

October 2019

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Cross Timbers Master Naturalist Newsletter

President's Pen — Bill Collins

Yes, Virginia there is a Santa Claus and yes Fall does come to Texas.

Both statements have been posed as questions, especially this year with no sign of fall in the forecast. But yes, it will happen. The good news is that we don't always have to wait for a sign from the weather man. We can look to Mother Nature to give us hints. Late summer and fall plants are blooming. Birds (I've seen lots of humming birds), ducks and geese (and don't forget the Monarchs) are moving south.

When possible, I have attended the meetings of the latest Master Naturalist class. Always a pleasure to see a room full of hungry students soaking up what information they can from the night's speaker. Lots of good questions and good interchange of information and ideas.

Board items: We do have a new volunteer/advanced train director. Theresa Thomas has taken on that task. Her email is volat@ctmn.org

We also have an interim treasurer. Lani Akers is unable to continue as Treasurer and the Board has appointed Gailon Harden as interim Treasurer until next year. (Elections will take place during the November general meeting)

Last year's CTMN State Park event at Lake Mineral Wells State Park was not the success we had hoped primarily because of the weather. David Owen, assistant Park Director at LMWSP has invited us back to try again. So, save the last weekend of March for our 2020 CTMN event. The schedule of events will be very similar (except for the cold weather). More details will be coming soon.

The board is doing it's best to represent the membership's needs and desires. If you have ideas for programs, events, activities, field trips, etc., please let the board hear from you.

Reminder. Their email address is board@ctmn.org.

Get outside and see what the fall weather is bringing.

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Plant of the Month– American Pokeweed : Josephine Keeney

American Pokeweed, Pokeberry, *Phytolacca americana*
Phytolaccaceae (Pokeweed Family)

What a beautiful and useful plant this is!

This plant is really attractive with its red stems and white flowers that turn into lovely red berries. The leaves also turn gorgeous colors in the fall. It can grow as high as six or eight feet.

Once you have it you won't need to plant it again, since it comes back from the great big root, stronger every year. Also the seeds will fall and give you many new plants that you can share with your friends. This plant has a very wide range in the U.S. as well as a large part of Canada.

Even though every part of this plant is very poisonous to humans, the tender new shoots can be consumed in the spring as they emerge from the ground, but they must be boiled in water several times, draining and changing the water after every boil, which they say will take away all the poison. I think it probably renders them totally void of nutrients so I don't advice eating them at all, except maybe in a dire emergency.

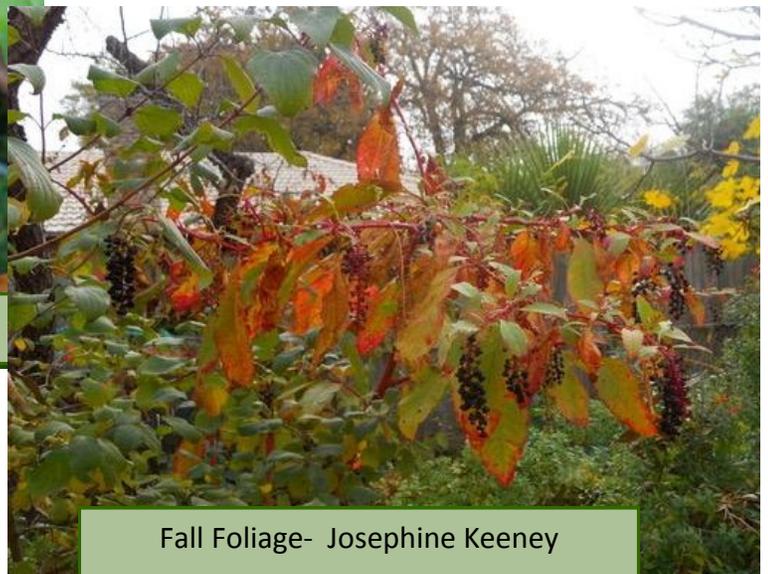
One of the benefits of Pokeweed is the fact that deer won't eat it, so for those with deer problems this is a real blessing.

The berry juice also makes a brilliant red dye that can be used for many jobs, be sure to wear gloves to keep the stains off your hands and to keep the juice from soaking into your skin.

But the best part is how the berries appeal to birds. I have had mockingbirds and robins feast on it all summer and it was a delight to watch. Sometimes as the fruit ripens it ferments and makes the birds tipsy, which can be a lot of fun to watch



Flowers and Fruit: Josephine



Fall Foliage- Josephine Keeney

Bird of the Monty- Red-breasted Nuthatch– Zachary Chapman

Red-breasted Nuthatch: *Sitta canadensis*

This was a lovely photo I shot last winter at one of my bird feeders in my backyard. We moved a year ago, and last year I was able to attract about three Red-breasted Nuthatches. They are a fun one. I first saw one at the Fort Worth Nature Center a couple of years ago, but this was my first time getting a good shot of one. These guys sure loved the mixed Audubon blend. These guys are like most of the other nuthatches, they like to climb the bark headfirst going down the tree. Normally they scan the bark looking for tasty insects. These guys are a wintertime visitor and sometimes come in big flocks. I love nuthatches.

Last year was the first time I got these birds at my feeder. I also had some Brown Creepers which do a similar tree climb except they go up the tree and not down it like these guys do. They are very entertaining and will follow the same pattern if you watch them close enough; as my friend says animals (like us) are creatures of habit, they follow a pattern in every aspect of their lives.

I will spend hours in the winter sitting at the kitchen and dining room windows in my PJs watching birds as I sip hot coco. Winter will soon be arriving, and it makes me happy to know that the winter birds will soon be back at my little spread I have set up in the backyard.

These birds are very entertaining and I was just in awe of how cute these little birds are. I have seen a bunch of nuthatches in the last few years and have almost seen all of the ones found in the US. I love to keep life lists of all the birds and love to find new ones, but sometimes I love to sit back and watch the oldies but goodies.

Red Breasted Nuthatches are kind of rare if you go by my personal experience. I don't get to see too many of them; but they are fun. A few more facts about these guys: They nest in tree cavities. They eat insects, but will take a hand out from a feeder. They nest in Spruce, Fir, Pine, Hemlock, Larch and Red Cedar, but they will nest in Aspen, Birch, and Maple among others depending where they are located. These guys are just one of my favorite backyard visitors. I have maintained feeders for a long time.

Back in 2015 I have had to have kidney surgery and I was pretty bummed about it. My grandmother got me a camera and I began to take photos of birds and that helped me greatly in my recovery. That is how I was able to heal and learn about birds. A few months later I would learn of the Cross Timbers Master Naturalist and that is where I am now expanding my knowledge about nature and having everyday adventures.



Red-breasted Nuthatch– Zachary

A common damselfly in our area sticking mostly to vegetation at edges of ponds. Nonetheless at 24-29mm they can still be hard to see unless really looking. But when you do see the neon red needle floating along at ankle height it is quite exciting.



Meet the Author of Cerulean Blues- Scott Hollinger

Taking the reader from the mountains of Appalachia to a coffee plantation near Bogotá, Colombia, this investigation into the plight of the Cerulean Warbler, a tiny migratory songbird, describes its struggle to survive in ever-shrinking bands of suitable habitat. This elusive creature, a favorite among bird watchers and the fastest-declining warbler species in the United States has lost three percent of its total population each year since 1966. This precipitous decline means that today there are 80 percent fewer Ceruleans than 40 years ago, and their numbers continue to drop because of threats including deforestation, global warming, and mountaintop removal coal mining. With scientific rigor and a sense of wonder, Fallon charts their path across more than 2000 miles and shows how the fate of a creature weighing less than an ounce is vitally linked to that of our own. **Katie Fallon** has had nonfiction pieces in a variety of magazines and journals, including *Appalachian Heritage*, *Isotope: A Journal of Literary Nature and Science Writing*, and *River Teeth: A Journal of Nonfiction Narrative*. Her essay "Lost," published in *The Fourth River*, was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2008. She teaches creative writing at West Virginia University. She lives in Morgantown, West Virginia.

Join us at **10 am Saturday, October 5th** at Everett Hall, Room 100, on the lower lever of the Research and Education (RES) building at the University of North Texas Health Science Center on 3500 Camp Bowie Boulevard (at Montgomery Street) Fort Worth, TX 76107. Use Parking Lot 6 on Clifton Street. Katie will have her books for sale (15\$ cash or check) and will be happy to sign them for you. Also on sale are FWAS shirts, hats and patches and tickets for the raffle. A light continental breakfast will be served. For additional information or questions log on the to the FWAS website at www.fwas.org ; contact Scott Hollinger at scotthf4law@gmail.com ; or for directions log onto <http://www.fwas.org/showthread.php?4-Monthly-Meetings>

October 2019 CTMN Monthly Meeting -Kerry Newberry

Meeting Date: October 21st

Presentation Topic: Saving North Texas Prairies

Presenter: Suzanne Tuttle, Retired Manager of Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, CTMN Member, and NPAT Member



Paul Mathews Prairie, Hunt County
Photo by Jason Singhurst



Clymer Meadow Preserve, Hunt County
Photo by David Bezanson

The Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT) was founded in 1986 and is an accredited land trust. Their Mission is dedicated to the conservation, restoration, and appreciation of native prairies, savannas, and other grasslands in Texas. NPAT actively seeks the purchase of prairie remnants and holds conservation easements on multiple properties throughout Texas, totaling over 4,000 acres.

Presenter Suzanne Tuttle joined NPAT in 1998 and is a Life Member of the organization. She will share more information about NPAT with specific focus on properties located in the North Texas region.

To learn more about NPAT, visit:

<https://texasprairie.org/>

<https://fortworthnpat.wordpress.com/>

Volunteer Opportunity Spotlight-Stella Rowan Prairie

Does your organization or project need naturalist volunteers? Are you a naturalist volunteer looking for new opportunities? Let the matchmaking begin!

Beginning with our October chapter meeting, a dedicated "Volunteer Opportunity Spotlight" table will be set up in the meeting room. A representative of an approved volunteer opportunity will staff the table before and after the scheduled presenter (6:30-7:00 p.m. and 8:15-8:45 p.m.).

The "Volunteer Opportunity Spotlight" for October is Stella Rowan Prairie. This 125-acre remnant prairie is on *Tarrant County Resource Connection* property located north of Interstate 20, south of East Seminary Drive, and west of Campus Drive. Drop by the table at the October meeting and chat with Laura Penn. Learn how your volunteer efforts can help preserve and restore this precious Fort Worth Prairie habitat.

If you are interested in reserving the "Volunteer Opportunity Spotlight" table for future chapter meetings for your volunteer project, send your request to vp@ctmn.org.

1. When did you finish TMN classes?

Class of 2013!!!

2. We know your passion for Odonates, as presenter at the June 2019 meeting. Do you have other passions?

Birds, I would put them as a very close second if not a tie to my odonates. They were what got me into all this naturalist stuff actually. I have loved them my whole life without knowing anything about them. Coming in a very close third would be moths.

3. How & where do you get your 40 volunteer hours each year?

Vast majority comes from citizen science. Ever heard of iNaturalist?

4. What is your favorite field tool?

Hard not to say camera but think I would have to say my binoculars. I often say I don't see how people can go out without binoculars. I may have bought them for birds but they are so useful for dragonflies, insects off the trail and plants in the distance.

5. Is there a website you like to visit?

Is there one besides iNaturalist? Well actually, there is Odonata Central and BugGuide.

6. What did you like most about being the Cross Timbers Chapter 2017 President?

Wow summing that up to one thing would be hard. I really liked being able to work with the board and learn about the "inner workings" that make TXMN such an awesome organization. As 2017 President, it gave me a real appreciation for all the hard work our state leadership does. Also really loved getting to know many of our members so well and help them move through their journey as a Master Naturalist.

7. Tell us about your background.

Born in Abilene, moved to Hurst in my senior year and joined Army a year after graduating.

8. What other organizations are you involved with?

Lapsed member of Ft Worth Audubon Society but still make it to most of the meetings every year.

9. What is most rewarding about being a Master Naturalist?

I love being able to meet so many people with a common shared interest and learning from them. I also feel like it is a great conversation starter with people outside our community to be able to talk about importance of ecological issues.



New Butterfly Sculpture Arrives at Southwest Library Garden—Nancy O'Mal-

Parents looking for a new place to snap pictures of their kids can head to the Southwest Regional Library, at 4001 Library Lane in Fort Worth. There, on a gravel path at the south end of the library, stands a large, turquoise and purple bejeweled butterfly, designed to be a charming backdrop for photos of children and adults alike.

In early August, Tarrant County Master Gardeners installed the oversized, brilliantly colored butterfly wings to attract more visitors to the garden. Hundreds of butterfly- and bee-attracting plants fill the area, already designated as a way station for Monarch butterflies, but as it is perched above busy Hulen St., the garden can be easily overlooked.

Interns in the 2019 Master Gardeners class installed butterfly-themed bronze sculptures along the garden path, leading toward the large butterfly wings at the end of the trail. The brightly painted wings stand out against a red brick wall and invite the children to climb up the limestone steps and pose for a picture. The children also will likely discover real butterflies fluttering among the native plants, blooming even in the scorching Texas heat.

The garden was installed in 1997 by the Texas Native Plant Society, North Central Chapter (NC NPSOT) and became a Master Gardener Project in 2002. Volunteers of the Tarrant County Master Gardeners, NC NPSOT, and Cross Timbers Master Naturalists still maintain the garden. Benches are scattered throughout the garden for rest and relaxation, and educational materials about native plants are tucked in a colorful mailbox. According to garden lead and Master Gardener Theresa Thomas, "This is a demonstration and educational garden to showcase the many beautiful and easy-to-grow native plants that are so important to the life cycle of pollinators. The new beautiful butterfly sculpture just adds to the awe and wonder we hope people will discover here."

Use #Cowntownbutterfly for posting photos on social media.



Volunteer Highlight: Apple Snails– Rachel Richter

Invasive island apple snails (*Pomacea maculata*) native to South America have been actively threatening freshwater ecosystems in Texas for over 20 years. They are currently found in at least 22 counties in Texas. These snails are found mostly in slow-moving streams and ponds, where they are able to thrive and reach high population densities. Island apple snails were likely introduced originally as a food source. They are believed to have also been introduced through the aquarium dumping pathway. They are currently found at many sites in East Texas and are spread during flooding events as well as by aquarium dumping.

Island apple snails are considered highly invasive due to their potential to cause harm to our ecosystems, economy, and even human health. They feed primarily on native aquatic plants that provide important habitat for fish and wildlife. They are also known to cause significant damage to rice crops and could have serious economic impacts in Texas where they are found in several rice-producing counties. Apple snails are also hosts to a parasitic nematode, the rat lungworm (*Angiostrongylus cantonensis*), which can be transmitted to mammals, including humans, and causes a type of meningitis. These snails grow to large size with large individuals having few predators and they reproduce rapidly allowing them to proliferate and increase in prevalence.

In an attempt to slow the spread of this species in the state, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has partnered with the Dallas Zoo and Texas Invasive Species Institute to design and produce signs that can be posted at both public and private water bodies in the counties where these species have been documented to occur. These signs are intended to increase awareness about these invasive snails and their impacts as well as how to identify them and help to reduce their populations. We are working through a network of volunteers to help us distribute these signs.

We need your help to increase public awareness of invasive apple snails and help prevent their spread. By installing or allowing installation of the 'Help Stop the Invasive Apple snail' sign(s) by volunteers in an area where invasive apple snails have been observed in Texas, you will greatly assist this outreach partnership. You and others can also participate in apple snail monitoring by reporting apple snail sightings (with photos) online at the following URL:

<https://nas.er.usgs.gov/SightingReport.aspx>.

Fifty boat ramps in Tarrant County have been identified as potential locations to install signs. We need your help getting the signs distributed and installed. If you're interested in helping with this effort, please contact me at rachel.richter@tpwd.texas.gov



Zachary Chapman, Barbara Fleischman, and I were some of the CTMN attendees at the Grapevine Parks iNaturalist Explorers at Meadowmere Park on September 7th, along with some of our family and iNaturalist friends.

Left to Right:

Kimberlie Sasan (CTMN), Meghan Cassidy, Paul Mendoza, Zachary Chapman (CTMN)

For the last two years Stephonia Roberts Class of 2013 has given 8 weeks of her time volunteering at Generation Uplift a non profit organization dedicated to raising awareness to low income children in the Stop Six area . As a volunteer instructor she has taught several classes about the ecosystems , metamorphosis of butterflies, and gardening with field trips to Tandy Hills Nature Park and her own Garden of Eve. She also volunteers at Carter Park Elementary School teaching students about pollinators, host plants , lifecycle of trees and flowers at the school's Learning Garden.

In her spare time she has done over 40 Facebook Butterfly Release videos of Gulf Fritillary, Pipevine Swallowtail, Tera Sphinx , Silvery Checkerspot and Variegated Fritillary which total over 155 butterflies.



Pictures From Our Members



This is a photo using my cell phone of a lovely visitor to my mistflower. Cindy Crump



Little Lizard on a Turk's Cap- Carrie Moore



Rat Snake in the Ft Worth Nature Center Above and Clammyweed in the Ft Worth Nature Center Left- Carol Marcotte

Couldn't have been a more perfect day/evening for the Second Annual Nature BioBlitz and Mothing !! To celebrate Kimberlie Sasan's birthday, a Nature BioBlitz at Overton Ridge Park, Keller was held September 28, 2019, 5pm - 9pm. Also celebrating a birthday was Brent Franklin, who held a mothing.

Findings were loaded into iNaturalist. All those CTMN members attending can count the time as volunteer hours. What FUN!! Good Food & Drink, storytelling, laughs and celebration.

CTMN members attending were Kimberlie Sasan, Brent Franklin, Dick Schoech, Carol Marcotte, Melinda Pajack, Zack Chapman and Lisa Piqueno. Other participants were from Zach's interest group. Let's do it AGAIN next year!



Reflections on Summer in Texas - by Dawne Schomer

Texas has a funny kind of beauty.

There's a flowering tree that grows easy here - called a Crepe Myrtle. Some over 50 years old and 2-3 stories high. This morning there's a nice breeze, and the occasional gust of wind is loosening some of their bright pink blossoms into the air to twirl around, down and onto the sun-speckled grass where they lay like drifts of pink snowflakes.

Been raining. Sometimes we have normal rains in Texas - other times it comes down fast and thick. Thunder, lightning, solid sheets of water - such ferocity! Land is thirsty in summertime, though - drinks it all up till it can't anymore - then the rest runs off, down familiar paths to collect in low places (where it provides habitat for the next batch of mosquitoes). It doesn't usually last too long, fading into remnants of rising steam that dissipate like the bluster of a Texas politician. Soon there's twitters from the bushes - then tiny beaks and heads poke out - time to find worms escaping saturated ground.

The temperature rises with the day. The cloud cover traps the heat and moisture close-in. Oaks and prairie grasses pause motionless, to siesta, blanketed in the shimmering sauna. Quiet but for cicadas - rubbing their wings and legs together, vibrating out their rhythmic lullaby in waves of crescendo into the hot afternoon. A Texas summer symphony!

October 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 H	2 A	3 B	4	5 B, F, K, M
6	7	8 H	9 A	10 B, G	11	12 B, N
13 L, N	14	15 H, J	16 A, E, C	17 B	18	19 B, I
20	21 D	22 H	23 A	24 B	25	26 B
27	28	29 H	30 A	31 B		

A– FWNC– Restorative Greenhouse from 9:30– 11:30 AM– this event is a reoccurring event every Wednesday

B– FWNC– National Guard– Outdoor Conservation from 9 AM to 12 PM– this event is a reoccurring event every Thursday and Saturday

C–Sierra Club Monthly Meeting, Fort Worth Botanical Garden, 6:30 pm. Please bring a pot luck dish. This counts for an advance hour of training. This is a reoccurring even every 3rd Wednesday of every month.

D– CTMN Monthly Chapter Meeting

E– Citizen Urban Forestry Class

F– Molly Hollar Volunteer and Mini Class, from 10:30-11 am .

G– BRIT Water Saving Seminar from 6-8 pm

H– CTMN 2019 Class

I– Tree event at the Fort Worth Tree Farm, great deal for Fort Worth Residents

J– CTMN Board Meeting

K– Katie Fallon, the author of Cerulean Blues, will be speaking about the endangered Cerulean Warbler and her experiences conducting research for the book. At 10 AM

L– Trash Pick Up at CTCP at 9 am, contact Alexis t alchernosky@yahoo.com for more information

M– Monarch Tagging at the Botanical Garden

N–River Legacy Fall Festival, Arlington, Sharon Hamilton, Outreach Director, at outreach@ctmn.org or 817-999-9233