

September 2020

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Inside this Issue

Plant of The Month 2

Get To Know CTMN Member 3

Insect of the Month 4

Fall Bioblitz 5

Tech and App to Use 5

Building Bridges at FWNCR 6-7

Honorable Mention Photos 8-10

Calendar Addresses 10

Photo, Art, and Media Contest 10

Congratulations to Re-Certifiers 10

TMN 2020 Annual Meeting 11

August Calendar 12

Cross Timbers Master Naturalist Newsletter

President's Pen — Bill Collins

Hope you caught Sam K's webinar on the bio-blitz the other day. He is a very enthusiastic individual, and it comes through in his presentations.

The North Texas bio-blitz will be September 6-12 is just for the MN chapters in North Texas. It is a challenge, so get out there and login lots of observations.

I have several basil plants, I have let two of them go to seed and I was amazed by the size (very small) and number of critters (8-10 at a time) pollinating those flowers. I am sure I knew they existed, but I hadn't seen so many in such a small space.

Like many of you, we have a bird bath in the back yard. I believe I am getting more wasps than birds. Wasps of many sizes come to the edge of the bird bath and "drink". It is fascinating to watch.

I know many of you are members of North Texas NPSOT. I hope you caught Kim Conrow's tour of her garden at the last meeting. It was quite a large garden with lots of pollinators. A very nice garden, I am sure she and Ray put in lots of hours to keep it alive. Well Done!

Get outside when you can and stay cool.

Scarlet Sage, Blood Sage, *Salvia coccinea*

Lamiaceae (Mint Family)

Sometimes I wonder if there is a plant easier to grow than *Salvia coccinea*, or a plant that will give as much in return for so little effort. I find myself hard pressed to find a plant that can do a better job without much help at all.

This lovely native plant is indigenous to our area and a perennial in zones 8 and up, although sometimes the roots can freeze in the DFW if we have a very cold winter. It can be grown as an annual in colder climates.



This plant can reach a height of 3 feet, and will continue growing and blooming, but it can benefit from trimming and cutting back to keep those flowers coming. Another good thing about it is, that you can keep it trimmed short and it will still bloom. I have cut some of mine down to three nodes from the ground with no problem. It can be grown in full sun and semi-shade, or even full shade, although you may not get many blooms in full shade.

As far as watering, it benefits from regular water if rain is not forthcoming, but it can withstand some dry periods.

Scarlet sage reseeds itself very vigorously, but it can also be propagated by tip cuttings, although you probably won't need to do cuttings after the first season or two. There are some cultivars in pink and white, but the original species is the red.

If you want a plant that blooms all year long from spring till frost this is the plant for you. On top of that the beautiful orange-red blooms attract bees, butterflies and hummers, making it one of the best plants to grow for pollinators in our area.



Pictures by Josephine
Top Right: Single Bloom
Middle Left: Large Plant
Bottom Small Plant

1. What year did you get certified?

I am a graduate of the class of 2018.

2. Where do you volunteer the most, 2nd most?

I get most of my volunteer hours by removing trash from the urban prairie located at the Chisholm Trail Community Center. I also enjoy transcribing for BRIT.

3. Are you involved in any other organizations?

I'm not officially a member of another nature group, yet! But, I am involved in community outreach in my hometown of Alvarado.

4. Is there anything we should know about you?

In June, I retired from the Alvarado School District after 22 years of working with elementary kiddos. The last seven of those years was as the school librarian. I would often bring a little critter to the library for show and tale. Most of the time it was just a bug I had found at home or perhaps in the hallway at school. It was amazing to see how the students reacted. Many had been taught that all bugs are bad. Hopefully I was able to change that thought in a few of their young minds!

5. What advice do you have for future Texas Master Naturalists?

Cross Timbers has a wide range of volunteer opportunities. Explore your options and you will soon find your niche! Also, never be afraid to reach out to a member if you have questions!!!





This time of year we all are of course familiar with the sound of cicadas, or locusts, all around us. This photo is the Superb Dog Day Cicada. Texas has 40 cicada species. This one is our second most common. It is an "annual" cicada with a life span of 3-5 years. We are at the end of the time of year we would be finding them. Once they emerge and begin singing they live from 3-5 weeks. Sadly this one likely would not make it that long. The second photo heavily zoomed you can more clearly see that a fly or some other parasitic critter has laid eggs in the wing joint where there was likely an injury. So this time around you get a two-fer!



Fall Socially Distant Bioblitz– Brent Franklin

The gauntlet has been thrown and the game is afoot. Or some other dramatic saying. September 6-12 has been declared officially as the Fall Socially Distant Bioblitz for our region. Unofficially it's the Regional Master Naturalist chapter challenge. For that week every observation posted in each of the covered counties will be automatically aggregated into the project for the chapter that covers that county.

All of the 6 chapters in our region are competing to see who can get the most observations and most species recorded in iNaturalist during that time. The odds-on favorite I would say is the NTMN chapter. Even though they have around 4 times more members than we do I am sure we can at least give them something to worry about.

So, I am asking you to get outside if you have time off that week and make some observations. Even if it's one photo of a tree in your yard. Though a picture of every plant in your yard would be better. You'll have additional incentive to spend some time outdoors and that's never a bad thing. And it's a way to get some volunteer hours in this crazy year we're experiencing.

If you have been under a rock or just joined the chapter and don't know what iNaturalist is please let me know and I will be glad to tell you more than you want to know. Or if enough folks are interested might even give a go at doing a class on Zoom or something.

Remember in the end nature wins from this. But it sure would be nice for us to win wouldn't it.

Texas Master Naturalist Technology To Look At and Use

TMN YouTube channel, you can subscribe and watch.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/txmnnaturalistprogram>

Here is a list of applications you can get for your smart phone:

<https://txmn.org/files/2013/02/Nature-Apps-for-Smart-Phones1.pdf>

They cover all sorts of topics, including: Astronomy, birding, field guides, geography and geology, nature tracking or surveys, navigation, plants, productivity, travel, utility, weather and climate, AND wildlife and fisheries.

Interview of Daniel Price, Natural Resource Manager at FWNC&R.

Have you ever wondered how those wood deck bridges are built on the trails at Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge (FWNC&R) ? Especially on the Canyon Ridge Trail? This is a 3.25 mile trail of ridge top vistas, shady canyons and marsh views. Trail widths are between 8 inches to 3 feet wide and in most areas on the trail, it is very remote and rugged.

I asked Daniel Price, Natural Resource Manager at FWNC&R.

"With the help of volunteers and finding trail access with our UTV's as close as possible! In the past 2 years, we've replaced 4 bridges, taking anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to complete each one. It really depends on the location of the bridge. Most of the time, the UTV is loaded with equipment, tools, metal and wood. It is driven as close to the project site as possible. Then all materials and equipment is hand carried to the bridge site, including a 100 lb. welder.

We are replacing all the wooden bridges with new and improved bridges built with a metal frame and a wooden top. We pre-build as much as we can in the shop before taking it to the trail. We can pre-cut the wood at 7ft and when installed diagonally it makes a 5ft wide bridge. We use a variety of tools to install the new bridges and to tear out the old ones. To tear down the existing bridges, we use hammers, saws, pry bars, and old fashion elbow grease. To install the new bridge we drive pipe into the ground with sledge hammers, attach the metal frame using the welder, and use various drills, screws, and saws to attach the decking.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built rock structures that are found along Canyon Ridge trail in the 1930's and the original bridges were built around the same time period. Back then, they packed all the equipment and materials to the site. In those days, there were no UTV's, just strong backs. Today, there are many bridges found throughout FWNC& R, a 3,621 acres natural area including over 20 miles of hiking trails, making it one of the largest city-owned nature centers in the United States."

Who pays for the replacement of bridges on the trails I asked? "FWNC& R is maintained and managed by the City of Fort Worth Park and Recreation Department where we are given an annual budget to be used for maintenance and park improvements. The Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge (FONC) also provides a funding source and is an outlet for grant funds. For the previous two years we received grants funds from REI through FONC and were able to replace the 4 most recent bridges on Canyon Ridge trail. Not only did they provide funds to purchase materials, they also coordinated a volunteer day where REI staff and volunteers joined forces with our National Guard volunteers to replace a bridge. We were able to tear down the old one and build the metal frame all in one day."

"Our goal is to replace all the bridges with metal structure base and wood deck"

Do you want to help?

Learn more at <https://www.fwnaturecenter.org/>. You can become a Nature Guard on Thursdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 12noon. For questions regarding volunteering, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Kenneth Nalley, at (817) 392-7411.



Pictures by Carol

Honorable Mentions in the 2020 Photo Contest



Wildlife
Avon Burton
Raccoon at Wildwood
Park



Plant Life
Banjo Moore
Water Lily



Birds
Zach Chapman
Sea Gull



Historical
Donna Honkomp 2nd Annual Chisholm Trail
Community Park Prairie Day



Scenic
Carol Marcotte
Red Bud Trail at
Randol Mill Park

Calendar Addresses

- A- FWNC Restoration Greenhouse - Resource Center, Broadview Dr
- B- FWNC Natural Guard - Resource Center, Broadview Dr
- F- Molly Hollar Wildscape, 2866 Spanish Trail, Arlington
- H- Lake Mineral Wells State Park - 100 Park Rd 71 off Hwy 180
- I- Tarrant County SW Sub Courthouse, 6551 Granbury Rd, FW
- J- SW Regional Hulen Library, 4001 Library Ln
- M- Chisholm Trail Community Park, 4936 McPherson Blvd, FW

Congratulations to Our Members Who Have Already Re-Certified– Carol Marcotte

Amos, Charley
Burton, Avon
Butler, Glenn
Collins, Bill
Hamilton, Sharon
Honkomp, Donna
Keeney, Josephine
Marcotte, Carol
McLaughlin, Marsha
Miller, Jan



Morgan, Kate
Mullens, Martha
Mullens, Troy
Piercy, Donna
Sasan, Kimberlie
Schwarzer, Hester
Thomas, Theresa
Thornburgh, Susan (Sandy)
Tuttle, Suzanne



Photo, Art & Media Contest Announcement



'A Virtual Contest for a Virtual Meeting' Hosted by the Cradle of Texas Chapter



In order to keep the *Photo, Art, & Media Contest* as an event for a Virtual Meeting, certain changes were required to be made to various areas of the Contest criteria. A partial list of the changes can be found below. A complete list of the 2020 *Photo, Art, & Media Contest* Rules will be available August 1, 2020.

- Entries - TMNs may submit entries for the 2020 *Photo, Art, & Media Contest* by uploading them to the TXMN.org website, and completing an entry form(s) on the website. Any TMNs may submit entries for the Contest, but only those who are registered for the Annual Meeting may vote on the entries starting on October 14, 2020, the first day of the state meeting, through the Annual Meeting App, and ending at 6:00 PM October 16.
- Entries must be received between September 1, 2020 12:01 AM through September 30, 2020 12:00 PM. More details on the website will be available by August 1, 2020.
- Categories not available in 2020 due to judging difficulties brought about by the *virtual* nature of the meeting are: **ART** – Carvings and Sculptures, and Sewing and Stitchery. **MEDIA** – Scrapbooks. We sincerely apologize for this inconvenience. One new category was added, “Digitally Enhanced Nature Photos”.
- Photos - Entered as digital files only (File size <= 8 MB) with a 10:8 aspect ratio.
- Drawings and Paintings – A Jpeg/Png file of a drawing/painting will be submitted in place of the original work of art. The file aspect ratio that best compliments it should be used. If framed, and if the frame is an original, it may be included in the Jpeg/Png.
- Brochures and Newsletters are submitted by chapters, not individuals, and are submitted as PDFs. The PDF will then be linked on the State Website and voted on through the Annual Meeting App. Pages should be viewable enough to read as part of the judging.

#	Photo Categories	Submit As	Comments
1	Plant Life (w/o Wildlife)	JPEG/PNG File <= 8 MB	Keeping with tradition, all photo entries will have an Aspect Ratio of 10:8 or 8:10 (i.e. 10" x 8" or 8" x 10" if printed)
2	Wildlife	"	
3	Birds	"	
4	Scenic	"	
5	Photos of Chapter at Work/Play	"	
6	Digitally Enhanced Nature Photos (New)	"	
#	Art Categories	Submit As	Comments
1	Drawings and Paintings	JPEG File <= 8 MB	Aspect Ratio is the Same as the Entry AR
#	Media Categories	Submit As	Comments
1	Chapter Newsletters	PDF	All Pages Will be Viewed
2	Chapter Brochures	PDF	All Pages Will be Viewed

If you have questions, please direct them to billahlstrom@gmail.com or 979-299-8645 (cell).

September 2020

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

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

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 via Zoom. Via facebook or Meetup. This counts for an advance hour of training. This is every 3rd Wednesday

D– CTMN Monthly Chapter Meeting Amanda Gobeli, Quail Ecology , you will receive an email from the board with a link.

E– CTMN Board Meeting, contact a board member if you would like the Zoom link. Canceled this month.

F– Molly Hollar Wildscape Volunteer Opportunity from 9 am –12 pm. The mini class has been canceled until further notice.

G– CTMN Newbie Class, Members can monitor 2020 Fall Classes for their own re-

fresher. Email webmaster@ctmn.org, membership@ctmn.org or training@ctmn.org for the link

H– Lake Mineral Wells Pollinator Garden Volunteer Opportunity from 9-11 am, this is every 3rd Saturday of the month at the park administration building. Contact Cynthia Crump

I– Tarrant County SW Sub Courthouse Garden Volunteer Opportunity from 8am –12 pm. Volunteers can take home plants. Contact Gailon Hardin

J-Southwest Regional Hulen Library Native Plant Demonstration Garden on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. Saturday can be scheduled with leads. From 8:30 to 12:30 am (Summer 7:30 to 11:30 am). Contact Theresa Thomas

K–TMN Photo Contest Submissions due

L– Socially Distant Bioblitz

M– Trash Pickup at Chisholm Trail Park, 7-9 am . Meet by the dumpster in the front parking lot.

N- CTMN Newbie Field Trip

O– Virtual Volunteer Fair, <https://txmn.tamu.edu/virtual-volunteer-fair-september-2nd-2020/>