he was joking, I countered with "How about friendly and informative because that's more my style!"

sa Duckworth for coming up with the Texas State Parks tee shirt door prize idea. Due to popular request I have shifted to caps instead, but the concept is the same; just a fun and informative way to celebrate our great state parks by highlighting a different one each month. For myself it has been fun deciding which ones to do and visiting them in person if I can.

We Texans are so fortunate to have over 100 state parks, state historic sites, or state natural areas to visit. They are scattered all over our great big state, divided into seven geographical areas: Big Bend Country, Panhandle Plains, Prairies and Lakes, Piney Woods, Hill Country, South Texas Plains, and Gulf Coast. Thus no Texan is too far from one. I plan to get caps from all the different areas. Naturally this allows for a great diversity of landscapes from desert to ocean beaches, mountains to wooded forest, plus lakes, rivers, and caves to explore. Some parks showcase historical sites and events such as missions, forts, battlefields and even a battleship.

The Texas State Park system began with the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the organization that during the Great Depression gave many young men much needed employment. From 1933 to 1942 they constructed twenty nine of our state parks. Their legacy of dams, bridges, cabins, shelters and the like still stand for current and future generations to enjoy.

I also want to thank my predecessor Melis-

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Please submit pictures, articles, reports, stories, announcements, etc. to

becky_breazeale@yahoo.com

Photos should have captions and appropriate credits. The deadline for submissions for each quarter's issue are located on the HLMN event calendar. Or contact Becky.

HAPPY GOLDEN
ANNIVERSARY,
MIKE AND SUE KERSEY!!!

50 years of marriage

The Giver

a poem by Julie Lewey

*Rolling down from the canyons of blue
skies*

Growing strong as each hill begins to cry

My patrons find their way to my banks

*On bended knee they suck the life I freely
give with no thanks*

*I give to life unseen beneath this hallowed
ground*

*No thirsty plant nor animal shall go un-
quenched so long as I may run on down*

I give more than will ever be brought back

But once I am dry this earth will crack

So care for me, hear my call

For I am but the river, the giver of all

MESSAGE FROM CATHY

(Continued from page 1)

Park visitors can camp, hike, fish, swim, boat, view wildlife, ride a horse or a bike, stargaze, or just kick back and relax. As Texans we should all grab a State Park Guide and plan a visit to one. As Master Naturalists we should also volunteer our time and talents to help ensure that our State Parks and our other partner sites remain places that people want to visit. In many areas they depend on us to help them do so. And last of all let's remember the motto of our State Parks, "LIFE'S BETTER OUTSIDE!!"

Cathy Hill

THE NATIVE PLANT SPOT

Article by Sammye Childers

Aloysia macrostachya (Torr.) Moldenke

Woolly Bee-brush

Woolly Bee-Brush is an attractive perennial, semi-evergreen shrub with an airy texture and extended blooming period. It is normally about 6 feet tall with equal width. However, in a landscape situation, it could reach up to 12 feet in height and girth. The conspicuous, fragrant blossom is in the purple range and the plant produces blooms from March through September, sometimes longer. The foliage, when crushed, has a scent reminiscent of thyme or oregano. This plant is endemic to Texas.



Woolly Bee Brush is well suited to poor or rocky soil in full sun. In fact, it is a heat tolerant plant. However, be aware that the plant will require some supplemental watering as it is rated medium for water usage. This plant may freeze down to ground in extreme winters, but will re-sprout again the next spring. The stems tend to be brittle but it may be pruned into a multi-trunk form or other desirable form for a more formal look.

The blooms are an excellent source for nectar for both bees and butterflies. Woolly Bee Brush has a high deer resistant rating. The fruit is a small drupe (cherries and olives are drupes) with two nutlets. The seeds germinate easily and cuttings root well. Note that plants grown from seed may not stay true to form. Soft stem cuttings will give you the most reliable form of propagation.

Other common names are Rio Grande Beebrush and Vara Dulce.

If seeking a plant, I would start with Wrights Nursery in Briggs, TX. <http://wrightstexasnursery.com>

Photos by: Joseph Marcus LBJWC





When “logging in” to report your hours in VMS, do you have trouble finding the “Volunteer Opportunity” you are looking for because there are so many listings?

Here is a step that can help you with that problem. It is called “Remove Yourself from an Approved Opportunity”. It will shorten the list on the drop down menu and make it easier to find what you are looking for.

- Login using your volunteer user ID and password
- From the volunteer dashboard, select “My Placements”



My Placements

View opportunities I have applied
for that have been approved.

Scroll through the list of opportunities for which you are approved until you find the one you wish to remove and click on the line “Click here for details or to remove yourself”

New Opportunity- Highland Lakes

Overview //

Used to gather information for new opportunities that have not been setup prior to being attended or if the attendee needs to be approved for an existing opportunity. Information for new opportunities should be routed to the review...

Program: Highland Lakes Master Naturalists

Contact Person: Highland Lakes

Contact Phone:

[Click here for details or to remove yourself](#)

On the resulting screen, click on the Red button containing the prompt “Remove Me”

- A confirmation window will display with the prompt “Are you sure you want to un-sign from this opportunity?” Click the OK button to confirm or click “Cancel” to cancel the action.
- Return to the Volunteer Dashboard.

Removing yourself from the opportunity has no effect on hours you have posted against the opportunity and does not prohibit you being approved for the same opportunity in the future.

Mother Gave Me Birds by -Joan Mukherjee

A day last spring I remembered my mother. A blue-gray gnatcatcher was singing in the front yard, a great crested flycatcher heralded me on my half mile trek to the mailbox and, best of all, a goldencheek warbler was calling its “come hither” song from the rise just above of my home. My mother taught me to love birds when I was just a little girl: the red-headed woodpeckers on every telephone pole, the killdeers in the field calling kill-dee, kill-dee, the mourning doves calling at dusk, goldfinches feeding on sunflowers and especially the house wren who nested in the crabapple tree blooming outside my bedroom window. I learned to love birds.

I grew up on the rich farmland of southern Minnesota now covered with miles upon unending miles of corn and soybean fields planted to the road edge. When I was a child there were still fencerows, pastures, orchards, groves, a wide variety of crops and free range livestock. Thus we had habitat for many bird species. Of course there were no chicken hawks or sparrow hawks because farmers vied to eliminate their menace by shooting them. We also had snakes, frogs, foxes, skunks, opossums and other animals. By the time I got to college farmers were finding financial benefits from specialization and mass production. Corn and soybeans were rapidly taking over and it was found to be more profitable to raise livestock and poultry in close confinement. For lack of habitat birds and wildlife were driven away and the country became sterile—no birds except for an occasional house sparrow. Mother gave me birds but I couldn’t keep them.



Unlike much of the United States, in Texas we are blessed with a wide variety of native habitat for birds and wildlife that so far has escaped development. Our landscape outside of heavily developed areas is alive with life because it provides food, shelter and water for birds.. Our Christmas bird counts easily surpass 100 species in nearly every 15 mile diameter count circle. Sparrowfest at Balcones Canyonlands often garners 23 sparrow species alone! We are a winter haven for seed eating birds such as sparrows and finches. They need go no farther because they find grass seed and other seed on wild plants in our prairies. Flocks of meadowlarks also feed in our grasslands in winter. Wood-

peckers and creepers, too, winter here because we have mature trees where they can find grubs under the bark and sap for sapsuckers. And don’t forget the huge flocks of robins, red-winged blackbirds and cedar waxwings who feast on juniper, yaupon and possumhaw berries every winter. Our lakes and gulf coast provide a winter haven for water and shore birds. We are fortunate to be on the flyway for birds heading south to or through Mexico. Anyone loving birds will love Texas year around, for fall and spring migrations, for our winter and summer visitors as well as our year around birds.

We revel in the song of the little brown bird who sings outside our bedroom window every morning. We let those pesky phoebes nest on top of our outdoor lamp; not having the use of the lamp for a month is well worth the entertainment we get from watching them raise a family. And the swallows who build those messy mud nests on our porches and the wren who nests in our decorative flower basket beside our front door are all fascinating to watch. I love to see the flocks of lesser goldfinches, like the one pictured, raid my yard and fields as soon as the plateau goldeneye seed is ripe. Apparently the seed is just the right size for those little birds and delicious, too. Even white winged doves who raid our feeders driving out the smaller birds would be missed.

But Texas, too, is being rapidly developed as human population surges. Instead of cornfields, the Texas landscape is being razed to provide homes, many of them in the Hill Country which has been important habitat for many birds. Unfortunately the suburban lawn provides little or no habitat for birds or other wildlife. The Atwater prairie chicken is struggling to survive even with the help of a refuge set aside for it. The bob white which was recently so common, is being driven from most of Texas. Bird surveys show that nearly all of our songbird populations are still healthy but dropping. Preservation of native landscapes is essential to Texas remaining a haven for our many bird species. Planting natives, limiting the use of pesticides and helping preserve existing native habitat is critically important to the future of our feathered friends.

Sights Seen On A Winter Texas Hill Country Photographic Safari

P.R. Wyde

In the last issue of The Steward I told you that one of my favorite things to do was to go on photographic safaris. I then proceeded to tell you about a one day safari that I took meandering just around our property. It was amazing to find so many interesting and colorful things to photograph in one's own back yard. Incredibly in just a matter of weeks and several freezes later, so much changed! There were no butterflies, very few flowers, very few insects, spiders or crawling creatures and certainly very little color! What are aspiring photographers or enthusiastic Master Naturalists supposed to do during winter in the Texas Hill Country! I decided to climb into my red chariot (which you know as a bright red Ford Ranger) and every day for a week (from December 26th through January 3rd) sallied forth along the back roads of Llano and Burnet Counties. Virtually every expedition had an adventure and photographic opportunities. Indeed, because of space limitations I can only show and tell you about a few of my encounters. I hope that you enjoy the images that follow as much as I enjoyed taking them. I normally do not pay much attention to goats. First, they are ubiquitous in this area. Secondly, I usually think of them as misshapen domesticated animals with little grace. I mean, other than mountain goats perched on craggy perches, has any goat ever made your heart beat fast? However, the goats shown in Figure 1 really struck my fancy. Can you imagine what a predator would think coming upon this trio? I know that I stared at them for a long time. Then I began to wonder if my camera would focus on them! Luckily the camera did and I got the shot. I think that we could use this im-

age in our presentations about camouflage. It is sure to provoke interesting discussions.

Figure 1 Spotted goats, Burnet County



Even though they are not rare, and like goats, are domesticated animals, I had to include an image of a Texas long horn (Figure 2). After all, these bovines are a representation of Texas, proud, strong and independent creatures. Why else would the University of Texas pick a long horn as their mascot. Looking at this image you can also see why supposedly highly intelligent, sophisticated and cultured people (i.e., U.T. students, graduates and fans) go around making funny gestures with their hands and yell, "Hook-em-Horns!" (They are mimicking the wide spread, erect horns of long horns.)

The Texas long horn shown in Figure 3 was part of the same herd as the long horn shown in Figure 2. However, I figure that he was designed by animal engineers at Texas A&M University and put in with the herd to produce similarly horned animals. They could then use such confused horned cows to represent Texas A&M. Think about it, with long horns like the one shown in Figure 2, the highly intelligent, less sophisticated and purportedly less cultured people from Texas A&M could legitimately make funny gestures with their hands and yell, "Gig Em!" (Only one horn up.)

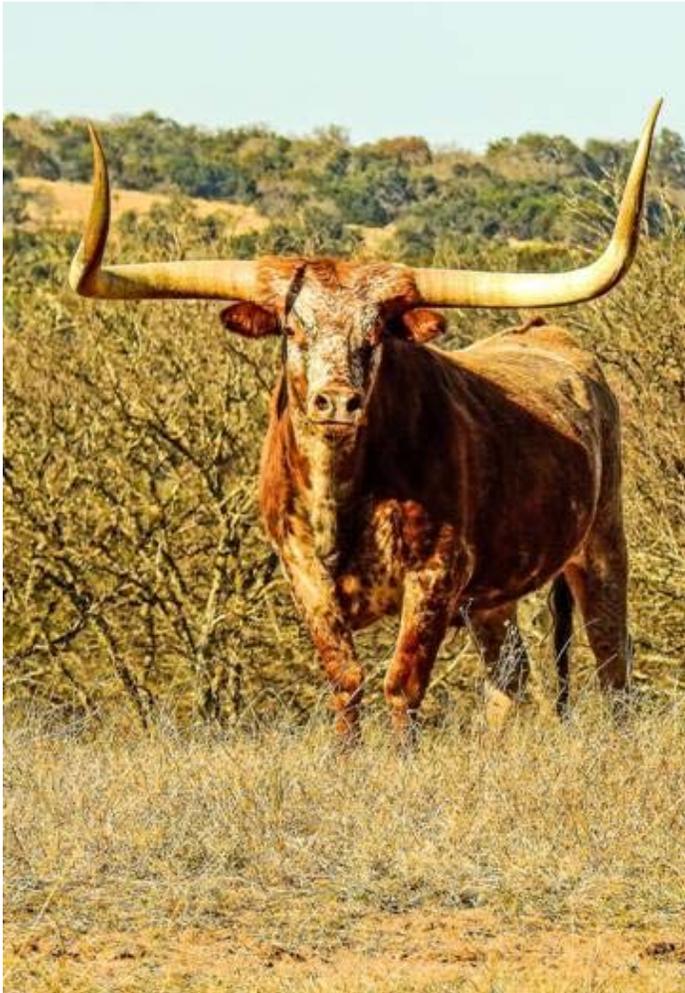


Figure 2 Texas long horn bull, Burnet County

Figure 3 Texas long horn with a possible confused identity, Burnet County.



You are probably wondering if I saw any wild animals on my forays. I did. Figure 4 shows four spotted antelopes, and one animal (second from the right) that I cannot identify.) Although none of these animals are native, they are impressive and quite photographic. That said, I do have to wonder what they are doing in the middle of Texas.



Figure 4 Two species of non-native antelope, Burnet County.

My next two images (Figures 5 & 6) are of a species that is both wild and native to Texas. According to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department WEB site, elk (*Cervus canadensis*) roamed, and can still be found roaming, in far west Texas. This site also says that elk can also be found on ranches with high fences throughout Texas. My images are proof that they can be found right here in Central Texas. (Helen Smith and Billy Hutson, the male Elk is the one with the antlers!)



Figures 5 & 6 Female and male elk. Burnet County





Figure 7 Sun setting behind the Llano River, Llano County.

Of course, there are other things to take pictures of besides animals. Figure 7 shows an image of the sun setting behind the Llano River. Everything is calm, glowing and peaceful after an eventful day. This was to be the most colorful image that I took during the week.

On another evening when the sun was setting, I took the image shown in Figure 8. Again, there is the feeling of tranquility and peace. There is also color, but of a different sort.

Let it be known that I also took pictures during the day also. In Figure 9 you can see an image taken at one end of the lake at Reveille Peak Ranch during the Christmas Bird Count. I really had a lot of conflict within me while walking around this lake – and while taking the picture. Although I was happy that I had a camera in my hand, I also really wished that it was a fishing rod that I was holding.

By the way, we saw many birds at Reveille Peak Ranch during the Christmas Bird Count. One of them, a large Snowy Egret, is shown in Figure 10.

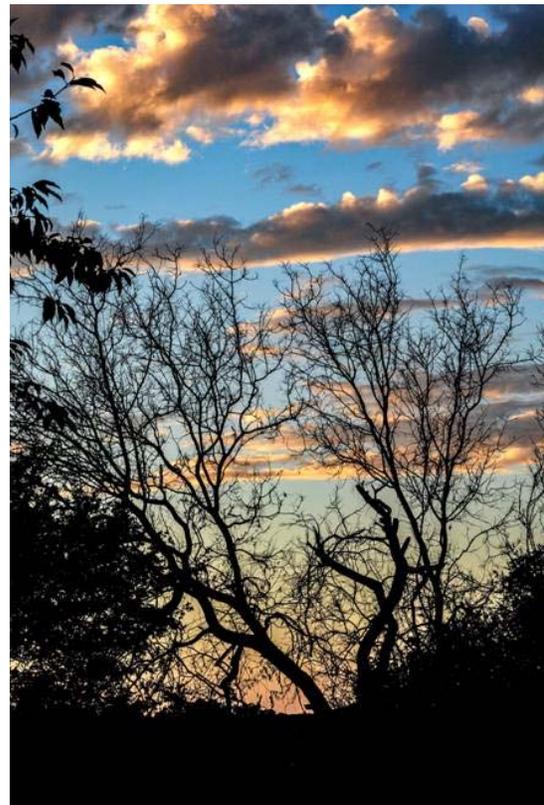


Figure 8 Sun setting behind a leafless tree, Llano County.



Figure 10. Great egret, Burnet County.

My last image (Figure 11) is my favorite one taken during my week-long Texas Hill Country photographic winter safari. It is my favorite image not because it is perfect. It is most certainly not photographically perfect. It is my favorite image primarily because of how I obtained it.

Figure 11. Bald eagle, Burnet County.



Meet Our Members: by Sheryl Smith Rodgers



Jennifer Daniels

Lampasas, Class 2008

Where were you raised?

I grew up in Dumas, a small town in the wide, open spaces of the Texas Panhandle.

What is your professional background?

I taught middle school math and science for more than 15 years and was a school administrator for 10 years.

Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.

I have a passion for kids and nature. I want kids to be able to observe, understand, and be part of taking care of nature and the outside world around them. They are our future and who better to teach them than Master Naturalists.



Celia Escamilla

Burnet, Class 2012

Where were you raised?

I was born in Odessa and raised in Amarillo

What is your professional background?

I have taught P.E., Spanish, and Health at Packsaddle. I also have taught Jazzercise.

Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.

I have a memory from when I was younger. When I was a young girl, walking to the candy store, I would chew on Mesquite beans on the way. As a youth, I also enjoyed playing with Horned Lizards and grasshoppers. My family liked to camp and I remember catching a really big fish on one of those camping trips – a perch I think.



Cathy Hill

Buchanan Dam, Class 2011

Where were you raised?

I was born and raised in Baytown, Texas.

What is your professional background?

I was a zoology major at Texas A&M University. I got married, moved to Houston, and taught high school science briefly. Then I went back to school to get a degree in Medical Technology. I worked in the microbiology lab at two Houston Medical Center hospitals before retiring and moving to Buchanan Dam.

Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.

I was a Girl Scout leader with my daughter. I enjoy gardening, birdwatching, hiking, and being in the outdoors. When we lived in the Houston area, I volunteered at Brazos Bend State Park.



Kristen Rodgers

Burnet, Class 2016

Where were you raised?

I grew up in Lago Vista, from kindergarten 'til now.

What is your professional background?

I started in marketing and management in a cubicle. Now I'm working at Inks Lake State Park as a customer service rep, as well as a certified interpretive guide. I was recently certified as a wildlands fire fighter, too.

Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.

Every chance they could, my parents would take us to state and national parks. After college, I worked in a cubicle for a Fortune 100 company in Austin. I had my Texas State Parks calendar hanging at my desk. I'd look at it and wish I was outdoors. So I decided to quit corporate life and do what I love! Soon after I started working at Inks Lake, Elaine Barnhill introduced me to the Highland Lakes Master Naturalists. I've been outdoors ever since. No more cubicles for me. And the best part is that I get to share my passion for the outdoors with others!

**Ellis Winkler****Burnet, Class 2003****Where were you raised?**

Bee County in South Texas. I grew up in Skidmore, right in town. Population was 660 back then.

What is your professional background?

I joined the military for four years and served in the Korean War. I went to school at the University of Houston. For 26 years, I worked as Allison Transmission sales manager for Stewart and Stevenson Co. in Houston.

Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.

One of the volunteer activities I did the most was at the Old Tunnel State Park. I love bats! They take care of the insects that eat our crops. I was in our chapter's first training class.

**Phillip Wyde****Kingsland, Class 2008****Where were you raised?**

I was born in Monticello, New York. This upstate town of 6,000 is nestled in the foothills of the Catskill Mountains. Besides being the home of Rip Van Winkle, it is one of the prettier and most nature-filled spots in this country.

What is your professional background?

I was employed in the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Virology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston for 29 years and 11 months. I started as an assistant professor, became an associate professor and then became a full Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Virology. During those 30 years, I was also a member of the Influenza Research Center, taught medical and graduate students, and did basic research on a number of different human respiratory viruses, including influenza, measles, respiratory syncytial virus, virus and avian influenza virus. All of my research centered on animal models, primarily mice and cotton rats. However, including my student days, I worked with horses, cows, rabbits, mice, rats, cotton rats, chickens, sheep, and goats.

Tell us about your nature-related passion or volunteer activity.

I belong to the Highland Lakes Master Naturalists, Friends of the Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery, Friends of Inks Lake State Park and the Upper Highland Lakes Nature Center. As a kid, I was always outside capturing frogs, tadpoles, salamander, and observing rabbits, deer and other critters. I started fishing very young. After four years in the U.S. Navy (only four days on a ship), I went to the SUNY at Binghamton, N.Y., to become a wildlife biologist. I took the N.Y. and Federal Civil Service Exams, and scored very high. Unfortunately, there were NO openings for government wildlife biologists in N.Y. or federally. There was an opening for a microbiologist in Albany, N.Y. I took the position, and it changed my life. After another 7.5 years of train-

ing, I went to Baylor College of Medicine and for the 29 years and 11 months I worked in places that were not only NOT outdoors, but often without windows. Although I loved it, I love retirement more and, to my surprise, like working with people!

Granite Shoals Wildlife Viewing Station - The Project!!

By Fredi Franki



Before....

In 2012 our chapter did a bird and plant survey at Quarry Park in Granite Shoals. The City had applied for a grant from TPWD to create the Manzano Trail around the park; the survey was part of the grant process. That's the first time we saw the pond and were entranced by all the dragonflies. In early 2016 when our chapter was looking for a new project we remembered that pond! The location provides both accessibility and seclusion, perfect for wildlife viewing. The City of Granite Shoals welcomed our project ideas. Everyone was ready to get started.

Planning the WVS in 2016 took about 6 months, building it in 2017 took less

than 6 weeks. At least thirty chapter members helped in the construction phase and at the end of February 2017 the structure is nearly finished. The WVS is both attractive and functional. It offers opportunity for recreation,



The pond directly in front of the viewing station.

Post holes dug, and framework begun.
Pictured to the right:
Linda O'nan and
George Brugnoli.



Heave Ho.....



Truly putting your back into it. Pictured left.

From the GROUND up. Pictured to the right::
Paula Richards
Alice Rheume
Phil Wyde





Woo Hoo!! It's painting time!! Pictured to the left: Lori Greco, Billie Gunther, Jean Schar.

W
O
W



(Continued from page 16)

relaxation, and education. Everyone is proud of our progress.

What is ahead? In March 2017 we will add the glass windows and flooring. The benches are being built. It's time to think about bird feeders. We need educational material. Most importantly we need a group of volunteers to maintain the feeders and clean the windows 2-3 times a week. Many of you have offered to help and as you can see opportunities are abundant. Everyone can look forward to a successful and satisfying HLMN project.

Perhaps soon Nature Lovers will see these from the viewing station:



Photo credits: Paula Richards, Phil Wyde's friend Richard Van Inwegen and Martelle Luedecke.



Discovery Trunk Training - February 13th



Pictured to the left: Andrea Roach talks about the freshwater trunk. Pictured below: her freshwater volunteer .



Carol Hess explains the layout of the mammal trunk.



**Example of
Discovery
Trunk
Materials.**

(to the left)

(below)

Phil Wyde and
the Lady Bug
trunk



Eastern Screech Owls



These are the Backyard buddies of Lyn Davis, our featured speaker for March.

Readings

In case you did not get a copy of my favorite readings regarding the Eastern Screech owl – here it is!!!!

Let me know if you have any questions.
Lyn



Angell, Tony, [The House of Owls](#), Philomel Books/Penguin Group 2015

Berger, Cynthia, [Owls Wild Guide](#), Stackpole Books 2005

Gehlbach, Frederick R., Professor of Biology at Baylor University [The Eastern Screech Owl, Life History, Ecology and Behavior in the Suburbs and Countryside](#), Texas Am & M Press 1994

Markle, Sandra, [Animal Predators, Owls](#), Carolrhoda Book, Inc. 2004

O'Brien, Stacey, [Wesley the Owl](#) - New York Times Best Seller
A heart wrenching and heart-felt story of the deep reciprocal and enduring emotional bonds that develop between Stacey and her longtime friend They spent an unprecedented 19 years together. A memoir.



GARDEN SHOWS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER!

Saturday, March 25th at the Burnet Community Center 9-3. Demonstration, many vendors, kids' corner, many plants, native and garden supplies. For more information call Irene Dauphin [254-498-6009](tel:254-498-6009) or to be a vendor Roxanne Dunegan [512-756-9396](tel:512-756-9396).

Llano Master Gardener Lawn and Garden Show: Saturday, **April 1** 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the St. James Lutheran Church 1401 Ford St. in Llano.

Let's Build Raised Beds

Why raised beds you might ask? Here in the Hill country our soils are primarily very alkaline: 8+ on the scale. Raised bed gardening allows us to grow those plants that prefer an acidic pH by creating a proper environment. Raised beds also allow us to garden just about anywhere. They also permit us to keep our garden and flower beds closer to home or in a convenient location for us. And yes, painting the outside for a color theme is fun and vibrant.

When deciding what dimensions, you want to use, make sure that you can reach the center from the edge. (Another lesson we learned the hard way. Now you don't have to.) With a 2" x 10" x 8' (redwood, cedar or treated lumber) you can make several variations: 4' x 8', 2'x6', 4'x4' or a 2'x2':**1)** For a 4' x 8', use three boards and cut one in half for the sides. **2)** Two boards will build a 2' x 6'. Cut 2' off of the 8' for the 6', the remaining 2' work wonderfully for the sides. **3)** For a 4' x 4' cut two boards in half. **4)** And if you would like to put small raised beds around your yard perhaps a color theme in each, one board cut into fourths provides a 2' x 2' bed.

The 4' x 8' works wonderfully for vegetable gardens, the 2' x 6' giant sunflowers, 4' x 4' wildflowers to attract hummingbirds and butterflies, 2' x 2' to simply make everything pretty.

This soil recipe courtesy of John Dromgoole, The Natural Gardener, works wonderfully: 60% top soil, 30% manure compost, 10% granite gravel for the bottom layer (¼ minus size of gravel) = 100% Excellent soil.

Hummingbirds are HERE

Hummers are HERE!! Put your feeders out. Personally, we use 4:1 water:sugar ratio. Please no food coloring or dye. And please use real sugar. Grandmother thought she would help the birds not gain weight by using saccharine. She couldn't figure out why the birds kept going to the neighbor's feeders instead of hers. Once she started using



real sugar she enjoyed our fine feathered friends as well

Asparagus!!

March is a full month in the garden. Are you ready to plant those asparagus crowns? Dig a hole that is 12" deep for the open pollinated asparagus and 6" deep for one of the Jersey bunch. Put about 1" inch of compost in the hole and toss in a banana peel or two (K=potassium=banana peel). Set the crowns approximately 18" apart with rows 4" apart. Disinfect the newly purchased roots by soaking them in a solution of 1 cup regular bleach to 1 gallon of warm water for 3-4 hours before planting. (This soak also help open their pores.) Put one crown in each hole, spread out the roots, and cover with 2" soil. As it grows, gradually fill up the hole, but don't cover any foliage. Give your plants 1 to 2 inches of water each week until they become established. After that, don't bother watering them until drought-like conditions occur.

Start planting

Vegetables: Corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Peppers. When planting Pumpkin, Squash and Watermelon, make sure to leave room for them to wonder.

Herbs: Basil, Bay, Caraway, Catnip, chives, Cumin(o), Fennel, Scented Geranium, Horseradish, Lamb's Ear, Lavender, Lemon Grass, Lemon Verbena, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Summer Savory, Tarragon, and Thyme.

"I'd grow my own food if I could only find bacon seeds" ...anonymous. Since we don't have bacon seeds yet...

Keep your souls and soles in your garden!

Remember the True Master Gardener: Jesus said, "I am the vine; my Father is the Gardener." John 15:1

Stewardship

An ethic that embodies cooperative planning and management of environmental resources with organizations, communities and others to actively engage in the prevention of loss of habitat and facilitate its recovery in the interest of long-term sustainability.

Thank you *EVERYONE!!*

We truly appreciate your photos, submissions, cooperation, encouragement, and articles.

A special Thank You to Mike Childers for having published The Steward all these years, and for your help in getting us started in the transition.

Can't wait for the summer issue!!

*Hugs,
Becky and Martelle*

