

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 8, No. 4

<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

April 2016

Presidents Report

Terry McKee

On behalf of the Rolling Plains Chapter, I would like to welcome the 2016 Texas Master Naturalist trainees: Kat Anderson, Sara Baggs, Donna Beavers, Marilyn Meador, Joy Parson, Pete Peterson, Raymond Smith, Lisa Taylor and Pamela Troester. We have a great group of people involved this year and they have made for some interesting discussions in our classes.



We have a couple of weeks of classes under our belt now, but remember that all members are invited to attend any of the Tuesday, Thursday classes as well as the field trips on April 9 at Lake Arrowhead with Paul Dowlearn about plants and the April 16 field trip to Hackberry Flat in Oklahoma.

Nine-banded Armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*)

The Nine-banded Armadillo is a cat-sized (Body Length: 15-17 in. Tail: 14-16 in. Weight: 8-17 lbs.), armored, insect-eating mammal. Similar in form to an anteater, the bony, scaled shell of the armadillo protects it

from attacks by predators. Unfortunately, armadillos often fall victim to automobiles and are frequently found dead on roadsides.



Armadillos are prolific diggers. They dig many burrows, as well as dig for

food. The animal will not survive in areas where the soil is too hard to dig. Many other wildlife species use and benefit from abandoned armadillo burrows. Although occasionally considered a nuisance by home owners, the armadillo's habit of digging up lawns is driven by its appetite for grubs, which can also harm lawns. The armadillo eats insects and other invertebrates. They are skilled at digging for grubs and occasionally eat berries and bird eggs.

Although breeding occurs in July, the embryo remains in a dormant state

E V E N T S

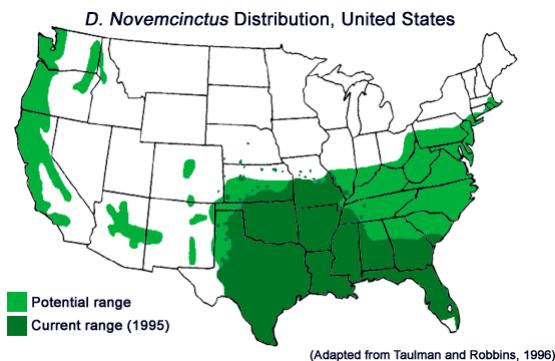
APRIL 5: NO April 5 meeting. Due to the training class, **we will NOT meet** at River Bend **in April**. Next meeting, May 3 will be held at RBNC

APRIL 9: Canyon Walk & Talk
Location: Caprock Canyons State Park & Trailway **Time:** **10:00 AM to 11:30AM.** Join us for a guided hike where anything from the history, geology, flora, and fauna of the park will be discussed. From its rich cultural history to scenic canyonlands and its diversity of plants and animals, Caprock Canyons State Park has something for everyone. During this moderate hike, join the park interpreter to learn a little bit about it all! For more info: Le' Ann Pigg (806)455-1492 le'ann.pigg@tpwd.texas.gov

MAY 7: 2016 Wildflower Walk
Location: Lake Mineral Wells State Park & Trailway **Time:** **9:00 AM to 10:30AM.** Join us for a walk in the park to observe and identify wildflowers. Along the way park interpreter, David Owens, will stop and identify plants and tell about the plant's nature and folklore. Reservations are required. Call 940-328-1171. Held at Lake Mineral Wells State Park, 100 Park Road 71, Mineral Wells, TX, 76067. The program is free with paid park entrance fee or a State Park Pass.

until November. Four young are born in a burrow in March. All four young, always of the same sex, are identical quadruplets and developed from the same egg. They even share a single placenta while in the womb. Armadillos are the only mammals in which multiple young form from a single egg with any regularity.

The Nine-Banded Armadillo is found in all but the western Trans-Pecos portion of Texas in a variety of habitats; brush, woods, scrub and grasslands.



Originally native to South America, the armadillo now ranges as far north as Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Louisiana. Their distribution is often based on soil conditions, and they are not found where the soil is too hard to dig.

The armadillo is the state small mammal of Texas.

Thank-You Home and Garden Show Volunteers

by Terry McKee

Thanks to our members that volunteered at the Home and Garden Show. We attracted a lot of attention with our booth, thanks to the taxidermied animals on loan from Tad Gose, Lake Arrowhead State Park and Wild



Bird Rescue. The animal theme was Larry Snyder's idea and the booth was very well done. All the volunteers did a great job explaining the wildlife and promoting the Rolling Plains Chapter and the chapter's training class.

We hope everyone at-



tended at least one of the Advanced Training presentations at the show, especially Mark Klym's talk on pollinators. Thank you, Jane McGough for arranging for him to speak. We were honored to have Mark visit our booth.

Above left: Larry Snyder talks with visitors about the mission of the Texas Master Naturalists. **Left:** Terry McKee. **Above:** Mark Klym, information specialist with TPWD and chapter president Terry McKee.

Texas State Parks Official Guide App Now Available for Free Download



Now find your perfect state park escape using the Texas State Parks Official Guide for Apple and Android devices. The free app locates campgrounds, cabins, trails and places to hike, bike, swim, fish or kayak. And it'll give you all the details on 95 state parks in Texas.

Search for your perfect park.

- Find parks with swimming, fishing, kayaking and other activities
- Find cabins, lodges, shelters, RV sites, and tent camping sites
- View parks with boat ramps, dump stations, showers and more
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- Use the in-app map to locate parks near you*

Discover more about the parks.

- View detailed facility maps for each park
- Read about things to do, park fees, and operating hours
- See photos, videos and virtual tours
- Create a list of your favorite parks

Make your getaway to a Texas State Park.

- Use in-app dialing to make reservations or call a park
- Get driving directions from your current location
- Download trail maps and save for use at a park
- Discover park programs and events happening during your visit
- Get up-to-date park advisories such as burn bans

*Some features require internet access.

March Chapter Activities



Martha Ford and Diane Hoehne count participants during the Plum Lake Kid Fishing Rodeo March 5.



A small mouth Buffalo (top) and a Spotted Gar are shown to the new training class during the field trip at Lake Arrowhead State Park, March 12. *Photos by Debra Halter.*

Invasive Spotlight Onionweed (*Asphodelus fistulosus*)

Onionweed is a perennial herbaceous plant with leaves that resemble, as its name implies, onions or scallions: long, smooth, cylindri-



cal, and hollow. However, they neither smell nor taste like onions. The numerous leaves are dark green and grow 12 to 30 inches tall from the base of the plant and spread to 15 inches wide. Onionweed produces one to several stiff upright, branched flower stem(s) up to 2 1/2 feet tall. The flowers alternate along the branches and are about three-fourths of an inch across with six petal parts, each white to pink with a brown or reddish stripe along the center. Fruits are spherical capsules divided into three segments. Seeds are brown or black, triangular, one-eighth inch long, wrinkled, pitted and three or six per fruit. The thick root crowns have many fibrous roots and no developed bulb.



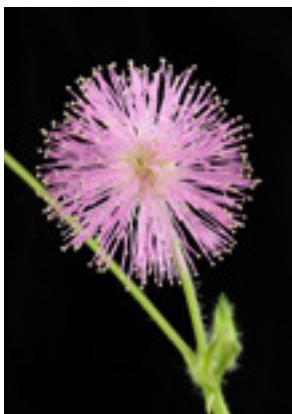
Onionweed is native to the Mediterranean area and from western Asia to India. It was introduced in the United States as an ornamental. It is an aggressive invasive, seeding prolifically and spreading relatively rapidly. It excludes grasses and desirable forbs.

Because onionweed infestations pose a serious risk to ecosystems as well as agriculture, it is currently on the Federal and the Texas Department of Agriculture noxious weed lists. It is also one of the “Dirty Dozen” pest species identified by the Texas Invasive Plant and Pest Council. Therefore, it is one of the “Report It!” alert species on the Texasinvasives.org website and reporting app.

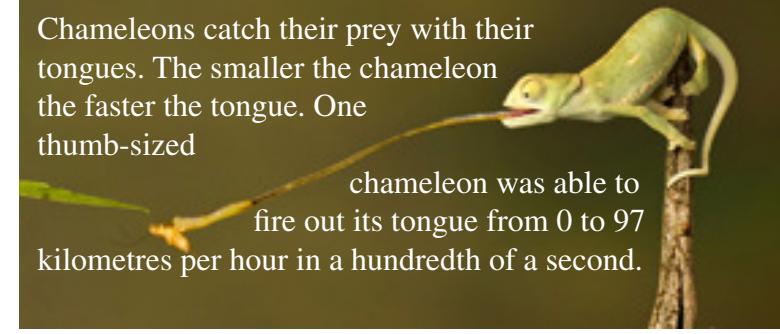
Onionweed has occasionally been found in Texas, but there have not been any reported infestations. Let’s keep it that way! If you believe you have found onionweed, please report this species.

FACTOID

5,000 items of prey is the amount a breeding pair of barn owls catches in a year, for themselves and their owlets.



If you disturb the roots of a plant belonging to the Mimosa genus, make sure you're holding your nose. Tiny, hair-like sacs dotted along the roots of some species release a cocktail foul-smelling sulphur compounds when touched. This is believed by experts to be a defence mechanism designed to deter predators or to stop other plants' roots from growing in their territory.



TEXAS POLLINATOR POWWOW LUBBOCK/TAHOKA - APRIL 22-24, 2016

We are very pleased to announce that we are now taking registrations for our upcoming Texas Pollinator Pow-Wow at the Museum of Texas Tech University in Lubbock, and at nearby Tahoka Lake Pasture. We're really pleased to be in the Panhandle for this conference, and it's been deeply gratifying to learn of the growing groundswell of interest in pollinators and agricultural practices supporting conservation in this area.

<http://www.texaspollinatorpowwow.org/lubbocktahoka>



april-22-24-2016.html Space is limited to 250. **PRE-REGISTRATION**

DEADLINE IS APRIL 12. If we are not sold out by that date, you may register at the door, but your lunch will NOT be included.

The Lubbock/Tahoka PowWow has two dozen speakers and field trip leaders, two Native Bee ID workshops, two Milkweed Propagation workshops, and two dozen exhibitors. And one very awesome field trip! The Lubbock/Tahoka pollinator conference focus will be on native bees.

RESOURCE CORNER

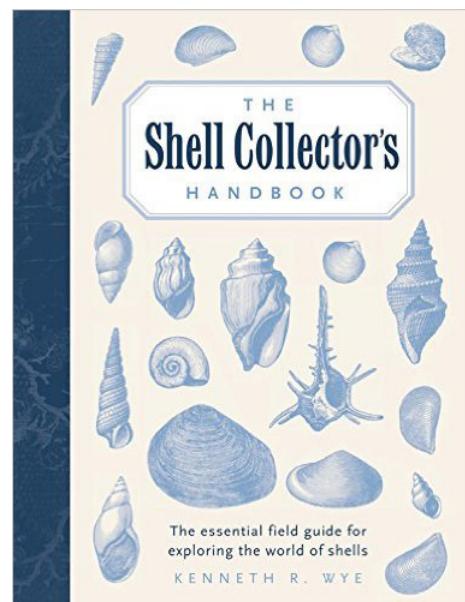
The Shell Collector's Handbook

by Kenneth Wye

Hardcover: 192 pages

ISBN-10: 1577151062

Price:\$14.95



All you need to know to log and classify the shells in your collection. Hints, tips and expert advice to help you get started.

Over 150 photographs and illustrations make it easy to identify your finds in the field: Gastropods, bivalves, cephalopods and scaphopods. This practical identification guide covers a wide range of shells from all parts of the world. The book combines comprehensive and informative text with color illustrations, focusing on the shells themselves rather than on the marine creatures that once inhabited them.

An introductory section covers mollusks and their classification, terminology and collection, along with conservation issues and an invaluable identification key.

The main section is the identification guide to species in precise detail and clarity. The description of each species is accompanied on the same page with an easy-to-use identification key and color illustration.

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