



November 30th Forecast

By Christine Cook

Winter? Seriously????

*Who? Me? - I'm in Ellis County, Texas,
I don't button my jacket.*

What birds at my feeder? - wow! What a racket!

Hard frost you say? Well, okay...

Where are last year's faucet covers?

Get out the blankets for the front porch lovers.

Rake up the leaves for the compost pile.

Fix the front door in Christmas style.

Locate favorite sweaters, scarves and socks.

Get soup in the pot and presents in a box.

Now I'm all ready, but, I'm not in a hurry;

Our Texas winter may just be a flurry!

*(But, y'all better be fixin' to be ready, maybe by
mid-January; or tomorrow!)*

From the Desk of the **PRESIDENT**

Greetings Trailblazers!

It's amazing to me that this year is over so quickly! How time flies when you are having fun! And, it has surely been a fun year thanks to all of you who have worked so hard on events, projects, and committees!

I want to say a special thank you to those who are stepping down from their positions. I am sure they will be stepping into new roles soon.

- **Jessica Willis** has spent much time and effort bringing us superior programming even in the midst of the COVID shutdown. We have learned and enjoyed the programs so, thank you from all of us!

- **Jennifer Zarate** has spent several years keeping us all up to date with the minutes of the meetings including all monthly meetings and quarterly board meetings. That is a lot of notetaking and writing! Super job!

- **Joe Mundo**, what a terrific job you have done for so long! I would bet that most people have no idea that every email written on the sign in sheets we have at events and every request for information goes into a "Friends' List" that you keep up with, so you can send out updated information about ITMN throughout the year. Also, keeping us in all the newspapers and other publications is a big job that you have done for years! Thank you is not enough to convey how much we appreciate you and the work you have done.

I am certainly looking forward to 2023 and all it will bring us! Please get involved in any way you can. Take some time to get to know your fellow ITMN members at meetings, activities, and social events. What we do makes a difference in our world. We must continue to work to defeat Nature Deficit Disorder!

See you soon!

Rena Sutphin, *President, Indian Trail chapter*

The Seasonal Tides by Trailblazers

From the creativity of our talented members, we envision the poetic changes of seasons...the before, the now, the yet to come. In this season, we give thanks, to all of you, our members, for your talents, for your service, for your presence...for being you. Read on.

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Monthly meetings are held on the 4th Monday (usually) of each month at 6 p.m., program at 7 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, Waxahachie. Our office is located in TexasAgrilife at 701 S. I-35E, Suite 3, Waxahachie, TX 75165 | 972-825-5175

Visit our website at <http://txmn.org/indiantrail>



Winter Social 2022

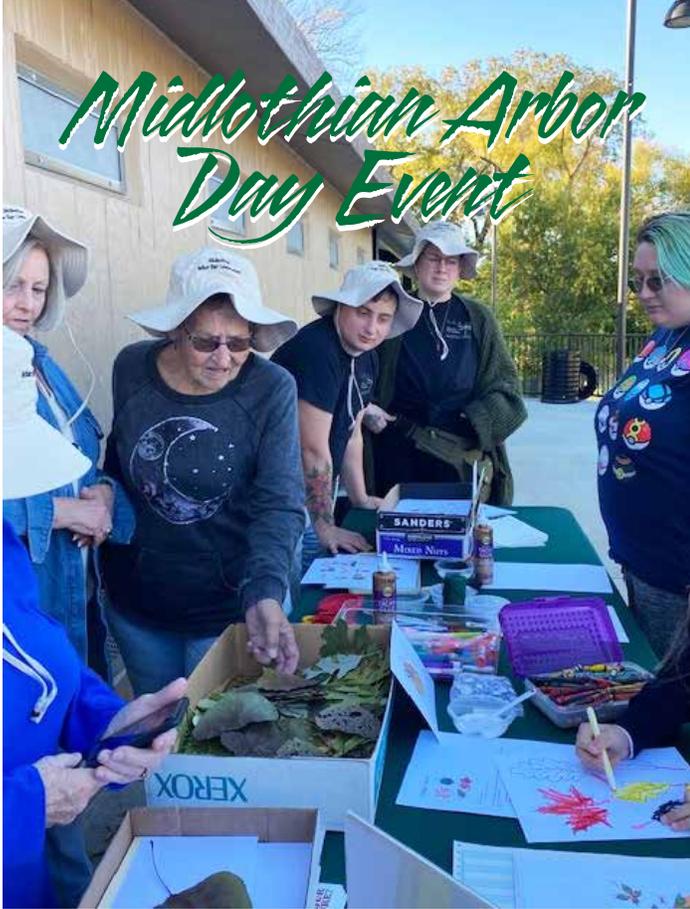
By Santa's Elves, Photos by Erin McKool

Indian Trail social events are always fun and this Winter Social was something to “yowell” about. Hosts, Celia and Charlie Yowell graciously provided their lovely home for the gathering. There was music, food, games, and gift exchanges. *More photos on the next page.*





Midlothian Arbor Day Event



Hazards) who would make a good speaker for one of our programs.

I want to give a BIG THANK YOU to Denise King, Sage Gregory, Jim Patak, Robbie Robbins, Chris Cook, Celia Yowell, & Jeffery Austin for volunteering this evening. I also want to thank all the members who collected & pressed leaves. We had a wonderful assortment, all shapes, sizes & colors as you can see from the pictures. Such an awesome group of volunteers! I couldn't do these fun things without you! We have lots of leaves left over and had a great suggestion to mount one of each kind on a poster & make a "Can You Identify the Tree?" contest for the next EXPO. Let me know if you want to help put such a poster together.

By Charlie Grindstaff

Photos courtesy of Denise King and Charlie Grindstaff

Trail Blazers - Good time was had by all at the Arbor Day Event in Midlothian on November 5th. Check out the leaf critters the kids made. The Midlothian Parks & Rec had over 200 trees of about 8 varieties to give away. They gave each of our ITMN volunteers a bucket hat...sorry I didn't take any pictures of us. There were approximately 200 people in attendance with about 55 kiddos coming to our tables!

The kids painted flower pots, donated by the City of Midlothian, for starting their trees in. Thanks to Denise for getting those kid pictures. It was a really, good group of people that attended, including one newly minted biologist who is interested in our next training class and one teacher at Navarro College (Earth Sciences and Geologic



DARKEST BEEBALM



By Sue Frary

At the 2022 Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting Photography Contest, I was lucky enough to win the blue ribbon in the Plants category. I was very surprised, because there were many beautiful entries, and the photo I submitted was a little bit offbeat. It's a portrait of *Monarda citriodora*, or Lemon Beebalm...an experiment for me. Our showy pink Beebalm are really common in the summertime on the roadsides and in our parks, but in the dark? They should be, well, dark, right? But not always. This is the story behind the photograph.

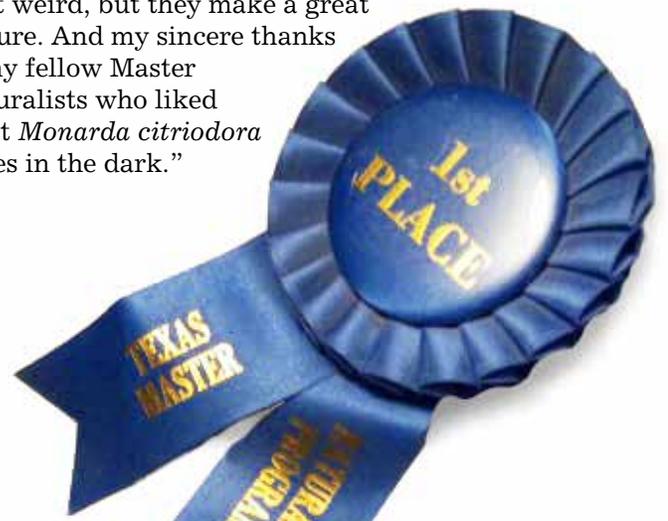
This is what's called "Ultraviolet-Induced Visible Fluorescence", or UVIVF. The photograph records the visible light emitted by the structures of the plant when the plant is irradiated with ultraviolet light. The plant absorbs the UV light (short wavelength, about 365 nm), then parts of the plant emit that energy at longer wavelengths – here in the visible spectrum. UV light is higher energy than visible light, so there is loss of energy in the process. I don't know if the plant uses that energy

for something, or if it's just "lost." Lots of things do this: rocks, scorpions, lizards, lichens, bird feathers, highlighter pens, copier paper, and tonic water to name a few. Lots of plants do it too, both flowers and leaves. The effect is really obvious to our eyes in a dark setting, but there is no natural UV light at night. So, unless a pollinator is flying around at night with a UV flashlight, there might not be a benefit to the plant. The effect is pretty cool though. Plants do some amazing things just because they can...

This photo was taken with a long exposure (30 seconds) in a completely dark room (a walk-in closet) against a black background – at f/11 to get all of the flower in focus. I "painted" the flower with a UV flashlight, the kind rock hunters use to find fluorescent rocks, a Convoy S2. (Use protective glasses when using UV lighting...UV is dangerous to look at directly). "Painting" things during long exposures involves just moving the light around on the subject so as to get even coverage. The image is "as shot," no Photoshop or other manipulation. Pure plant stuff! The camera gear doesn't matter – any camera which can do long exposures is fine. No special

lenses or filters are necessary, and you don't have to modify the sensor on your camera as you would for pure ultraviolet or infrared photography. Just your camera on a tripod, a UV flashlight, and a dark room, that's all you need for UVIVF!

I got lucky with this image; the plant's structures are a bit weird, but they make a great picture. And my sincere thanks to my fellow Master Naturalists who liked what *Monarda citriodora* "does in the dark."



Mauna Loa Wharwat?!



By Ann Spencer

By nature, and by habit, I'm a bit of a weather bug. I'm likely not the only Master Naturalist who has a weather station and checks the skies when fronts approach or takes note of interesting cloud formations anytime and anywhere. I'm often on the lookout for birds moving out ahead of weather coming in.

My one semester of climatology (taken in college under a degree mandate) came back to me on November 1 when Sarah Barnes, a forecaster with National Weather Service/NOAA office in Fort Worth, ran our training class through weather basics and a bit of climate change discussion.

New to me was Sarah's mention of the Mauna Loa Observatory (MLO) and the climate data that has been collected there since 1958. Mauna Loa sparked my attention because my husband and I had just visited Hawaii (Oahu) a few weeks earlier.

Sarah described the observatory and its location as a prime site for atmospheric change -data. The MLO website describes its activities this way:

The observatory protrudes through the strong marine temperature inversion layer present in the region, which separates the more polluted lower portions of the atmosphere from the much cleaner free troposphere. The undisturbed air, remote location, and minimal influences of vegetation and human activity at MLO are ideal for monitoring constituents in the atmosphere that can cause climate change.

MLO has supported hundreds of cooperative research programs with national and international universities and government organizations. A staff of 8 operates and maintains the observatory, with offices in Hilo, Hawaii.

Sarah noted during her presentation that Mauna Loa had not erupted since 1984, which in my mind sounds like about 20 years ago. It's actually closer to 40 years, but who's counting?

You might then imagine my surprise when I caught dramatic images of lava flowing from Mauna Loa on November 27 and many days following! Scientists perhaps were not as shocked as I was; they had been closely monitoring previous months of elevated seismic activity and anticipated an eruption. I wondered what the impact of the eruption was having on the climate data collection and so, I reached out to Sarah. Here is our brief Q&A exchange:

1 What is the current status of the monitoring program at Mauna Loa in light of the recent eruptions?

As of November 29th, they have suspended carbon dioxide observations at Mauna Loa due to the eruption and resultant loss of power. The Scripps Institution of Oceanography at University of California San Diego is currently exploring options for relocating the measurement equipment. This could be challenging given the location and elevation on Mauna Loa was specifically chosen to collect uncontaminated observations.

2. What is the long-term outlook for the Mauna Loa observatory monitoring program in light of the recent eruptions?

This kind of situation will always be a threat to the Mauna Loa Observatory, solely because the Observatory is located on an active volcano. This likely won't be the last time this occurs.

As of our newsletter December 15 deadline, the National Park Service provided an update noting that Mauna Loa is no longer erupting and sulfur dioxide

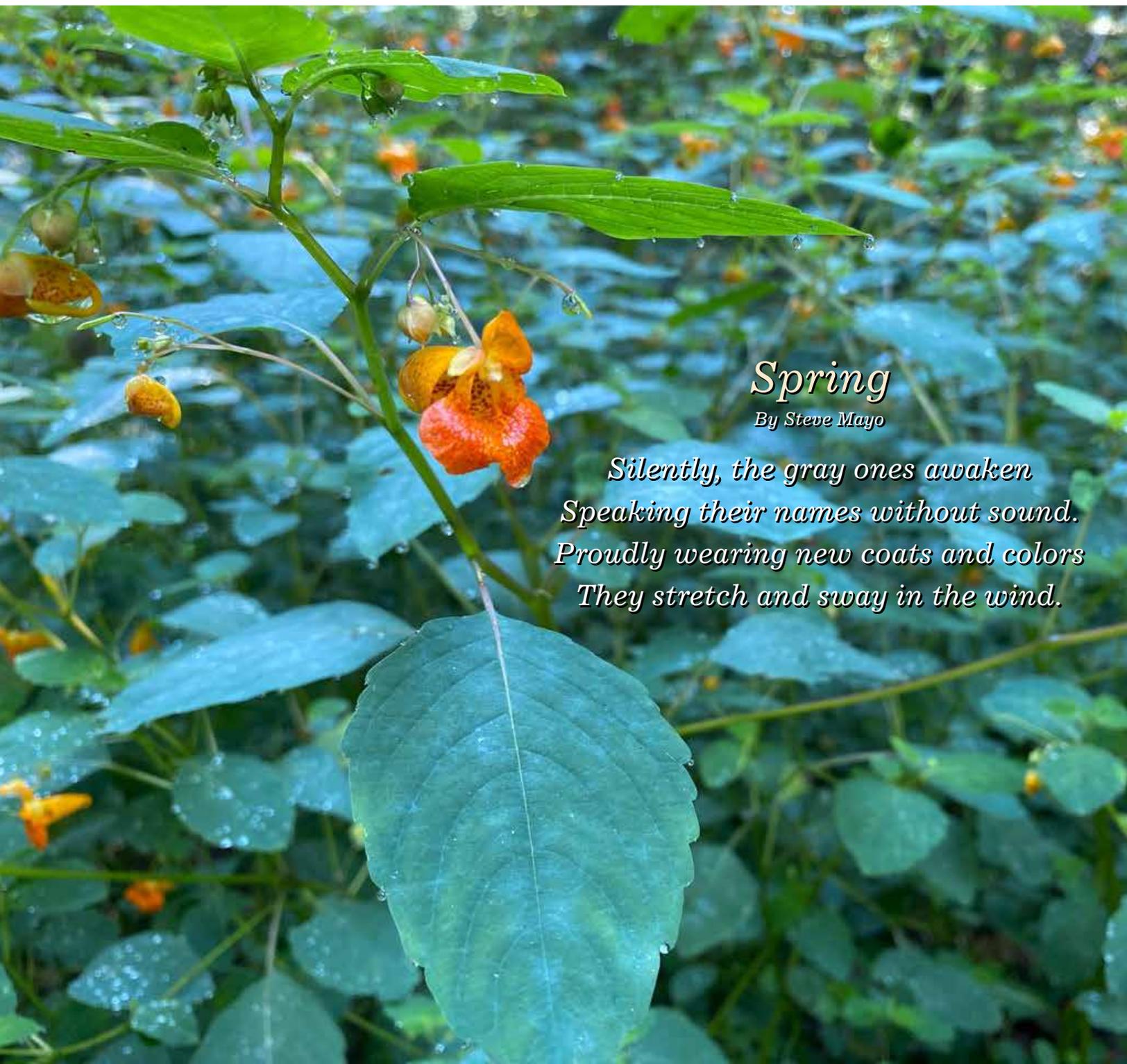
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(SO₂) emission rates continue to be reduced. Ralph Keeling, who now runs the Scripps CO₂ project begun by his father Charles Keeling (Scripps Institution of Oceanography researcher), notes that the lava has to cool, road access has to be built and power restored before the data collection can begin again. According to an interview with KPBS (San Diego PBS), Keeling says he is searching for a nearby location to collect data until MLO comes back online. That data would be added to the long-running record with an asterisk to note the different measuring station; the 1984

eruption also prohibited data samples for several months.

While I might closely watch weather systems in our North Texas region for severe storms and tornadoes even as we approach Christmas, I can only imagine living on an island in the shadow of a volcano that has erupted. That might be a good lesson learned through being more curious about nature than more “master,” as TPWD’s Sam Kieschnick pointed out to us during a training session on ethics: never say never!



Spring

By Steve Mayo

*Silently, the gray ones awaken
Speaking their names without sound.
Proudly wearing new coats and colors
They stretch and sway in the wind.*

Among the Pines

by **Lucy Maud Montgomery**

Courtesy of Lori Crider

*Here let us linger at will and delightsomely hearken
Music aeolian of wind in the boughs of pine,
Timbrel of falling waters, sounds all soft
and sonorous,
Worshipful litanies sung at a bannered shrine.*

*Deep let us breathe the ripeness and savor of balsam,
Tears that the pines have wept in sorrow sweet,
With its aroma comes beguilement of things
forgotten,
Long-past hopes of the years on tip-toeing feet.*

*Far in the boskiest glen of this wood is a dream
and a silence
Come, we shall claim them ours ere look we long;
A dream that we dreamed and lost, a silence richly
hearted,*

Deep at its lyric core with the soul of a song.

*If there be storm, it will thunder a march in the
branches,*

*So that our feet may keep true time as we go;
If there be rain, it will laugh, it will glisten, and
beckon,
Calling to us as a friend all lightly and low.*

*If it be night, the moonlight will wander winsomely
with us,*

*If it be hour of dawn, all heaven will bloom,
If it be sunset, it's glow will enfold and pursue us.
To the remotest valley of purple gloom.*

*Lo! the pine wood is a temple where the days meet to
worship,*

*Laying their cark and care for the nonce aside,
God, who made it, keeps it as a witness to Him forever,
Walking in it, as a garden, at eventide.*

Autumn

By Jim Bush

*Given to long reflection,
autumn is my favorite time,
season of yellow leaves and cool days,
the stillness born of intermission,
sky stretched to a fine blue tension,
stacked wood and the honk of geese,
the evening scent of wood smoke.
The last summer birds are on their way,
taking no baggage but a song,
reinforcing the fact that
freedom multiplies with the less we carry.
And now the autumn night with its cool tingle,
the period that ends the sentence of summer.*

There's a certain Slant of light

By Emily Dickinson

Courtesy of Ann Spencer

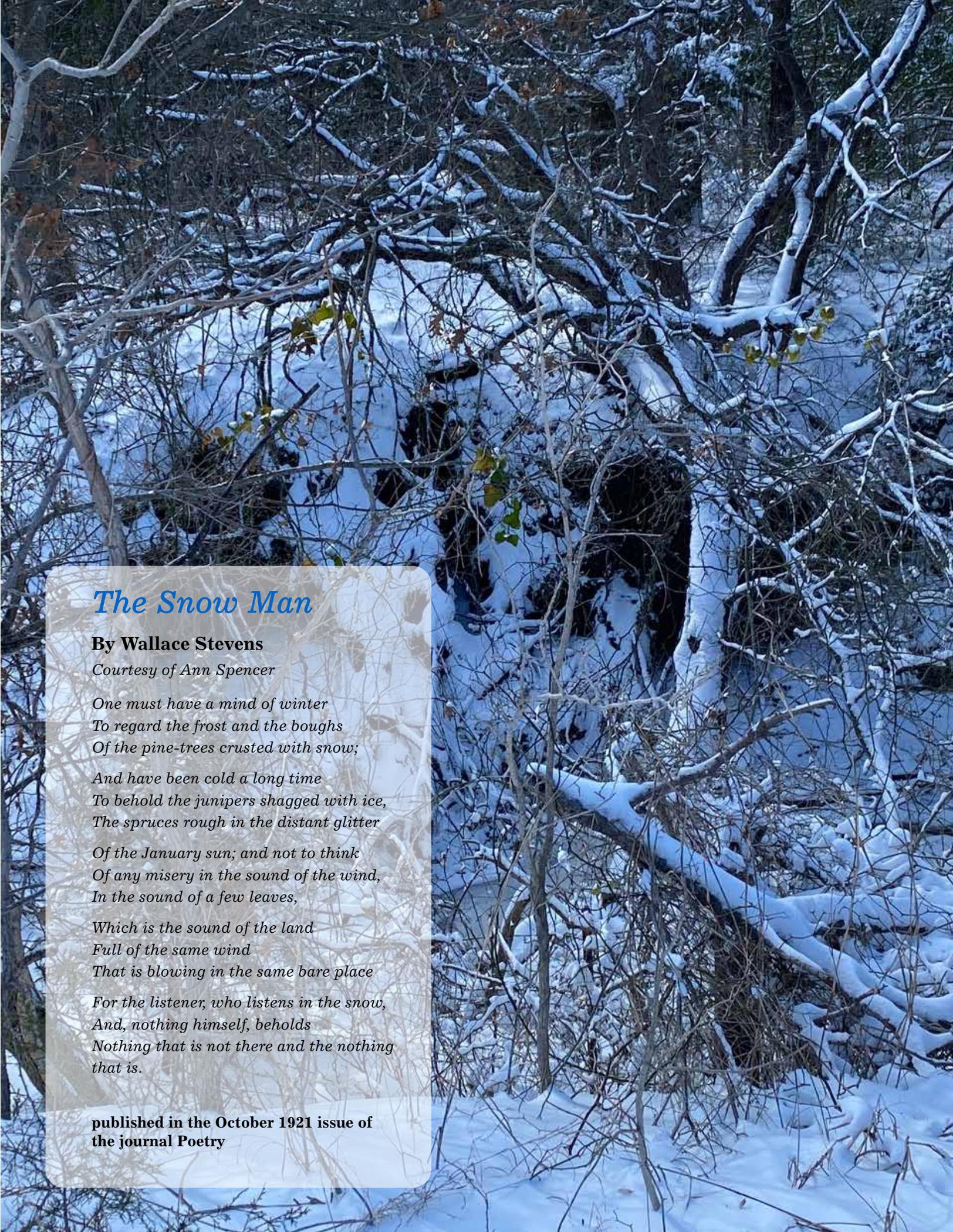
*There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons –
That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes –*

*Heavenly Hurt, it gives us –
We can find no scar,
But internal difference –
Where the Meanings, are –*

*None may teach it – Any –
'Tis the Seal Despair –
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the Air –*

*When it comes, the Landscape
listens –
Shadows – hold their breath –
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance
On the look of Death –*

Manuscript. Originally in Poems: Packet XIV, Mixed Fascicles. Includes 33 poems, written in ink, ca. 1860-1862. Courtesy of Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Houghton Library – (74d) There's a certain Slant of light, J258, Fr320. First published in Poems (1890), 106.

A photograph of a winter forest. The trees are covered in snow, and the branches are bare and intricate. The overall scene is a dense, snow-laden woodland.

The Snow Man

By Wallace Stevens

Courtesy of Ann Spencer

*One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;*

*And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter*

*Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,*

*Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place*

*For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing
that is.*

**published in the October 1921 issue of
the journal Poetry**

MOTHERHERBS GARDEN



By Thomas Hollingsworth, Photography by Joshua Fread

Does Rodale Institute, Rudolf Steiner, or Rosa Finsley ring a bell? The practice of organic gardening in North Texas has deep roots. In an unassuming location, lies a treasure of organic, native plants, herbs and “edibles.” Motherherbs Garden in Cedar Hill is a nursery residing on what remains of the 200-acre Ramsey-Nafas Farm including the family farmhouse built in 1864. Val Nolen owns and operates the nurs-

“I’m here on a mission to help people get closer to Nature, to understand Nature, and to be successful.”

ery and lives in the house. As a care taker of Mother Earth, she explains, “My aim is to grow plants and specific edibles that suit our environment.”

From a young age, Val soaked in gardening tips from her grandparents. At her grandmother’s direction, 4-year-old Val dug holes and put in a scoop of sugar when planting. She later learned carbohydrates are a part of plant life...sap in trees, milk in grass...-nature’s nourishment. As Val puts it, “Molasses and good compost create a good party!” Her grandfather taught her the power of observation. For example, he “hid” Easter eggs without placing them under or behind things, yet still not in plain sight. This taught her “the looking” was important and observation can be the key to anything. As she grew up, she used the power of observation in everything. Full of wisdom,

Val shares insights on growing when customers ask questions that are only properly answered with an awareness of nature’s ways.

Val’s earth-consciousness study of Nature and agrarian life evolved. After a college stint in Boston, her patch garden led neighbors to request gardening tips...then came seed handling and veggie sharing. She soon worked farms in Vermont for the Community Service Association under Amish tutelage. Later came her “wolfing” days as she crossed New England

for seasonal and greenhouse work. In Pennsylvania, she worked at the Rodale Institute farm which remains a leader in organic-farming, research and education. Val studied Rudolf Steiner’s (grandfather of organic gardening) biodynamic agriculture and realized organic gardening was her love.

Returning to Cedar Hill to care for her mother, she purchased the Ramsey property with an agreement to continue working the land. The heat and the hardened prairie soil was frustrating and unyielding. “My shovel wouldn’t go in the soil an inch!” She questioned herself, “I don’t know what I’m doing on Mars!” Upon reflection, Val realized the soil needed compost and care tailored to native conditions. This led her to Kings Creek Gardens and her mentor, Rosa Finsley, the owner. Kings Creek was the first organic,

continued

native nursery in the Southwest. Rosa Finsley did landscape designs for the Dallas Arboretum, was active with plant societies and cemetery prairie restoration, and contributed widely to native gardening practices.

Val has also consulted with the Arboretum. You can hire her to advise on gardening design, plant choice, tree and plant identification, soil conditioning, and plant care. Skilled at “reading the land,” a way of assessing land layout, rain, water flow, plant health, soil condition, erosion, and habitat, Val can give valuable guidance to property owners. She evaluates plant suitability, pest/disease management, wildlife sustainability, and sustainable landscaping and gardening.

The property at Motherherbs Garden is a blend of garden, growing houses, plants and supplies. Val often propagates cuttings and seeds from legacy plants. Her selections include rock roses, fall aster, salvia, sedums, lantana, sages, and herbs like rosemary, sage, oregano and many others. The nursery has lots of vegetables plants that vary according to the proper season. Big box stores and growers sell crossbreeds that make the most money regardless of local climate. Motherherbs Gardens offers plants that fit North Texas’ unique climate, weather, and soil conditions. “Natives deal with the soil, insects, climate, pollinators, wildlife, sun and shade conditions, and the local growing seasons,” Val explains. Our heat, dry spells, and the soil’s high alkalinity makes this area unique; plants must be suitable to your property’s conditions to thrive. Val helped me better understand that, “The balance of Nature is a fine act.”

If there is one principle to Val’s gardening, it would be the balance of natural processes. She once observed how the population of rodents on her property dropped with an increase in copperheads. Then, the copperheads disappeared. She didn’t realize why until she discovered a King Snake. Rather than trying to intervene, she observed as the balance shifted naturally. Rosa once explained to Val that some concerning holes in a particular plant’s leaves were from a certain bug in its mating season...bugs that desirable birds particularly liked. Some “solutions” would inevitably impact the birds. Val’s approach is to work with the natural processes to manage a garden. She promotes

biodiversity, timing of planting, spacing, pruning practices, hands-on observations, and organic fertilizers to achieve a natural balance. Val can explain when to plant a species to minimize bug and heat damage and maximize garden productivity. “As an environmentalist, staying as close to native as I can helps the natural processes,” she says. Motherherbs Garden promotes a natural, balanced community of living organisms. The removal or introduction of one thing in nature can make a big impact.

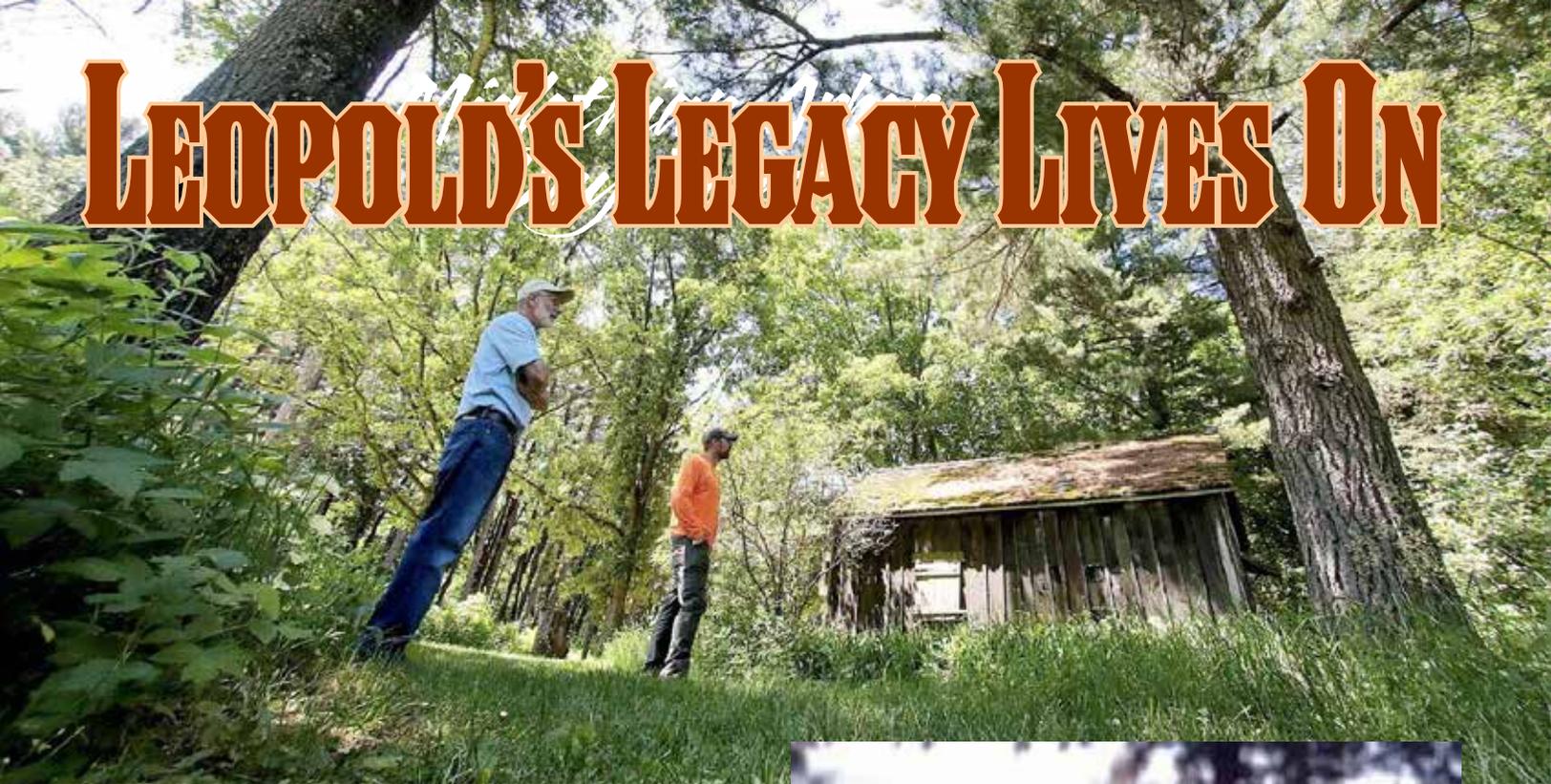
HERE ARE A FEW TIPS FROM VAL. When planting, “Don’t crowd everything. Plant in 3’s or 5’s; use buddies.” Make selections from a wide variety of species, colors, and types: “Diversity, mix things up.” And, “Don’t plant in squares or lines.” More than tips, her advice mimics Nature.

Motherherbs does not advertise. “You will find me when you are supposed to...when you are ready.” Val’s newsletter offers gardening tips and moon news. “Every civilization, up until the last 100 years has used ancient knowledge of the moon phases and positions for successful planting practices...and many still use that method.” Drop by or call her...you’ll be glad you did.

Open Thurs & Sat ONLY 10am-7pm (not after dark). 1007 W. Belt Line Rd. Cedar Hill, TX 75104. (972)207-2938. motherherbsgarden@gmail.com (Ask to sign up to the newsletter.)



LEOPOLD'S LEGACY LIVES ON



By Madeline Kelly

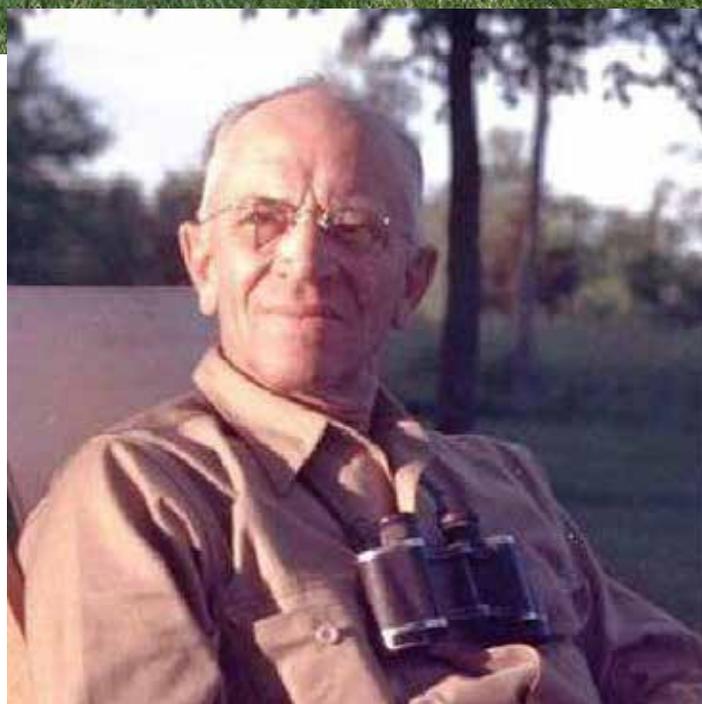
“Work Begins To Restore The Legacy of Aldo Leopold” by Barry Adams (as reported in the Wisconsin State Journal July 3, 2022 “Stabilizing Plan for Famed Naturalist Shack and Environs”

Baraboo, Wisconsin -- When Aldo Leopold spent eight dollars an acre in 1935 to purchase an abandoned farm for weekend retreats from his home in Madison there were sweeping views of the Wisconsin river, no farmhouse, and only a few trees.

What would become his famed shack was a dilapidated chicken coop. It had been built in the decades prior to white settlement when the land was a prairie. Over the years, Leopold and his family would expand the coop into a cabin, plant thousands of trees and work to restore the prairie. The property northeast of Baraboo served as a working model of Leopold's environmental philosophies, and it's where he kept detailed journals that would become the basis for a Sand County Almanac. Published in 1949, a year after Leopold died of a heart attack, the book is considered one of the most influential in American history, has been translated into 15 different languages and speaks of a symbiotic land ethics that includes humans, soils, waters, plants, and animals.

“There is yet no ethic dealing with a man's relationship to land and to the animals and plants that grow up on us”, Leopold wrote. “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

That ethic is top of mind as the Aldo Leopold Foundation (“foundation”) embarks on a three-phase, \$750,000, capital campaign designed to further preserve and promote the heart of Leopold's work.



Over the next two years Leopold's shack will undergo maintenance to preserve its authenticity so that “it remains a constant state of stable disrepair.” The cedar shake roof will be replaced, a French drain will be installed, the interior will be white washed, and the benches outside “Shack” will be restored. The outhouse nicknamed “the Parthenon,” which still can be used by visitors, will also be restored.

The Shack (placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978) has undergone routine maintenance over the years. But, the last major project to stabilize the building was in the mid-1970s by Leopold's daughter, Nina Leopold Bradley, and her husband, Charlie Bradley.



“That’s kept it in good shape,” said Buddy Huffaker, president of the foundation’s board of directors and its executive Director. This is the biggest package of work to address its stability and integrity for the future. But the work goes well beyond the Shack.

The overgrowth of black walnut, silver maple and river birch will be removed to allow for white oak, swamp, white oak, and burr oak to thrive and open up views from the shack to the river. The white and red pines planted by the Leopold’s will undergo a much-needed thinning, while the 4.5-acre Shack prairie and a nearby sandblow will be restored.

The Leopold Shack journals housed at Steenbok Memorial library at University of Wisconsin Madison will be digitized so they can be shared online around the world. The digital work will also include virtual tours of the Shack, redesigning self-guided, in-person tours of the Shack and holding more “Shack-focused events.” The efforts will bring more people to the Shack either through the foundation’s website or in person.

To the many people who have read a Sand County Almanac many may not know that the Shack and the farm were what inspired him to write. The book is actually a place you can visit, and that you can come and see and immerse yourself in what he was doing, and seeing this will better share Leopold with the world.

Work on the overgrowth will begin this fall with the Prairie restoration, Shack stabilization, digital projects, and other efforts happening in 2023. The work is expected to take 10,000 staff hours to complete. The capital campaign is primarily being funded by private individuals and small family foundations, although State and Federal grants are also being pursued. So far, 200 donors from around the country have contributed to the campaign which kicked off in May. Once a \$20,000 challenge grant is fulfilled Huffaker said about \$375,000 will have to be raised.

A 75-foot-tall, white pine planted by Leopold towers over the Shack and officials with the foundation say their goal is to maintain an environment on the property that could someday hold

trees that are 300 to 400 years old. White oak savannas are also being created.

We’ll treat the pines carefully and thin them lightly, but some of the other acreage will change significantly said Arik Duhr, an arborist, who is site manager for the property. “Being able to see the river from the shack hasn’t happened for probably 40 to 50 years so it’s going to be quite a shift.

An Iowa native, Leopold was a scholar at Yale and went to work with the US forest service for a time helping to establish the Gila wilderness area in New Mexico. He came to Wisconsin in 1924 to work as associate Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Products Laboratory in Madison and in 1933 published the first textbook in the field of wildlife management. Later that year he accepted a new chair position and game management at University of Wisconsin Madison.

The Aldo Leopold Foundation was created in 1982 by the five children of Aldo and Estela Leopold as a nonprofit conservation organization to “inspire an ethical caring relationship between people and nature” through Leopold’s legacy. The foundation, set amid the 16,000-acre Leopold Pines Island’s important bird area, owns and preserves the Shack. It has classrooms and a conference center along with the headquarters building with a museum that holds artifacts, including Leopold’s writings, saddle, shotgun, tiny bands he used to study birds, and an original pocket notebook he would carry in the field

The foundation is located along Levy Road, one of the state’s 123 Rustic Roads, and stewards the Leopold archives which include his original writings, sketches, photographs, artifacts, and class materials. It also cares for the pines prairies and floodplain forest that make up the Leopold Shack property and surrounding 600 acres referred to as the Leopold Pines Memorial Reserve.

“For a while, the foundation was about kind of protecting the legacy and now we’re really trying to promote it,” Huffaker said. “It’s kind of the realization that yes, we’ve got to take care of it, but it’s really only valuable if it continues to inform and inspire and care for the natural world.”

A Wild Flower by any other Name

By Karen B. Nilsson

Yosemite Association, 1994

Book Review by Charlie Grindstaff

If you are looking for a book about wildflowers, this is not it! This book is about the pioneer naturalists who named some of the wildflowers or for whom the wildflowers were named. There are lovely sketches of western wildflowers and very brief descriptions of them; but, they are not the focus.

Forty-five naturalists (eight of whom are women) are featured, with a page or two about their work and including their picture. Many names were familiar: John Torrey, Asa Gray, George Engelmann, Charles Wright, Florence Bailey, etc., while others were unknown to me: Johann von Eschscholtz, Nathaniel Wyeth, Rebecca Austin, and lots more.

The great age of western plant collecting began in 1804 after President Thomas Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark across the west to the Pacific Ocean. Unfortunately, the plants collected during their expedition were dispersed because there was no national museum to house them. The *Lewisia rediviva*, or Bitterroot is now the state flower of Montana. Lewis observed Shoshone digging up the plants and reported that the root “had a very

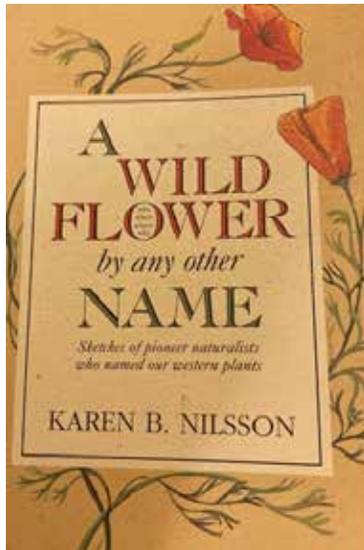
bitter taste, which was naucious to my palate.” No notation on how he felt about having that plant named after him. Their journals and drawings were printed in 1814 and provided Americans with their first look at the vast territory added by the Louisiana Purchase and a reality check on the distance and hazards involved with transcontinental travel.

David Douglas, was sent from the British Isles to gather new plants in a temperate area with moisture patterns similar to those at home. He was another one of those naturalists with little formal education (left school at age 10) who, through his tenacity and resilience, embarked on three collecting expeditions to North America. The rain in present-day Oregon and Washington was a constant problem for him. I guess the rain was more continuous than at home in Scotland. In addition to the Douglas Fir, he discovered the Sitka Spruce, seven pines, another seven firs, and many flowers.

Thomas Drummond (whose name should be familiar to us naturalists for his disastrous trip to Texas - cholera epidemic and flooding), collected 750 plants and 150 birds. Sir William Hooker, his benefactor, named *Phlox drummondii*, Drummond’s Phlox after him.

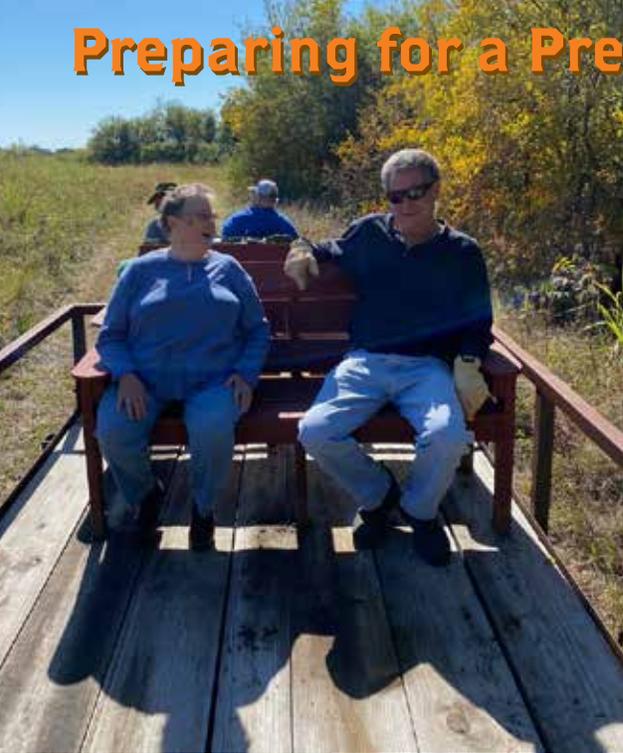
One of the most inspiring collectors, featured in this book is Edith Scamman, who took her first botany classes at the age of 53. This was the start of her 30-year career as a collector and research associate at the Gray Herbarium. She traveled to Iceland, Switzerland, and Latin America, but she had a special love for Alaska, which she visited nine times. She collected five thousand specimens and three Alaskan plants were named after her. One is a favorite of mine, *Claytonia scammaniana*, Spring Beauty.

I really enjoyed this book and the revealing details about the collectors that made even more remarkable their successes while enduring the challenges of their collecting trips.



A flock of Black Vultures take a break from migrating south even though it appears they’re waiting for the Turkey vulture to begin his sermon.

Preparing for a Prescribed Burn at Kachina Prairie



By Charlie Grindstaff & Christine Cook

Jim Patak organized two workdays at Kachina Prairie. The first, in October, removed items that could be destroyed in the prescribed burn. The second, in November, was to clear a fire lane.

It was a beautiful afternoon to be at Kachina Prairie whether you were just along for the ride like Paul Grindstaff or whether you were picking up the birdhouse & benches like Jim Patak, Paul Christenson, & Chris Cook, and me (Charlie) in preparation for a prescribed burn whenever that can happen. I did pick up the spikes that anchored the benches & enjoyed the ride. - *Charlie*

I took several pictures of the environment and group while we worked. The prairie is loaded with mushrooms, lichens, and a wide variety of plants. One unusually shaped leaf was probably from a winged elm, but I understand that young cedar elm may “wing out” also. I found a (rough green) snake and put it on Jim’s glove. I had a snake like that in my classroom for a while many years ago. It was a fun morning working with others and getting lots accomplished. Volunteers for this work day were Jim Patak, Jerry McClung, Diana Melcher, Mary Harper, Susan Simmons, Celia Yowell, Thomas Hollingsworth, and me (Chris). It was great seeing so many new members turn out! - *Chris*

WESTERN NAVARRO BOBWHITE RECOVERY INITIATIVE

By Lynn Sawyer

Western Navarro Bobwhite Recovery Initiative (WNBRI) had their 2022 Fall Meeting at the Bennett Farm in Blooming Grove. WNBRI offers members free or low-cost use of materials and equipment necessary for restoring and managing native grassland habitat that is critical for bobwhite production and brood rearing, plus educational workshops such as the one on October 14th. To give y’all an idea about their agenda, I’ve included some of the topics with additional resources.

Taylor Garrison, District Biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD), presented a research study on Ellis County patch burn grazing. Katie Myers of the Tarrant Regional Water District presented information on watershed planning and management along with a

demonstration with an outfitted trailer to show the effects of water on soil along a stream or river.

Natalie Cavellier, an attorney with Braun and Gresham Law, introduced us to conservation easements. I was unaware of conservation easements so this was a particularly enlightening presentation. Conservation easements are a voluntary contract between the landowner and a partnering land trust to help those who wish to preserve their land and protect it from encroaching development. The conservation easements allow families to keep their land intact for future generations. In one of the presentations, we learned that Texas is losing 640 acres daily to development and non-agriculture usage.

Mitch Hagney of Grassroots Carbon, discussed carbon banking and sequestration. This was a new

continued

concept for me so I looked it up after I got home to learn more. If you're like me and would like more information about this fascinating topic, here are a few websites: https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-carbon-sequestration?qt-news_science_products=0, <https://today.tamu.edu/2021/06/02/is-carbon-the-crop-of-the-future/>, <https://agrifetoday.tamu.edu/2021/05/27/is-carbon-the-crop-of-the-future/>

The walking field tour included multiple TPWD staff and local ranchers/WNBRI leaders discussing various aspects of the property, such as identifying several varieties of Blue Stem, including King Ranch (KR) Blue Stem, an exotic species from China, and a demonstration of water permeability in the compacted trail soil vs the grassy soil nearby. We also learned how to enhance the land for Bobwhite habitat. According to Jay Whiteside, Technical Guidance Biologist for TPWD, (WNBRI: A Strategy for Restoring Bobwhite Quail in Navarro County, Texas), "Bobwhite quail were once abundant throughout Navarro County and the Blackland Prairie region of Texas. However, over the past 40 years, bobwhite populations within this eco-region have plummeted to the point that now only small, fragmented populations currently exist within areas that provide suitable cover and space.

The bobwhite decline within the Blackland Prairie region over the past 40 years is a result of a combination of many factors, some of which include continuous and/or overgrazing of livestock, conversion of native pastures and croplands to introduced forages (Coastal bermudagrass), brush control practices, increased size of crop fields, and clean farming practices." For more information about Bobwhites in the Blackland Prairie of Texas, several websites are listed under Resources (below).

Please consider this an encouragement to those who have never attended a WNBRI workshop before. When I spoke with Ms. Bennett, she said they had gotten off schedule during the pandemic but are now back on schedule. The WNBRI meetings and workshops are held semi-annually. The workshop was eye-opening to me in many ways and an added bonus was the beautiful drive along Highway 55 from Avalon to Blooming Grove and the towering Loblolly Pine trees behind the Bennett's home.

Source: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/habitats/high_plains/upland_game/bobwhite.phtml

RESOURCES:

Kormos, M., *Corsicana Daily Sun*, October 28, 2016, *Dedicated to Conservation, Western Navarro Bobwhite Recovery Initiative Works to Restore Quail Populations*, https://www.corsicanadailysun.com/news/dedicated-to-conservation-western-navarro-bobwhite-recovery-initiative-works-to-restore-quail-populations/article_a4d5c906-9d5d-11e6-934b-1330fe917210.html

Ledbetter, K., *Texas A & M Today*, June 2, 2021, <https://today.tamu.edu/2021/06/02/is-carbon-the-crop-of-the-future/>

Texas Parks and Wildlife, *Bobwhite Quail in the Post Oak Savannah and Blackland Prairie*, [Bobwhite Quail in the Post Oak Savannah and Blackland Prairie \(texas.gov\)](https://www.texas.gov)

Texas Parks and Wildlife, *Under the Texas Sky, Conservation Easements*, Season 3, Episode 18, January 16, 2021, <https://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/utts/-conservation-easements/>

Schattenberg, P., *Texas AgriLife Today*, Is Carbon the 'Crop' of the Future, May 27, 2021, <https://agrifetoday.tamu.edu/2021/05/27/is-carbon-the-crop-of-the-future/>

Whiteside, J. *Western Navarro Bobwhite Restoration Initiative: A Strategy for Restoring Bobwhite Quail in Navarro County, Texas*, http://navarro.agrilife.org/files/2011/07/wnbri_strategic_plan_1.pdf



MEMBER P | R | O | F | I | L | E

Diana Melcher

Interviewed by: Thomas Hollingsworth

What do you do outside of ITMN?

I enjoy metal detecting with my sister on family land outside of Tool, Texas. My favorite find, so far, was a 1920s rouge make-up compact. I sure would like to partner with another detectorist closer to Waxahachie. Otherwise, I'm busy with my four chickens, two cats, and a dog. Oh, and a husband.

How did you become interested in Texas Master Naturalists?

After launching our third child out of the house to college I found time to indulge my own interests. We attended the Expo events a couple of years back at Waxahachie. I signed up, started classes and have been busy ever since. I was in the class of 2019.

What projects do you enjoy most?

It was fun to participate in the local effort to catch, tag, and release Monarch butterflies during their migration. I'd have to stop whatever I was doing and run out with a net, hoping to catch another. Each sighting provoked flurries of excitement in the middle of more routine chores. It motivated me to sow a lot more flowers attractive to pollinators. I'm looking forward to the next migration.



What nature/environmental issues interest you the most or that you find the most rewarding?

Our homesite is atop an old cattle pasture, formerly cotton fields, that we are slowly restoring with wildflowers and native turfgrass. It's been challenging to find native plants, non-invasive species, when picking over the bargains at Lowes or Home Depot. Also, we've registered with the MonarchWatch project as a "Waystation." I enjoy mowing around the milkweed seedpods!



Northern Harrier

Mockingbird Wildflower Walk

By: Lynn Sawyer

Photos by: Tanner Lambert

It was a gorgeous morning to enjoy the Mockingbird Wildflower Walk on October 15th. We had 27 attendees including five ITMN members. It was especially nice to see families with their children enjoying the walk. We identified thirty-one (31) plants and trees! Thank you, Tanner Lambert, for sharing your beautiful photos with us! Thank you, Lori Crider, for the fabulous job you did leading the walk!



EX LIBRIS OFFERINGS FROM THE ITMN LIBRARY

By Thomas Hollingsworth

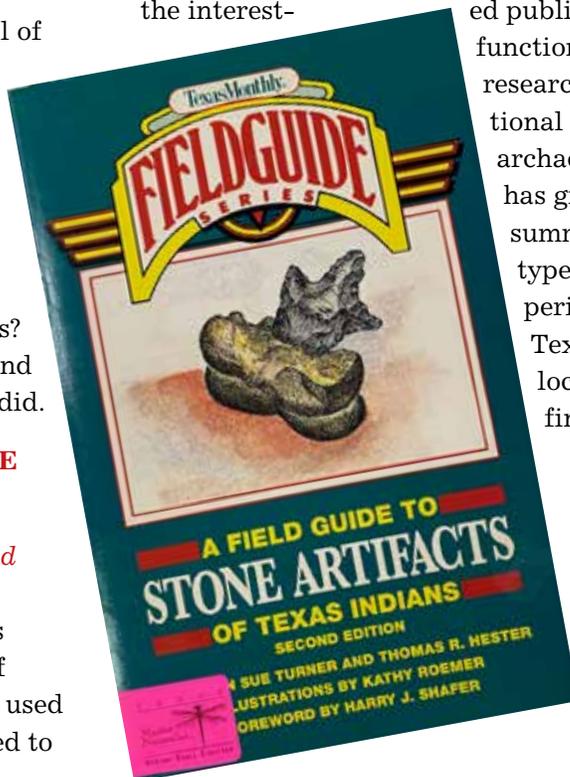
The ITMN Library is chocked full of resources. Located at the

Texas A&M AgriLife office in Waxahachie, the books are available to all Trailblazers for check out. Reading is fundamental to learning and knowledge sharing. Most newsletter editions will feature one or more books as a way to encourage use of our library. Do you need more information on butterflies, insects, birds, or trees? You'll find something on lots of citizen science and Nature topics. Check it out. You'll be glad you did.

IN THIS EDITION OF EX LIBRIS (OUT OF THE LIBRARY), TAKE A PEEK AT:

Turner, Ellen Sue and Hester, Thomas R., *A Field Guide to Stone Artifacts of Texas Indians* (2nd Edition), Gulf Publishing Company, 1993. "This guidebook provides a compilation of the types of projectile points and other stone tools made and used by the Indians of prehistoric Texas. It is designed to

serve as an introduction to the study of stone tools for the interested public and, we hope, to function as an aid to research for student, avocational and professional archaeologists." The book has great illustrations and summaries of artifact types, uses, distribution, period of use, and a Texas map-site for locations of typological finds.



Farewell to the 2022 Monarch Migration

By Amanda Weatherly

The 2022 Fall Monarch tagging season began September 15th for the Ellis and Navarro County areas. The tags were dispersed among 20 Indian Trail Master Naturalists that had signed up to attempt their hands at tagging monarch butterflies. While the taggers were diligent to get to work, the butterflies were not punctual to get to Mexico.

The drought was very harsh in the summer, and it resulted in there being very few nectar flowers available in the area for the migrating insect to feed upon. Some

taggers found refuge in their personal yards, while others would go to the

city-maintained flower beds. The key was to find those “sweet” spots that seemed to be few and far between this year.

September passed by fast, and it was mid-October when most people were reporting that they still were not seeing any butterflies. The area finally began getting a little rain here and there causing some of the nectar flowers to emerge and begin blooming. As the

flowers started popping up more butterfly species started coming around.

About mid-November the monarchs began fluttering through slowly, but, surely. They were never in a great abundance, like in the years past, and it had most of the veteran taggers stumped. Nevertheless, the tagging season was coming to an end, and all data reports had to be submitted to Monarch Watch (www.monarchwatch.org) by December 1st. As a team, a total of 141 monarch butterflies were successfully tagged in the Ellis and Navarro

County area.

While the 2022 tagging season was an “off” year for

most of the veteran taggers, there are high hopes for the 2023 tagging season. Thank you to all that participated this season and I look forward to working with everyone next year. If anyone has any questions about monarch tagging, you may reach out to Amanda Weatherly or look for the 2023 tagging season sign-up booth at the July chapter stated meeting.

“When the last tree has been cut down, the last fish caught, the last river poisoned, only then will we realize that one cannot eat money.”

-American Indian proverb



“Pursue something so important that even if you fail, the world is better off with you having tried.”

-Tim O'Reilly



NATURALART

By the artist in their own words

ANDREA HOLMES, BIRD LADY

Andrea Holmes is a Texas based mural artist and painter. Andrea is the host of Birdtober, co-founder of My Fairy Art Mother, co-host of McKinney Creative Community, and she serves on the MillHouse McKinney Art Events Team. She has an Associates in Art and a Bachelors in Arts and Technology.

She started painting in 2010 and has been a full time artist since 2017. Her studio is located at the MillHouse, in the historic Cotton Mill building in McKinney, Texas. Andrea has painted hundreds of birds from all over the world, and is even known as "The Bird Lady".



Andrea's work can be viewed on her web site at www.aholmesartstudio.com. She can be contacted at www.aholmesartstudio@gmail.com or by phone at 469-712-4126

Plant Family Study Group

By Tannis Lambert

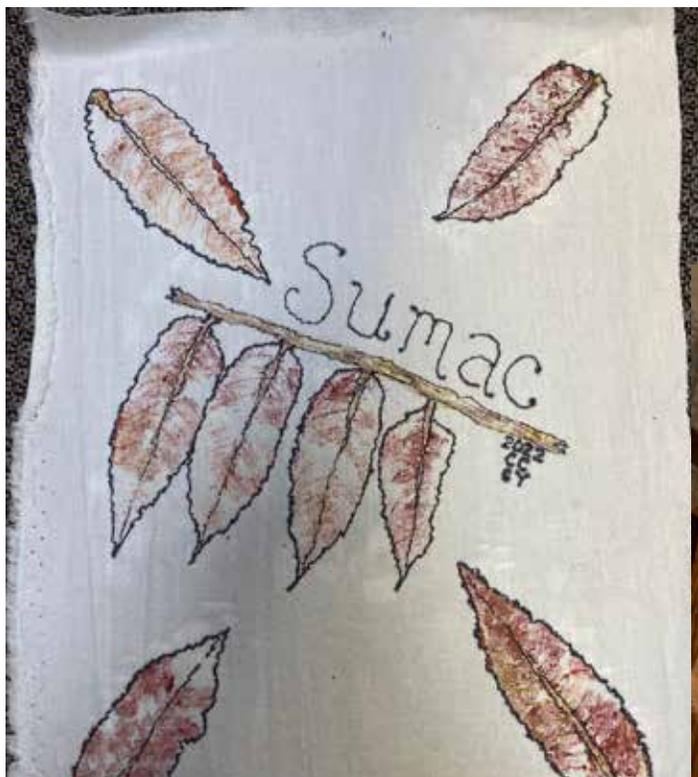
Join us for a sensory journey to explore the diverse and amazing world of plant families. Plant Family Study Group meetings are most 3rd Thursdays at 7:00 pm at Waxahachie Parks and Recreation building located at 401 S. Elm St. Waxahachie. Our relaxed and inclusive atmosphere encourages a fun way to learn new and unusual facts about our natural world. Did you know that Magnolias are considered a primitive plant and need beetles to pollinate them? There are plant samples to inspect and colorful, informative handouts to take home. Sometimes tasty treats made from the plant family are available to sample! Every meeting is as different as the plant world.

The pictures of leaf examples are from a study of the genus Ginkgo. In another study, we explored

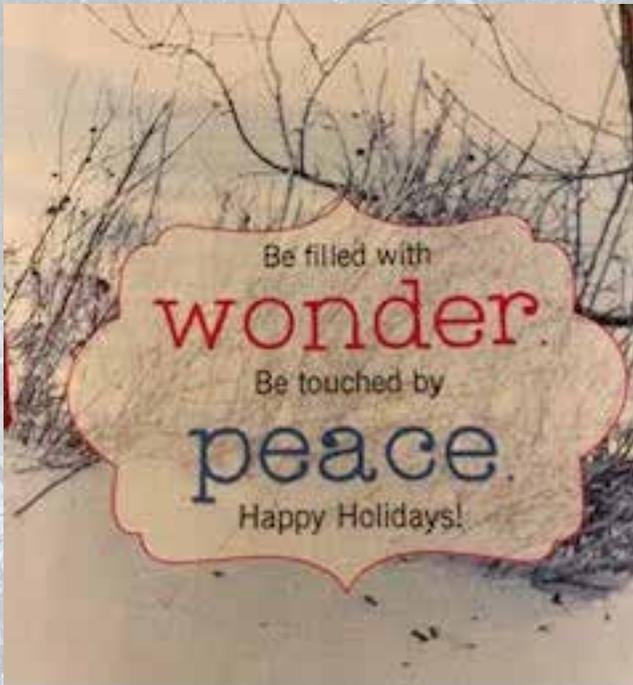


Sumacs. Chris Cook shared samples of cloth dyed from Sumac berries and from Avocado pits as well as a sketch of Sumac stems and leaves using Sumac dye for coloration. In the December study, Sherry Mossbarger lead the session on the Palm family. She brought dates from date palms and palm hearts for snacks and left attendees with pots of rooted plants from her own yard.

Next year we are planning a fun plant game night, the *Malvaceae* (chocolate) Family, plant collection pressing, moon plants, and more! Hope you can join us.



Holiday Greetings and Nature Quotes



from 2023 Mary Janes Farm publication

(Courtesy of Christine Cook)

"In the yellow mist the rough angles melt on the rocks. Forms, lines, tints, reflections, sounds, all are softened, and although the dying time, it is also the color time, the time when faith in the steadfastness of Nature is surest..."

The seeds all have next summer in them, some of them thousands of summers, as the sequoia and cedar. In the holiday array all go calmly down into the white winter rejoicing, plainly hopeful, faithful... everything taking what comes, and looking forward to the future, as if piously saying, "Thy will be done in earth as in heaven!"

John Muir *(Courtesy of Amy Allred)*

"Like music and art, love of nature is a common language that can transcend political or social boundaries."

Jimmy Carter *(Courtesy of Christine Cook)*

THINK LIKE A TREE

Soak up the sun
Affirm life's magic
Be graceful in the wind
Stand tall after a storm
Feel refreshed after it rains



Grow strong without notice
Be prepared for each season
Provide shelter to strangers
Hang tough through a cold spell
Emerge renewed at the first signs of spring
Stay deeply rooted while reaching for the sky
Be still long enough to
hear your own leaves rustling

Karen I. Shragg

© Philip Chircop | Photo | Ewa Beach, Hawaii

Philip Chircop, Ewa Beach, &
Karen I. Shragg *(Courtesy of Lori Crider)*

INDIAN TRAIL CHAPTER MASTER NATURALISTS BOARD

Chapter Mission: To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

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For additional information about the Indian Trail Master Naturalist Chapter please visit:

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- **For ITMN Members Only:**
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To get the year off to a flying start, here's a migrating White-faced Ibis.

