

THE TEXAS STAR

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HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

APRIL PROGRAM

Our April program will be a presentation by **Dr. Kim Lohmeyer**, a researcher at the USDA insect lab in Kerrville. Dr. Lohmeyer does research on livestock entomology and will speak on how insects impact livestock and humans.

Dr. Lohmeyer is a Research Entomologist at the United States Department of Agriculture's Knippling-Bushland US Livestock Insects Research Laboratory in Kerrville. She earned her PhD and did postdoctoral work at the University of Georgia. Dr. Lohmeyer gave the 2003 Harry Crate Lecture at Schreiner University and currently serves as Secretary of the Board of Directors of Riverside Nature Center Association. She has been a Hill Country resident for the past three years.

This meeting will be held on Monday, April 24, at 7:00pm at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street in Kerrville, with our social beginning at 6:30pm. We hope that you can join us.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JIM STANLEY

The Board has approved Bill Lindemann's presentation at our February meeting as advanced training (AT), so if you attended that presentation, you can count that hour as AT.

The Board wishes to reiterate the policy for new volunteer projects. If any MN wishes to do a project that does not appear to be on the volunteer project list, first check with Ron Hood to verify that the activity is not already covered by an existing project. If it is not, then the MN can follow our procedure by filling out our form (on our website) and submitting it to Ron Hood for his and/or Board approval.

The freeze some of us had on March 24 really set back a lot of our deciduous woody plants. At least around Tierra Linda, almost everything that had only begun to green up and therefore had small tender new leaves had the leaves killed by the freeze. Most of the trees and shrubs that were still in the bud stage are OK. Of course, all trees and shrubs native to this area have evolved to withstand late freezes – and March 24 is not really late – so they should all survive. By the time you read this, many of the damaged trees should be showing new life, or will be soon. While the ultimate survival of native trees is not threatened, there is no doubt that, coupled with the drought in recent months, this puts a lot of plants in stress. So especially if you have newly planted (within the last two years) trees or shrubs, a little extra water might be very helpful.

Oh, by the way, in case you have forgotten, the chiggers will be out soon.

EARTH DAY NATIVE PLANT SALE & NATURE FAIR

On **Saturday, April 22** from 8:00am to 3:00pm, our TMN partner, **Riverside Nature Center**, along with the **Kerrville**

Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas, will be holding an all-day event with a HUGE NATIVE PLANT SALE, educational nature presentations, and numerous nature-oriented exhibits. Admission is FREE!

The native plant sale will fill the Riverside Pavilion with hard-to-find ornamental trees and shrubs, colorful perennials, ferns and unusual vines. Now that – hopefully – our last frost is behind us, this is the perfect time to plant before summer's heat arrives. Plant docents will help you select plants to grow in any location, sun or shade, wet or dry. Some adaptive plants will be included as well as the Texas native plants that grow so well under our challenging horticultural conditions.

Ornamental trees and shrubs include the Anacacho orchid tree with white orchid-like flowers in spring, the goldenball lead tree with delicate foliage and fuzzy golden ball flowers, American beautyberry with rings of magenta berries on the branches, possumhaw with red berries decorating its branches all winter, coral bean with red flowers to attract hummingbirds, and deer-resistant Mexican oregano with pink blossoms for hummers throughout the summer. Perennials will include red columbine, evergreen yellow columbine, evergreen Jerusalem sage with ornate yellow flowers, Gulf Coast penstemon with abundant lavender bell flowers, and much more. Vines will include the butterfly vine with yellow flowers, evergreen Coral Honeysuckle with coral flowers for hummers from February to November, passionflower for the Gulf Fritillary butterflies and intricate blossoms, evergreen crossvine with its red flowers, and more.

There will be presentations on native plants in Kerr County, Texas snakes, hunting Texas wildflowers, and weather trends found in archeology, as well as exhibits on worms, composting and recycling. **Don Robinson**, TMN – HCC, will have his hybrid Toyota Prius on display. For children, there is a Make-A-Snake craft activity, and wood working with **Angelo Falzarone**, TMN - HCC. The special activities extend into the evening with a Star Party at 8:00pm featuring a program on the Mysterious Moon.

We hope to see you at this Earth Day celebration at Riverside Nature Center!

For more information on Earth Day, visit <http://www.epa.gov/earthday/> or <http://nature.org/earthday/> or <http://earthday.envirolink.org/>.

A PAGE FROM THE HERBARIUM

THIS MONTH'S PLANT: SWANFLOWER

(one of several Dutchman's Pipes)
Aristolochia erecta Linneaus

BY SUSAN LONGACRE

You can see this month's featured forb growing at Riverside Nature Center in the grassy area between the driveway and the first utility pole to the south of the exit. **Swanflower** prefers to grow in sandy loam or packed sandy silt, and is often found in open grassy flats. Swanflower is the only larval plant for the pipevine swallowtail; if these butterflies are seen hovering near the ground, chances are *Aristolochia* is nearby.

The swanflower is a member of the *Aristolochiaceae* or birthwort family. It is characterized by herbaceous to woody vines with bitter or peppery-tasting yellow sap and red-brown flowers that are variously shaped like a fused Dutch pipe. Of the seven genera in the family, Texas is home to only one, *Aristolochia*; the swanflower is one of seven Texas species in the genus that was named by Linnaeus himself.

Swanflower is a low perennial with a spreading, frequently prostrate growth habit. Stems are relatively short (to 30 cm) with long (to 13 cm), narrow (to 1.5 cm) tapering green leaves that are simple, alternate, and entire,



Photograph by Fred Siedow

Flowers on this herbaceous vine are vase-like, sit on a short stem, are about 1cm wide and 10 cm long, and have bulbous bases with mauve and brown spots on the rising tube and purple-brown spots inside the mouth of the upper, elongated limb. This narrow acute tip is curved back like the neck and head of a swan – hence the name. Seeds are about 6 mm wide, flat to triangular, dark brown and numerous. Herbal medicines have been made from the dried stems, roots and rhizomes of this genus.

The Texas Hill Country Virtual Herbarium is a project dedicated to creating a photographic database to be used for identification of plants native to the Texas Hill Country area.

For more information, contact [Barbara Lowenthal](#).

***Susan Longacre**, a retired geologist, represents the Class of 2005 on the Board, and is involved with the Virtual Herbarium and Los Rincones projects.*

VOLUNTEER AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center are looking for help on Thursday, May 11, when they host 184 third graders at the Nature Trails for a day of "Wings Over The Hills". Volunteers will work with a co-volunteer to staff a stop along the trail. All information will be provided – as well as lunch! During the afternoon we will have the opportunity to view a special program on raptors. For more information please contact **Jane Crone** 830 669 2639.

The Tree ID class will be held at Riverside Nature Center on Wednesday, April 26, from 9am to noon. **Jim Stanley** will make the presentation and **Priscilla** and Jim will lead field identification around the grounds. The Forb ID class will be at the same place and day from 1pm till 4pm, presented by Scott and Sandra Magee. The next Grass ID class will be in late May or June. Please e-mail [Jim Stanley](#) if you plan to attend either or both classes so we can have enough handouts.

FROM THE TMN DIGEST

In case you missed it, the *Texas Master Naturalist Digest* reported the 2005 dollar value of volunteer service per hour:

- The Independent Sector has posted its calculation of the per hour value of volunteers for 2005 at \$18.04.

This is up from the 2004 figure of \$17.55. More information on volunteering in the US may be found at <http://www.independentsector.org>.

- In December, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released its latest information on volunteering in the US in 2005. Their survey shows that 65.4 million people volunteered, about 28.8% of the population. This was basically unchanged from 2003 and 2004. The full survey results may be found at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.toc.htm>.

To subscribe to the TMN Digest, visit <http://taex001.tamu.edu/mailman/listinfo/tmn>, or send a message with subject or body 'help' to tmn-request@taex001.tamu.edu.

MASTER NATURALIST MILESTONES / ACKNOWLEDGMENTS / KUDOS

The first member of our Class of 2005 to become a certified Texas Master Naturalist is **Lars Nielsen**. Lars has completed all thirteen training sessions and three field trips, as well as forty hours of volunteer service and eight hours of advanced training. Lars will be awarded his TMN Certificate and his green and white Dragonfly pin at our April 24 meeting.

Six TMNs have re-certified for 2006 and will receive their certificates and Prickly Pear pins:
Cynthia Johnson, Sandra Magee, Phyllis Muska, Sandy Peña, Jim Stanley and Priscilla Stanley.

Jane Crone and **Phyllis Muska** have earned their bronze milestone awards for 250 cumulative volunteer hours in service to their communities promoting the beneficial use of natural resources. They will each receive a bronze Dragonfly to celebrate this achievement.

Diane McMahon and **Nina Wagner** are recent graduates of the Hill Country Master Gardener program.

Congratulations to all our achievers!

Sadly for us, **Amy Sugeno** has announced her departure from Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area, our Chapter, and the Hill Country as her husband Dave is graduating from seminary and being assigned to Conroe. Many of us know Amy in her capacity as volunteer coordinator at Old Tunnel and advisor to our Chapter. We'll miss Amy but wish her well and hope she keeps in touch from her new home.

CALENDAR

April 19: Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter board meeting – 2:00pm at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville. Chapter members may attend.

April 20: Madrona Garden Club – 10:00am, Riverside Nature Center in Kerrville. Presentation on water gardens by **Richard Thornberg**. Carpool from Bandera Methodist Church parking lot at 9:30. Bring a sack lunch; self-guided tour of RNC follows the program. Contact **Merida Tinsley** at 830 796 4770 for more information.

April 22: Earth Day Native Plant Sale & Nature Fair – 8am to 3pm, Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville. See above for details.

April 24: Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter monthly meeting – 7:00pm, Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos, Kerrville. See above for details.

April 25: Fredericksburg Chapter, Native Plant Society – 7:00pm, Gillespie County Historical Society, 312 W San Antonio, Fredericksburg. **Tim Shipman** and his class from Fredericksburg Middle School will discuss their horticultural program. For more information, contact Lonnie Childs at hollowcreek@starband.net.

April 26-30: North American Bluebird Society Convention – San Antonio Hilton Hotel. Special programs, presentations and field trips. For more information visit the NABS website at <http://www.nabs2006.com> or call 512 268 5678.

April 29: Bird Banding Workshop – 8:00am, Fredericksburg Nature Center, Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park. Contact **Craig Hensley** at rchensley@hctc.net for details or to sign up.

April 29: Medina birders – Meet in front of Medina Community Library at 7:30am to carpool to Cibolo Nature Center. Contact **Richard Redmond** at 830 796 7901 for details.

May 1-7: National Wildflower Week – Various activities at locations around Texas and the US. See <http://www.wildflower.org/?nd=118> for details.

May 2: Kerrville Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas monthly meeting – 2:00pm, Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos, Kerrville.

May 2: Boerne Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas monthly meeting – 7:00pm, Cibolo Nature Center, 1 City Park Road (off Highway 46, east of Boerne). Book signing and presentation on native grasses & photography by Brian Loflin, commercial photographer.

May 3: Boerne Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas spring grass walk: Join Brian and Shirley Loflin for a spring grass walk at the Cibolo Nature Center.

May 4-6: 2006 Southwest Land Trust Conference – San Antonio, La Quinta Inn, Suites & Conference Center. Co-hosted by the Texas Land Trust Council and the Land Trust Alliance. For more information contact **Pam Nicholls** at pnicholls@lta.org or 970 245 5811.

May 11: Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center "Wings Over The Hills" – [See above for details.](#)

May 13: Gardens on Tour 2006 – Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center sponsors tour of five exceptional private gardens in the Austin area. See www.wildflower.org for details.

May 18: Overabundant White-tailed Deer in Texas – 7:45am–5:00pm, Texas State University, San Marcos. Seminar on white-tailed deer impact on people, communities, and the land. Registration fee \$50. For more information or to register, contact **Helen Holdsworth** at the Texas Wildlife Association 1 800 TEX WILD or 210 826 2904 X120.

May 20: Hill Country Archeological Association meeting – 12:30pm at Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville. **Maureen Brown** from Texas Historical Commission will discuss ceramics found at Fort St. Louis.

May 24-28: Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference – Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches. For more information, visit <http://pnpc.sfasu.edu>.

Please send newsletter contributions and comments to Phyllis Muska at pmuska@omniglobal.net.