



We are a group of trained volunteers who share our appreciation and knowledge of nature with the community through outreach, education and conservation/restoration projects

## Coastal Prairie Archaeology and Edible Plants *By Diane Russell*

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Photo by Diane Russell



Photo by Amber Leung

Chapter events and nature-related articles, photos, and items of interest to the chapter need to be sent to [Lynn](#) by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Suggestions for the newsletter are also welcome. Thanks.

Lynn Trenta,  
Courier Editor

**The speaker for our October Program was Dr. Leslie Bush, an ethnobotanist. She began her talk describing how archaeologists find plant material, which does not preserve well like bone and stone. Even wooden houses are rarely preserved after 150 years, despite their durability. Earlier cultures left little trace of their lifestyle because so much of what they used was plant material, like their huts and baskets. What does usually remain of such plant material requires macrobotanical analysis, where isolated small plant remnants are studied under the microscope for identification. These remnants include bits of wood, charcoal, seeds, bulbs, fibers and chemical residues such as tobacco and caffeine. For example, caffeine from the yaupon tree found in the Southwest has been identified in pottery of cultures of the Northeast, indicative of trade. Such remnants may be preserved during anaerobic conditions, desiccation, volcanic ashes, landfill effects, and carbonization from fires.**

**Dr. Bush spent some time describing Cabeza de Vaca's account of the Karankawa culture he became familiar with after being shipwrecked in 1528. She found his book, We Came Naked and Barefoot, interesting and readable. De Vaca described all the plants they ate at the various seasons, such as prickly pear, acorns, and roots. Many of these were described well enough to be identified today.**

**Dr. Bush's enthusiasm and love for her work was so infectious and everyone found her to be a delightful and engaging speaker.**

# Prairie Heritage Festival This Week!



*One of our signature project, Prairie Heritage Festival, is taking place this upcoming Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 4pm at Seabourne Creek Nature Park in Rosenberg.*

*There are going to be lots of activities for kids and families! There are still some volunteer positions available, so if you haven't already done so, sign up on Sign Up Genius to help. You will receive VSP hours for your time and have a fun time as well!*

# Annual Meeting at Corpus Christi

*The annual Texas Master Naturalist's Meeting in Corpus Christi began on Friday, October 21 and went through the weekend. It began with classes during the day on Friday and then the naturalists were treated to a fun dinner at the Texas State Aquarium and access to the wonderful aquarium following dinner.*

*Many of our group attended field trips on Friday and Saturday. Debby Wendt toured Oso Bay Wetlands Nature Center there in Corpus Christi and saw beautiful flora and fauna while learning about the wetlands there.*

*At the awards dinner on Saturday Night several chapter members received milestone awards. Those who received awards are Margo and Bill Johnson and Amber Leung for 500 hours, Michelle Sullivan and Susan Walther for 1000 hours, Diane Russell for 4000 hours and Jim Butcher for 5000 hours.*

*Way to go, Coastal Prairie Chapter!*

Photos by Lynn Trenta



Photos by Diane Russell





## Volunteer Connection

### Monarch Madness Success

Coming Up.. VSP Hours



*Monarch Madness took place at Meadows Place, an incorporated entity located in the Missouri City area. Several CPCTMN Members participated in this day-long event. Barbara Willy spoke about milkweeds and her organization, Monarch Gateway. She is involved in several projects that establish large areas of native milkweeds for Monarch Butterflies, as well as other conservation projects.*

*Diane Russell brought her Monarch Butterfly display and expertise about Monarchs to this event and Debby Wendt and Jim Butcher were there to help families and children learn about the sources and effects of water pollution by interacting with the chapter's Environscape model.*

*Thanks to these chapter members for reaching out to the community with their expertise and energy!*

**KEEP**  
**FULSHEAR**  
 BEAUTIFUL  
 SATURDAY  
 NOVEMBER  
**11TH**  
 MEET AT CITY HALL  
 AT 9:00A.M.  
 A FAMILY FRIENDLY ACTIVITY!

PGAL W-E-B Helping Here. BGE ENERGY SERVICES  
 FULSHEAR RUN Kroger CROSS CREEK RANCH

## Great Texas Birding Trail Sign for Seabourne

*Seabourne was chosen to be a birding destination on the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail a short while back and now we have the signs to prove it! Two signs were put up on Highway 36 near the Rosenberg Civic Center close to the entrance to Seabourne Creek Nature Park. This has been an ongoing process and several activities have led to this honor. The addition of the wetlands area under the direction of Master Naturalist Karl Baumgartner attracted more water birds to the park and the monthly bird hikes led by Master Naturalists Wayne and Vicki Poorman added more species of birds to the Seabourne Bird List and invited the community out to participate in identifying the birds who visited Seabourne.*



## Seabourne Bird Hikes Start This Week!



*Our Chapter bird hikes begin this Wednesday at 8am. Chapter members Wayne and Vicki Poorman lead the bird hikes with the help of local bird expert Mark Scheuerman. Members will get VSP for helping to identify species that are in the park.*

*Come join this fun group and find out what birds are out at our wonderful Seabourne Creek Nature Park. This is a great learning experience and fun for birders of all abilities. Bring binoculars, hat, sunscreen, good waterproof walking shoes and water. We meet at the park parking lot.*



## Invasive Species Reports *Sent in by Carol Schwartz*

### Update on Use of Poison to Control Wild Hogs in Texas

*In April, Scimetrics, the company behind the only EPA-approved pesticide for feral hogs, [withdrew its request for registration in Texas](#). The company has "discontinued [its] attempts to provide this resource in Texas at this time," according to a news release. Scimetrics was worried about the potential for lawsuits over the use of its product, Kaput.*

*The news came a week after a bill that would require state agency or university research before the use of lethal pesticides on wild pigs overwhelmingly passed the Texas House. The Texas legislature eventually included a rider in the state budget that prevents the Agriculture Department from taking action to permit the use of Kaput.*

*Meanwhile, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services is researching the use of sodium nitrite, which is a chemical used in food preparation such as to cure bacon, as a control measure. Sodium nitrite causes feral hogs to fall unconscious and die within three hours. They hope to have it registered with the EPA in four years, according to an article in the September/October issue of *The Wildlife Professional*, published by The Wildlife Society.*

### USGS Develops Preliminary Web Tool to Show Potential Spread of Aquatic Non-native Species Due to Hurricane Harvey Flooding

*In addition to the tremendous difficulties faced by victims of Hurricane Harvey as a result of flooding, natural resource managers are facing the potential spread of aquatic invasive species. Flooding can connect normally separated drainages, which can spread invasives from one body of water to another. To help explore this possibility, the U.S. Geological Survey has produced an [on-line mapping tool](#) that illustrates the potential for aquatic invasive species to spread as a result of the flooding due to Hurricane Harvey.*

*While preliminary, the tool allows one to investigate the potential spread of over 80 non-native species, from a water flea (*Daphnia lumholtzi*) to bighead carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*) to giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*). It uses the HUC (hydrologic unit code) system to identify watershed units, and classifies units as either already possessing the specific species or potentially having the species spread to it.*

*Dr. Hans Landel, the manager of [Texasinvasives.org](#) and editor of this e-newsletter, has seen the effects flooding can have on the distribution of aquatic invasive plants, although the effects he saw were positive. In the Fall of 2016 [he led a team to Big Thicket National Preserve](#) north of Beaumont to map invasive plants, including giant salvinia and water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*). A few weeks before they arrived, heavy flooding had occurred. As a result, when they made their way by kayak into the bayous, they found that the populations of hyacinth and salvinia that had previously been present had been washed out to the Neches River and, presumably, on to the Gulf.*

*Go to [nola.com](#) for an article on the USGS' new on-line tool.*

**Invasive Species Reports** (continued) Sent in by Carol Schwartz**North American Ash Tree Species Face Extinction**

*The continued existence of North America's most widespread and valuable ash tree species is now being questioned. Due to the huge impact of the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), five of the six most prominent ash tree species in North America have been listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List as "Critically Endangered" -- only one step from going extinct, and the sixth species is assessed as "Endangered". The [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™](#) "is widely recognized as the most comprehensive, objective global approach for evaluating the [risk of extinction] of plant and animal species".*

*The IUCN Global Tree Specialist Group states, "Taking all of [the available information] into account, it is clear that EAB will rapidly kill all living *F. pennsylvanica* trees greater than 2 cm dbh that it encounters across the vast majority of the species' range. Furthermore, EAB can survive at low densities in infested forests of decimated ash populations, on alternative host plants, ready to infest any regenerating Green Ash sprouts until the trees finally die off and the seed bank is depleted. Therefore, until there is convincing evidence that EAB will be stopped before wiping out the entirety of the ash population in North America, it must be considered an imminent and all-encompassing threat."*

*"[The ash trees'] decline, which is likely to affect over 80 percent of the trees, will dramatically change the composition of both wild and urban forests. Due to the great ecological and economic value of ash trees, and because removing dead ash trees is extremely costly, much research is currently underway across sectors to halt their devastating decline. This brings hope for the survival of the species," says Murphy Westwood, member of the IUCN Global Tree Specialist Group who led the assessment.*

*You can read the [full Red List entry for Green Ash, and access the entries for the other ashes.](#)*



## Plant of the Month, Pennsylvania Smartweed *By Mark Morgenstern*

*Our plant of the month is Pennsylvania smartweed. Several years ago an unusual weed showed up in my wife Andrea's vegetable garden. Out of curiosity, I let it grow out. It turned out to be Pennsylvania smartweed. This Texas native annual attracts a slew of insects, butterflies, moths, native bees and others. We found the seeds nearly impossible to collect. However, the next spring about 20 plants re-sprouted in the same area. Tom Solomon took cuttings and had success. In fact, some he didn't plant, rooted out in the bucket of water.*

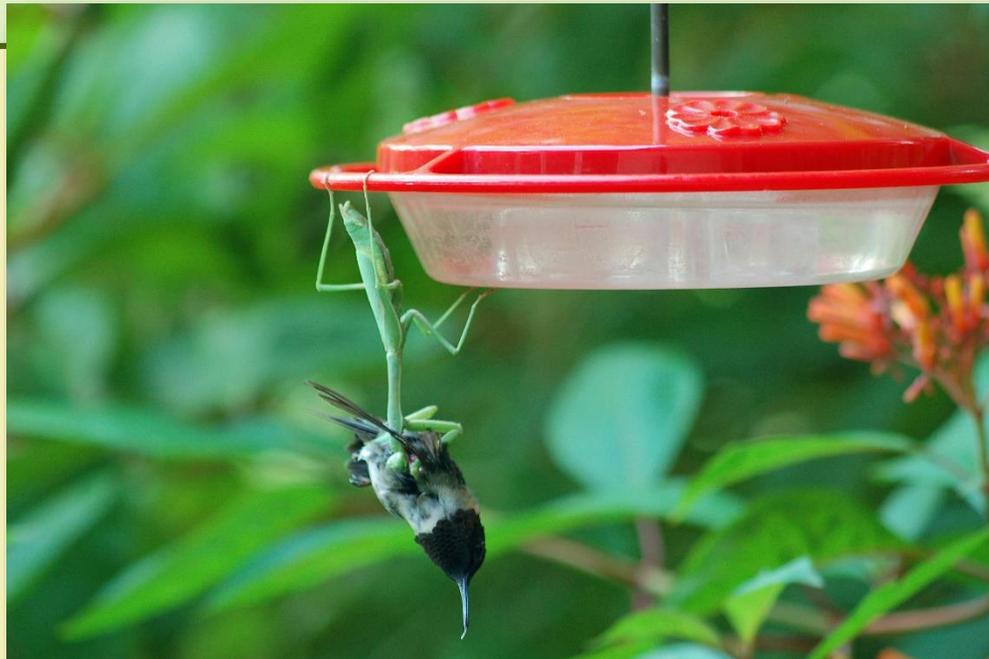
*The Latin name is *Polygonum pensylvanicum*. Its range includes most of the lower 48, Alaska and eastern Canada. Our local Smartweeds include a smaller white variety that grows in the ponds at Brazos Bend State Park. It is a favorite wetland plant for ducks. How did it show up in Andrea's garden? We believe it was deposited by a whistling Duck along with some fertilizer! Come see it at the demo garden at Seabourne Creek Nature Park.*



In Our Own Backyards and Other Places

Seeing is Believing *By Diane Eismont*

*Just in case Susan Walther's item in the September "Courier" on the Praying Mantis' ability to capture & eat hummingbirds did not convince everyone that it can happen in your own backyard, I came home on September 22nd to this horrific scene! Be sure to relocate any Praying Mantis near your hummer feeders!*



Fritillary Butterfly *By Lynn Trenta*



*While working in the Prairie Demo Garden at Seabourne, Bob Schwartz spotted a fritillary butterfly chrysalis and took this photo. A photo of the fritillary caterpillar and butterfly show the different stages for this common butterfly, whose host plant, passion vine, is abundant in the demo garden.*



Photo by Bob Schwartz

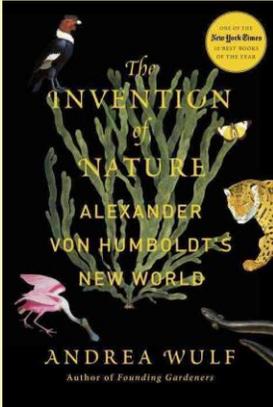
**In Our Own Backyards and Other Places (Continued)**

Seabourne Photos *by Dr. Taylor Sandlin, Senior Pastor of Sugar Land Baptist Church*

*Lea Hyman sent in these beautiful photos of Seabourne Creek Nature Park. Thanks to Lea and Dr. Sandlin.*



## Book Corner

***The Invention of Nature***

*By Andrea Wulf*

***The Invention of Nature" reveals the extraordinary life of the visionary German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) and how he created the way we understand nature today. Though almost forgotten today, his name lingers everywhere from the Humboldt Current to the Humboldt penguin. Humboldt was an intrepid explorer and the most famous scientist of his age. His restless life was packed with adventure and discovery, whether climbing the highest volcanoes in the world, paddling down the Orinoco or racing through anthrax-infested Siberia. Perceiving nature as an interconnected global force, Humboldt discovered similarities between climate zones across the world and predicted human-induced climate change. He turned scientific observation into poetic narrative, and his writings inspired naturalists and poets such as Darwin, Wordsworth and Goethe but also politicians such as Jefferson. Wulf also argues that it was Humboldt's influence that led John Muir to his ideas of preservation and that shaped Thoreau's 'Walden'. Wulf traces Humboldt's influences through the great minds he inspired in revolution, evolution, ecology, conservation, art and literature. In The Invention of Nature Wulf brings this lost hero to science and the forgotten father of environmentalism back to life.***

***Humboldt was, after all, as one contemporary said, 'the greatest man since the Deluge'.***



## Leave the Leaves! From Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

By Justin Wheeler, Web Manager and Communications Administrator

*The red-banded hairstreak is one of many butterflies that depend upon leaf litter as part of their life-cycle. While monarch migration is a well-known phenomenon, it's not the norm when it comes to butterflies. In fact, the vast majority of butterflies and moths overwinter in the landscape as an egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, or adult. In all but the warmest climates, these butterflies use leaf litter for winter cover. Great spangled fritillary and woolly bear caterpillars tuck themselves into a pile of leaves for protection from cold weather and predators. Red-banded hairstreaks lay their eggs on fallen oak leaves, which become the first food of the caterpillars when they emerge. Luna moths and swallowtail butterflies disguise their cocoons and chrysalis as dried leaves and blend in with the fallen litter of leaves. There are many such examples.*

*Beyond butterflies, bumble bees also rely on leaf litter for protection. At the end of summer, mated queen bumble bees burrow only an inch or two into the earth to hibernate for winter. An extra thick layer of leaves is welcome protection from the elements. There are so many animals that live in leaves: spiders, snails, worms, beetles, millipedes, mites, and more – that support the chipmunks, turtles, birds, and amphibians that rely on these insects for food. It's easy to see how important leaves really are to sustaining the natural web of life.*

### Leaves and Lawn

*According to a [2005 NASA estimate](#), there are around 40 million acres of lawn in the continental United States – making turf grass the single largest “crop” we grow. This disproportionate ratio of lawn to garden is the main reason we rake, mow, and blow. To mimic the natural ecosystem an animal needs, a layer of leaves needs to be at least a couple of inches thick. While this would be too much of a good thing for turf grass to handle – research has shown that lawns actually benefit from a thin layer of leaves, and the rest can be piled up around ornamental trees, shrubs, and perennials [to no ill effect](#).*

*If you must keep your lawn clear of leaves – try opting for raking or using a leaf vacuum to capture whole leaves, rather than shredding them with a mower and make a leaf pile in a corner of your yard. More on that below.*

*Better still would be to [reduce your overall lawn footprint](#), replacing it instead with [wildlife supporting plantings](#) that can be future repositories for fall leaves.*

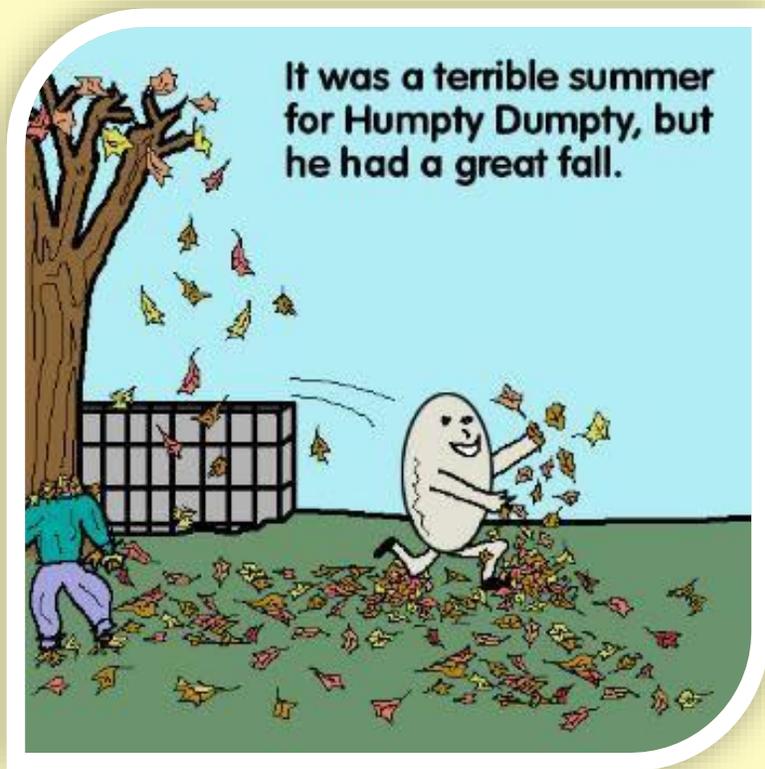
### To shred or not to shred

*Many organic gardeners opt for shredding their fall leaves for use in compost piles. While this is certainly a more environmentally friendly practice than bagging leaves and sending them to the landfill – shredded leaves will not provide the same cover as leaving them whole, and you may be destroying eggs, caterpillars, and chrysalis along with the leaves. We suggest that leaves in garden beds and lawn edges be left whole. Where space allows, consider creating a leaf pile and allowing it to break down naturally, or add the leaves gradually to your compost pile over time. Such efforts will keep critters safe and allow you to benefit from the rich garden gift that falls from the trees above. For more of this and other blogs go to <https://xerces.org/2017/10/06/leave-the-leaves/>*

The Lighter Side



Thanks to John Donaho (Facebook)



Harvey Heroes By Bob and Carol Schwartz

CPTMN 2017 Board Members

2016 Officers

- President [Amber Leung](#)
- Vice President [Debby Wendt](#)
- Secretary [Jamie Fairchild](#)
- Treasurer [Doug Simons](#)

2016 Committee Directors

- Past-President [Diane Russell](#)
- Programs [Debby Wendt](#)
- Communication [Lynn Trenta](#)
- Volunteer Service Projects [Margo "Mac" McDowell](#) (interim)
- Membership [Michelle Sullivan](#)
- New Class [C.J. McDaniel](#)
- Advanced Training [Margo Johnson](#)
- Publicity [Teresa Bailey](#)
- New Class Representative—Open
- Seabourne Creek [Karl Baumgartner](#)
- State Representative [Carol Schwartz](#)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://txmn.org/coastal>

*Hurricane Harvey affected all of us in some manner, some more than others. Bob & I just want to take this opportunity, via the Courier, to send out a very, very special Thank You to Coastal Prairie Chapter TMN members Hal & Mary Fuglaar. We were under a mandatory evacuation and went to the shelter at Terry HS on Monday. The conditions there were most challenging for the hundreds of evacuees. Some families with pets and others without were all together. Lunch was a slice of pizza and dinner was a half cheeseburger with a fruit cup. There were cots for about 2/3 of the evacuees as a shelter at Sacred Heart Church in Richmond had to be closed due to proximity to the Brazos River and those evacuees were transferred to Terry HS as well.*

*That evening Hal Fuglaar, a Red Cross Volunteer at Terry HS, spotted me and asked why I was there. After explaining the situation, he immediately said you are coming to stay at our house. What a relief!!! They already had another lady at their home involved with Red Cross relief efforts. It is absolutely impossible to adequately describe how much this gesture meant to us. We were made to feel so welcomed and Mary attended to our every need while Hal returned to work at the shelter. Their kindness will never, ever be forgotten. The bonus was that Mary is a super great cook too!*

*Bob & Carol Schwartz*

**Check out our Facebook Page at**  
[TXMN Coastal Prairie Chapter Facebook](#)

**To post photos and information, email**  
[John Donaho](#)

**Also, share our chapter Facebook entries with your friends on your Facebook Page**

**COASTAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS**

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