

November 2019

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# Cross Timbers Master Naturalist Newsletter

## *President's Pen* — Bill Collins

One of my favorite spots to look for wildflowers is the roadside, especially near a mailbox (doesn't get mowed as often). I check my own mailbox several times a week, and try to pay attention to what is growing and especially what is blooming. Having lived at the same location for over 40 years, I expect few surprises, but I keep looking. Last year's surprise was a rock flax, and this year's was a horse tail. Some bird or wild wind brought those surprises that I noticed. What is there that has escaped my detection and what will next year bring?

My favorite trail at the FtWNC&R is the oak motte trail. Always changing, always something new and different. And of course some old friends that I welcome back.

When looking for 'new' spots to find wildflowers, don't overlook places you have looked in the past. Something new may have blown in ready to be discovered for the first time.

Keep searching and keep looking for something new in old favorite spots.

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Page 2 **Plant of the Month– Smooth Sumac : Josephine Keeney**

Smooth Sumac, *Rhus glabra*, Anacardiaceae (Sumac Family)

This beautiful deciduous shrub or tree, sets the landscape aflame in the Fall of the year creating scenes that rival Monet.

It also has the honor of being the only tree species native to all 48 contiguous states, which is quite an accomplishment.

It loves the blackland prairie, where it grows with abandon spreading by root suckers. Not very tall, it may reach only ten feet, but it packs such a tremendous punch that it should be a must in all native plant gardens.

The flowers grow in a cone shaped cluster, and the seeds are excellent food for many birds and small mammals, and is also a larval host for Hairstreak butterflies.

This plant is happy with very little water, likes sun, shade or in between, it is also resistant to insects and disease. All plants should be this healthy and accommodating!



Fall Color: Josephine Keeney



## Bird of the Monty- Bewick's Wren – Jenny Warren

### Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*)

For the last two years, I have had the pleasure of watching wrens grow up in my backyard. I guess they didn't read the label on my "Bluebird Box". Despite the initial disappointment to find tiny white eggs with brown speckles in my box, rather than the bright blue eggs of the Eastern Bluebird, these little birds have won me over with their charming, lively, and often vocal ways.

Carolina Wrens seem more common in my area, so I was excited to learn that I was hosting a different species- the Bewick's Wren. The easiest way to tell the difference between the two is that the Carolina Wren has a reddish-brown underbelly, whereas the Bewick's Wren has a grayish underbelly. The ranges of these two wrens overlap here in Texas, but not in most of United States— the Carolina Wren lives in the eastern half, and the Bewick's Wren lives in the western half.

Beginning in March, the Bewick's Wrens start nest building in my birdhouse. Both parents participate in the nest building, and they are quite clever in their use of materials. The base of their nests are built with twigs and leaves. They line an inner cup with softer materials and have been happy to make use of the down feathers from our backyard chickens and horsehair from some distance away. I have also seen them use manmade materials like synthetic batting and bits of plastic bags. In my yard, they lay 4 to 6 eggs. The female incubates the eggs for about two weeks before they hatch. Both parents bring insects for the nestlings to eat and continue to help them find food after fledging. After successfully raising the spring generation, the parents will add new material to freshen up the nest and begin preparing for another batch of summer babies.

I encourage you to add a birdhouse to your yard, if you haven't already. Even if the inhabitants aren't quite what you expected, you might find much joy in observing them anyway. I know I have!



Bewick's Wren chicks— Jenny



Bewick's Wren eggs—Jenny



Bewick's Wren  
juvenile–  
Jenny



Bewick's Wren  
adult– Jenny



Parent tending nestlings- Jenny

## Bug of the Month: Common Green Darner – Brent Franklin

Going in the opposite direction of last month's tiny damselfly, here is one of our larger odonates. The Common Green Darner is considered the most common dragonfly in the U.S. This one averages about 3 inches long. Interesting note, these dragonflies actually migrate. An article published last year cites research using isotopes in their wings to track a rough cycle of migration of up to 900 miles. But, much like Monarch butterflies, it is not all done in one generation. Right now near most bodies of water you can see them in large numbers buzzing all around you. So here are photos of both a male and female posed on vegetation. Unlike most other species, darners tend to hang facing straight up and down. Note the characteristic eyespot on top of the frons, or head, of each.



Male and female—Brent

## TXMN 2019 Meeting Experience- Jane Oosterhuis

I received my naturalist training with the class of 2010. After attending my first annual meeting in 2016, I was hooked and determined to go every year. The presenters are experts in their fields and very enthusiastic about their topic. This year I learned about insects, environmental challenges to Monarch Butterflies, bottomland hardwood forests, research concerning plastics in our environment, the discovery of a new morning-glory species and the challenges faced by native quail as a result of global warming. Did you know that Texas had "poor farms" at one time? One has become Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center thanks to the hard work of many master naturalists. They host second and fourth graders as well as public events at this center. Another group in the DFW area making a difference in lives is Ground-work Dallas, a small nonprofit working directly with youth using green space. They are eager to include master naturalists in this program.

I was able to experience three ecosystems first hand on a field trip to Dallas parks and on our drive home from Rockwall we stopped at a 108 acre property where we found a good example of native grasses and many varieties of trees and flowering plants. Being together with over 600 likeminded individuals is exhilarating. The bonus is that I earned 15.5 AT hours.

I encourage you to be in Houston next October. You will learn so much and come home inspired and so glad to be a part of TXMN.

# Texas Master Naturalist



Pictured is a portion of the attendees from Cross Timbers Chapter—Carol Marcotte

## How long have you been a member of CTMN?

Since 2007 12 years

## Who influenced you to become a Master Naturalist?

My sister Marion. I wanted to take the classes & join, but I had to wait until my children were out of high school. I met Molly Hollar at Hill Elementary School, developing a courtyard garden. At that time, they were in the planning stages of the Wildscape.

## What is your passion?

I'm interested in plants, but I love all the ecosystems & enjoy visiting them on all levels.

## Have you attend the Texas Annual Meetings?

Yes. I've been attending them since 2007. Every time I go, I learn so much & meet wonderful likeminded people.

## Do you work?

Yes. I have a part time business. I design & maintain native plants landscapes, both residential & commercial.

## What is your favorite tools?

My Hori Hori knife and heavy duty English Spading Fork for clay soils.

## What advice would you give to a new student?

Try everything until you find your passion. Go to TMN & CTMN meetings. If you'll do that, you earn your AT Hours. You also meet other likeminded, crazy quirk, non-judging people.

## What do you do in your spare time?

Visit my grandchildren. I enjoy showing & teaching them about nature.

## Do you have any advice for us?

Don't get discouraged with what hasn't or needs to be done. Look at the steps you've taken to get to where you are now.

Best way to eat an elephant, is one bite at a time.  
Every person you influence can be multiplied times 10.  
Because that person will influence others.

## Last word to our chapter members?

If you want to start a conversation with me, ask about plants!



Meeting Date: Monday, November 18th

Presentation Topic: Texas Native Cats and White Rock Lake Camera-Trap Project

Presenter: Monica Morrison, founder and president of Texas Native Cats

At the November meeting, Monica Morrison will talk about the five wild cat species currently or historically present in Texas and discuss the benefits of and threats to these keystone predator species. She will also trace the path of the Texas Native Cats organization and explain how its mission has evolved from education and outreach to expand to advocacy, and even research. Monica will also share the results of a camera-trap research project conducted at White Rock Lake—designed to learn more about the bobcat (and coyote) populations in the area. For more information about the Texas Native Cats organization, visit <http://texasnativecats.org/about-us/>.



### From the Newsletter Editor Carrie Moore

- This newsletter would be nothing without all of the CTMN members who write about and document their experiences , and then send it in to me to add to the newsletter.
- Please send your photos and write ups for the newsletter on or before the 20th of every month.

### From the Interim Treasurer Gailon Hardin

-CTMN member dues can be mailed to the following:

CTMN  
c/o Gailon Hardin  
2311 Perkins Road  
Arlington, TX 76016

### From Michael Perez at the Fort Worth Nature Center

- Michael is inviting everyone to the Fort Worth Nature Center on November 19, 2019 at 6:30 pm. He has suggested a follow up meeting after the annual meeting where those who did attend could pass on information to those who did not.

### From Carol Marcotte



Sandy Thornburgh, Jenny Warren, and Sharon Hamilton—River Legacy fall Festival



Yellow Garden Spider- Avon Burton



Sandy Thornburgh, Jenny Warren, and Sharon Hamilton—River Legacy fall Festival



Sandy Thornburgh with happy visitors— Sharon

# Pictures From Our Members



2019 Urban Field Trip (above) and Rain Lilies (below) —Carol Marcotte





## Popular Vote Contests: Photo & Art



Wildlife:

3<sup>rd</sup> Place

Zachary Chapman,  
Cross Timbers Chapter  
"Photo Bombing Bee"



Quirky Armadillo—Carrie Moore

# November 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 <b>B, H</b>
3	4 <b>G</b>	5	6 <b>A</b>	7 <b>B</b>	8	9 <b>B</b>
10	11	12	13 <b>A</b>	14 <b>B</b>	15	16 <b>B</b>
17	18 <b>D</b>	19 <b>F</b>	20 <b>A, E, C</b>	21 <b>B</b>	22	23 <b>B</b>
24	25	26	27 <b>A</b>	28 <b>B</b>	29	30 <b>B</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– Hear about the state meeting from the members that went at 6:30 at FtWNC&R

G– CTMN Board Meeting

H– Trash Pick Up at CTCP at 7:30 am, contact Alexis t alchernosky@yahoo.com for more information