



*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*

## Chapter Field Trip to the Sea Center and the Brazosport Center for the Arts and Sciences *By Lynn Trenta (portions of the text come from <https://tpwd.texas.gov/fishing/sea-center-texas/>)*

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Photos by Erik Wolf

**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**

***Saturday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> found chapter members at 302 Medical Drive in Lake Jackson enjoying our June field trip to Sea Center Texas. This location has several interesting offerings for naturalists and other nature lovers. On site is a marine aquarium, fish hatchery and nature center operated by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.***

***We began our tour at the entrance of the aquarium and nature center. Our guide was a cheerful volunteer who told us a little bit about Sea Center Texas as we looked at the replicas of fish and other marine life mounted on the walls, including Fiberglass replicas of state record saltwater fishes. "The 25 fiberglass mounts (most created by Bob Harris of Saltwater Taxidermy) include popular bay sport fish like flounder, black drum and red drum as well as offshore species such as blue marlin, tarpon and red snapper. And of course, there are several large sharks."***

***When entering the aquarium area, we were greeted with a fun "20-foot touch pool which allowed us to gently touch marine animals such as blue crabs, hermit crabs, stone crabs, snails and even anemones. One prominent animal on exhibit is the state shell of Texas, the Lightning Whelk. The animals displayed live in a variety of habitats along the Texas coast and have developed many ways to survive conditions brought about by the tides, waves and predators."***

***Continued on the next page--***

## Chapter Field Trip to the Sea Center and the Brazosport Museum of Natural Science (continued)

Photos by Erik Wolf



Photo Diane Russell and wolf- Brazosport Museum

*We next ventured into an area where seven aquariums featured different marine environments in the Texas Gulf Coast. Flounders were hiding in the sand while other fish, such as redfish and black drum floated overhead, and crabs and crustaceans crawled on rocks and aquarium. We enjoyed the wonderful display of ocean wildlife.*

*Following the aquarium viewings, our volunteer guide took us on a tour of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department's marine hatcheries where juvenile red drum, spotted seatrout and southern flounder are produced for stock enhancement. "Stock enhancement is the release of hatchery-reared juvenile organisms into the wild to supplement the existing population. It serves as a tool used by TPWD to manage the marine fishery along the Texas coast to ensure that harvest levels are sustained, and stocks are replenished. TPWD's hatchery program is one of the most visible marine stock enhancement programs in the world. Annually, some twenty-five million juvenile marine finfish (averaging 35-millimeter total length) are produced by the hatchery program and released into the wild to supplement the natural population. Sea Center Texas is responsible for producing approximately a third of the red drum and one-half of the spotted seatrout stocked. Last year, Sea Center Texas released 25,000 flounder fingerlings into area bays." We were allowed to peer into the tanks to see the fish being raised there. These hatcheries serve a very valuable service.*

*Our next activity on our field trip was to the museum at the Brazosport Center for the Arts and Sciences in Clute. There we found an enormous collection of shells, butterfly collections, dinosaurs and dioramas of area wildlife. It was an amazing display of artifacts and collections. Members were agog at the variety and volume of the museum's content. You can find more information about the museum at <https://bcfas.org/museum2/>. Also, while there we were treated to the photos from the photo contest held at the Migration Celebration put on at the Texas Mid-Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex event underwritten by Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.*

*By this time, we were all ready for lunch and headed off in two groups to the Wurst House and a seafood restaurant. Thanks to Debby Wendt for a fun and educational field trip!*

Welcome to New Coastal Prairie Chapter Board Members!

*Two chapter members were appointed Thursday night to important positions on the board. Carol Hawkins stepped forward to take over the position of Training Director after serving as the Chapter Training Class Representative for the past year. Jerry Trenta took on the position of Seabourne Creek Nature Park Director.*

*We applaud these chapter members for stepping up to fill these challenging positions on the board. These positions are important and vital for our chapter and we can be proud to have these members working for our chapter. Many thanks for your service!*



**Carol Hawkins, Training Director**



**Jerry Trenta, SCNP Director**



**July Field Trip to the Waugh Bridge to See Bats!**  
(Information Found on [Signup Genius](#) )

***Please join us for an evening visit to the Waugh Bat Colony. If you have not yet seen this impressive roost, you have been missing out!***

***Friday, July 20th***

***Bat Talk begins at 6:30 P.M.***

***Parking available at Spotts Park, [401 S. Heights Blvd., Houston](#)***

***Walk over to Waugh Bridge***

***Contact Person: Debby Wendt***

***One of Houston’s best-kept secrets is its bat population. The Waugh Bridge Bat Colony consists of Mexican free-tailed bats that emerge nightly to stretch their wings and feed on area insects.***

***Unlike many other Texas bat colonies that migrate south during the winter months, the Waugh Bridge Bat Colony remains in Houston throughout the year. This may be the largest colony of Mexican free-tailed bats that resides in Texas all year. The huge majority of bats at other bridges and caves migrate to Mexico for the winter. The 1.5 million bats at the Congress Avenue Bridge Bat Colony in Austin, for example, begin migrating south to Mexico in the fall months, ending their twilight emergences until the following spring. Bats play key roles in keeping a wide variety of insect populations in balance. In the U.S., brown bats often eat mosquitoes and can catch up to 1,200 tiny insects in an hour. Large colonies of Mexican free-tailed bats eat tons of pests weekly.***

***Waugh Bridge Bat Chat***

***If you’re looking for an informative evening at the bridge, “swing by” any first or third Friday of the month year-round for a free-to-attend Bat Chat with Houston Area Bat Team volunteers.***

***The team typically meets on the East side of the Waugh Drive bridge along Allen Parkway by the bat viewing platform at 6:30 pm to answer questions and assist attendees with viewing.***

***To sign up for this field trip go to: [Signup Genius](#) on our website.***

## Spotlight: Honduran White Bat (*Ectophylla alba*) Sent in by Margo McDowell



Photo: Michael & Patricia Fogden/Minden Pictures

*One of the first things you may notice about the Honduran white bat is that the bat is, well, white. This species is characterized by its white fluffy body, its yellow and black wings, its yellow ears and a snout that is shaped just like a spade. And beneath that white fluffy exterior, this cotton ball of a bat hides a secret. In a display of evolutionary ingenuity, the Honduran white bat possesses a special band of dark pigmented tissue on top of its heads that protects it from harsh solar radiation.*

*These little bats roost by huddling together in groups of four to eight as they cling to the rib of leaf tents. To create these tents, they choose understory plant leaves and use their teeth to chew the sides of the leaf rib, causing the leaves to fall and hang like the world's most adorable tent.*



## Native Plant Blogs Sent by TMN

- A Nine Natives Update to Celebrate National Pollinator Week** <https://houstonprairie.org/2018/06/17/a-nine-natives-update/> The Nine Natives booklet is out!

*...In recent years, the mantra for gardeners has been, "Plant natives for pollinators and local wildlife because our local native plants have been supporting and co-existing with our pollinators and wildlife for thousands of years." Local conservationists postulated that, if a multitude of gardens plant at least nine local natives, that would significantly benefit our local pollinators and other wildlife. But how does a novice to native plants get started? This booklet recommends 9 plants, native to the greater Houston area, for a sunny garden. Read the blog and download a copy of the booklet at this link:*

<https://houstonprairie.org/2018/06/17/a-nine-natives-update/>
- Recommendations of local (Greater Houston) natives to be used in lieu of St. Augustine grass in the area between the sidewalk & the curb** : <https://npsot.org/wp/houston/2018/06/17/between-sidewalk-curb/> . This blog was inspired by the Native Plant Society of Texas article "[From Nuisance to NICE](#)" which recommended native plants of central Texas for this area.

## AS A CITIZEN SCIENTIST *By Laura Simpson*

*We know that birds, butterflies, and bees are in trouble. We want to help, but we don't always know the best ways. After all, most of us are not entomologists, wildlife biologists, or even botanists.*

*The good news is that we need not be scientists to help wildlife. All we need is a willingness to adapt gardening practices to support wildlife and a desire to observe and record. In other words, while we garden, we can be citizen scientists. Scistarter describes a citizen scientist as "an individual who voluntarily contributes his or her time, effort, and resources toward scientific research in collaboration with professional scientists or alone." We gardeners are particularly well-suited for this because we encounter wildlife frequently.*

*Here's how you can support wildlife as you garden:*

- **ADAPT.** *Our gardens must welcome wildlife, which happens when we adapt our gardening in ways like these:*
  - *Avoid pesticides: let predators keep pests in check.*
  - *Use compost or organic fertilizers*
  - *Leave some bare, undisturbed ground for bees' nests (70% of native bees nest in ground).*
  - *Reduce mowing (which scares wildlife, removes food and cover, and pollutes).*
  - *Leave dead stems until spring because tiny bees may nest or shelter inside*
  - *Allow leaves to stay in beds because wildlife shelters under them in winter.*
  - *Use native plants because they feed more wildlife and work better here.*
  - *Select flowers of varying sizes, shapes, colors, and bloom times.*
  - *Include plants that feed caterpillars.*

*Continued on the next page--*



## AS A CITIZEN SCIENTIST *(continued)*

- **OBSERVE.** *As you garden, be mindful of plant and animal relationships.*
  - *Which plants feed which animals, and when?*
  - *Which animals eat your garden pests?*
  - *What attracts pests and predators alike to your garden?*
  - *Knowing these connections will help you to understand the web of life and also to choose what, where, and when to plant.*
- **SHARE.** *Share your observations on citizen-science platforms, such as*
  - *iNaturalist, Nature's Notebook,*
  - *Bugguide,*
  - *Bumble Bee Watch,*
  - *Journey North, and educational communities.*
  - *Find citizen-science opportunities through sites such as*
    - [Scistarter](#),
    - [citizenscience.gov](#), and
    - [National Geographic](#).

*When we share, we give scientists the data they need to help the wildlife that we treasure.\* \* \**  
*Lauren is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Houston Law Center, where she teaches Lawyering Skills and Strategies. She is a spring 2016 recipient of the UH Teaching Excellence Award (Instructor/Clinical category) and the spring 2017 and 2018 Professor of the Year for Law Center faculty teaching in the part-time program.*

*You can reach Lauren: through her Facebook page, ["St. Julian's Crossing-wildlife habitat](#)*

## Texas A&M AgriLife Extension KR Bluestem Management Guidelines

*Sent in by Carol Schwartz*

*It is well known among managers of conservation lands, ranchlands, roadsides, and other landscapes that the control of King Ranch bluestem (*Bothriochloa ischaemum*) and other old-world bluestems is very difficult. Given this situation, it would be nice if there were a source of up-to-date information to turn to that could provide management guidance. Fortunately, that source now exists. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension recently published a guide called "Introduced Bluestem Grasses: Management on Native Lands". It covers the identification of different species of introduced bluestem, including KR bluestem and Kleberg bluestem (*Dichanthium annulatum*), as well as management strategies. It recognizes the difficulty and complexity in controlling the bluestems, and that different conditions will require different strategies. Their guide can be found [here \(pdf\)](#). Thank you, Texas A&M AgriLife!*



# Be On the Lookout for the Cuban Tree Frog in Southern Texas

Sent in by Carol Schwartz

*The Cuban tree frog, [Osteopilus septentrionalis](#), a native to Cuba, the Bahamas, and the Cayman Islands, is an invasive in the Caribbean and Florida. The frogs, which can eat smaller frogs and grow as large as an adult's fist, "... have noxious skin secretions, and they can clog plumbing and cause power outages by short-circuiting utility switches where they seek refuge," says USGS biologist Brad Glorioso.*

*Despite repeated occurrences in several states over many years, it was not believed that Cuban tree frogs had successfully established outside of Florida in the mainland United States. That has changed: in 2017, large numbers were found in New Orleans and the first record of a Cuban tree frog in Texas was [reported in The Woodlands](#).*

*Now that a Cuban tree frog has been found in Texas, it is important that residents in Southern Texas, especially along the coast, be on the lookout. These areas "would be the first places they may become established where the climate is mild. These animals are originally from the Caribbean area, so they like it warm," Glorioso said. [According to a USGS report](#), once they become established, it will be unlikely that the frogs can be eradicated.*

*USGS [provides a fact sheet](#) that describes the Cuban tree frog. Adults are the largest tree frogs in the U.S., growing up to 6.5 in. Its coloration is highly variable, but it may be distinguished from native tree frogs by the fact that its toepads are noticeably large -- similar in size to its eardrum, its skin is bumpy like a toad's, the dorsal skin on adults is fused to the skull, and the single vocal sac of calling males inflates bilaterally, giving the appearance of two sacs. Its call, which is a "rasping snarl or rubbery snore", may be confused with that of the southern leopard frog (*Lithobates [=Rana] sphenoccephalus*).*

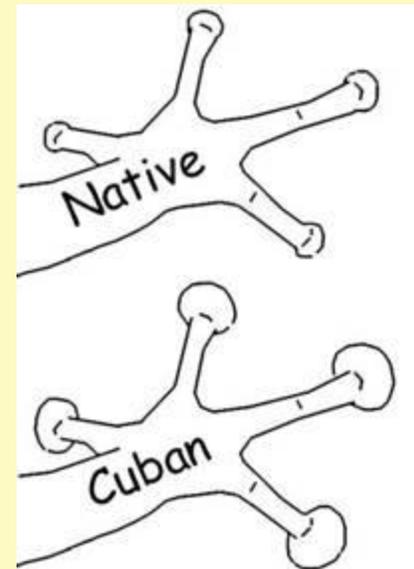
*If you think you have found a Cuban tree frog, please collect it if possible and [report it to the USGS](#) (take up to 4 photos to submit) and to [texasinvasives.org](#) (put "Cuban tree frog" in the subject line). Information on how to collect a Cuban Tree frog can be found [here](#). Let's keep it out of Texas.*



Credit: Denise Gregoire, U.S. Geological Survey



Example of color variation. Credit: Leanna Powers



Comparison of toe pads of native and Cuban tree frogs. Credit: Monica McGarrity, TPWD

## Plant of the Month, Eastern Gammagrass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*)

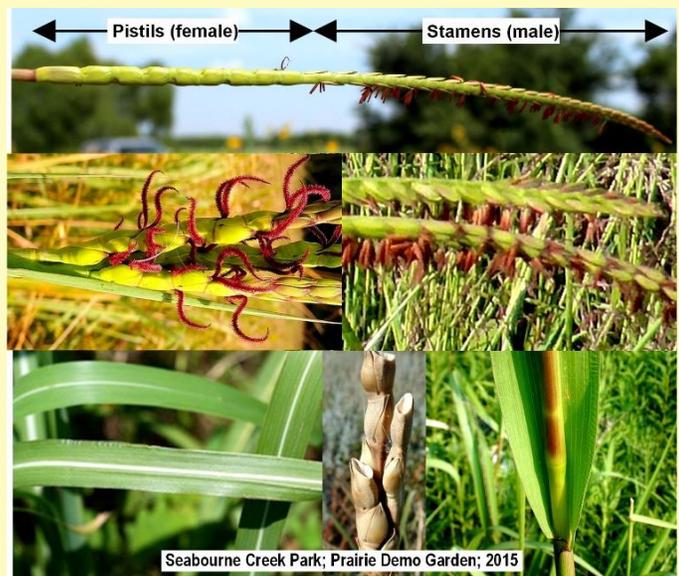
Text and photos by Jerry Trenta

**Eastern gamagrass is a perennial, bunch grass, a distant relative of corn that can reach 8 to 10 feet in height. The seed heads are 6 to 10 inches long and are made up of one to several spikes. Each spike has both male and female flowers, stigmas (female) are purple and stamens (male) orange. The leaves are 3/8 to 3/4-inch-wide and 12 to 24 inches long, with a well-defined midrib. It is classified as a facultative (capable of but not restricted to) wetland plant with roots that can extend down beyond 7 ft., allowing eastern gamagrass to grow in saturated soil, penetrate compacted layers, and tolerate both drought and floods.**

**Seed is produced from May to Sept. The seeds are believed to have been popped like popcorn by Early Americans and can also be cooked whole like wheatberries or made into a gruel. Deer like the seed as well and the plant is the larval food of choice for the Bunchgrass Skipper butterfly. The maze of spaces between the large clumps of gamagrass, covered above by the outward-arching foliage, provides valuable cover, shade, and nesting habitat for many native prairie species, including bobwhite, prairie-chickens, and other birds and small mammals.**



Seabourne Creek Park - Prairie Demo Garden - 2016



Seabourne Creek Park; Prairie Demo Garden; 2015

## In Our Own Backyards and Other Places

Great Horned Owl Visit *By Diane Eismont*

*We believe we had a Great Horned Owl visit our bird bath at 2:33 in the morning last December! As you see, it has yellow eyes, white on the throat, feathered feet, & ear tufts, but the face is blurred. We do sometimes find bird feathers around the drippers, but also have seen hawks & Barred Owls nearby (and heard the Barred Owl courting calls in February). We had a Screech Owl residing in one of our duck boxes for a few years, but other than this picture, never saw a Great Horned Owl.*



*Amber Leung shared this photo of a baby quail chick on CPCTMN Facebook. These will be used for educational purposes.*

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

*Sal Cardenas snapped this photo of a baby praying mantis who accompanied him while Sal was on the tractor at Seabourne.*



*Here are garden divas Jade, Donna and Terri making the Seabourne Prairie Demo Garden beautiful.*



*Mark was happy to see these aquatic milkweed pods in the Seabourne Prairie Demo Garden.*



*Mark Morgenstern and Ramona Ridge work in their organic prairie garden at Seabourne.*

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

*John shared this photo on Facebook and stated "Within a few hops of the Texas Medical Center Transit Station is a tiny pocket prairie of about 5,000 square feet. Yet that little prairie supports an abundance of plants and wildlife including med center rabbits!"*



*Lynn Trenta captured a bumblebee in the partridge peas at the Seabourne Prairie Demo*

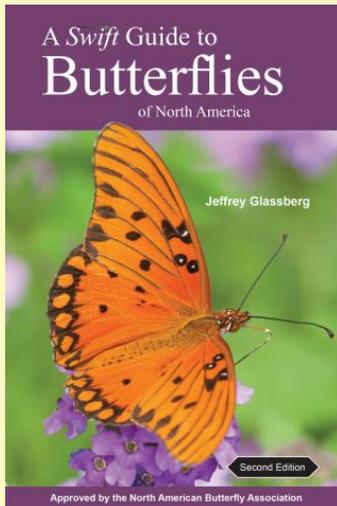


*Diane Russell's church garden that she maintains was brimming with basket flowers.*



*Barbara Willy sent in this photo of one of our resident alligators. Talk about a bad hair day!*

## Book Corner



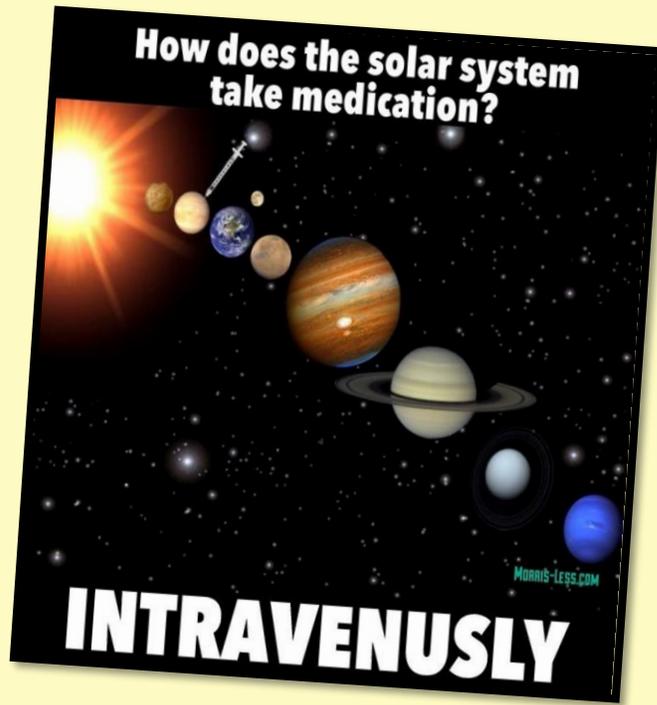
Trees of Texas

By Jeffrey Glassberg

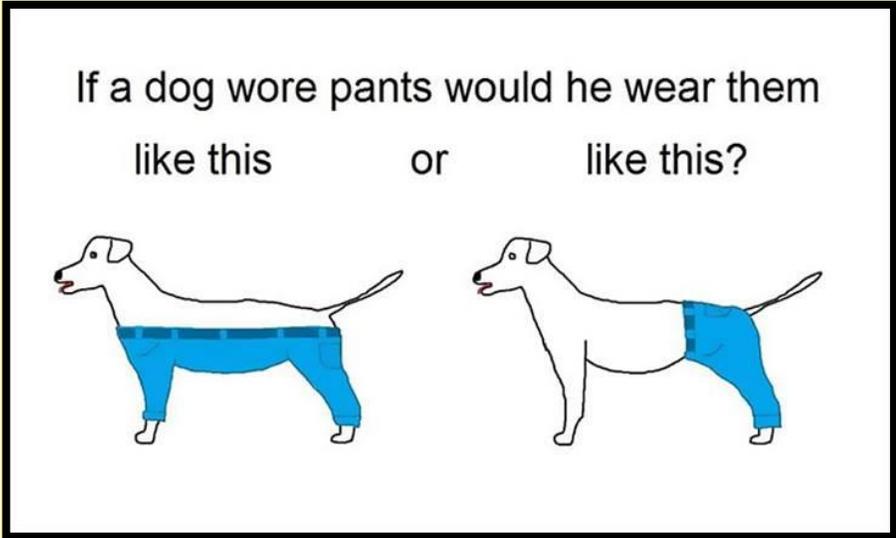
*This is a revised second edition of the most detailed, comprehensive, and user-friendly photographic field guide to the butterflies of North America. Written by Jeffrey Glassberg, the pioneering authority on the field identification of butterflies, the guide covers all known species, beautifully illustrating them with 3,500 large, gorgeous color photographs—the very best images available. This second edition includes more than 500 new photos and updated text, maps, and species names. For most species, there are photographs of topsides and undersides, males and females, and variants. All text is embedded in the photographs, allowing swift access in the field, and arrows point to field marks, showing you exactly what to look for. Detailed, same-page range maps include information about the number of broods in each area and where strays have been recorded. Color text boxes highlight information about habitat, caterpillar food plants, abundance and flight period, and other interesting facts. Also included are a quick visual index and a caterpillar food plant index. The result is an ideal field guide that will enable you to identify almost every butterfly you see.*

*Jeffrey Glassberg is a leading butterfly authority and author. He is president of the North American Butterfly Association, editor of American Butterflies magazine, and the author of many books, including the Butterflies through Binoculars series. He is adjunct professor of evolutionary biology at Rice University and lives in Morristown, New Jersey.*

The Lighter Side



Thanks to John Donaho (Facebook)





# Native Plant Society's Photo Contest

## CPTMN 2018 Board Members

### 2018 Officers

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

### 2018 Committee Directors

- Past-President [Diane Russell](#)
- Programs [Debby Wendt](#)
- Communication--Vacant
- Publicity [Margo Johnson](#)
- Volunteer Service Projects [Cheryl Garcia](#)
- Advanced Training [Ramona Ridge](#)
- Membership [Michelle Sullivan](#)
- New Class [Carol Hawkins](#)
- New Class Representative--Vacant
- State Representative [Carol Schwartz](#)
- Seabourne—[Jerry Trenta](#)

We're on the Web!  
See us at:

<http://txmn.org/coastal>

*This year's photo contest will accept entries from July 1 to July 31, 2018. The contest is completely digital – no need to develop photos and mount them for submission.*

*Contestants may enter one photo per Texas eco-region for a maximum number of 12 per contestant. Scientific names and regional locations of photographed plants are required. Use [this map](#) to determine in which eco-region the photo was taken.*

*Photos must not have been previously published anywhere. Contestants retain rights to later published photos, in addition to giving the Society publication rights. [Click here](#) for complete rules and the link to upload entries.*

*Voting will be online and open to all members September 1 to September 30, 2018, with a link to be announced here later.*

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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Extension Office  
Rosenberg, TX 77471—8678  
Phone: 281-633-7033

*We also have a **Chapter-Only** Facebook Page that allows chapter members to post items. You can join by going to the website below and clicking on "Join". The administrator will allow you access. This is for chapter members only.*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1882734648662315/?ref=bookmarks>