

May 2021

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Cross Timbers Master Naturalist Newsletter

President's Pen — Sharon Hamilton

I spent thirty-nine years in a high school science classroom and twenty summers training science teachers. Toward the end of my career, a forty-ish applicant for an administrative position at my school asked me, "After so many years, why are you still here?" Fortunately, I had a reply ready. "Because before long, I will be on a table in a doctor's office or a hospital, and I want the people standing over me to be well-trained!"

Teachers, like gardeners, are persistent optimists. Like gardeners, we assess and prepare the soil, finding out what our students know, what misconceptions they have, and where the gaps are in their knowledge. By requiring accurate usage of vocabulary words and basic facts, we fertilize their minds so they can grow stronger during our time together. We work so hard to weed out errors and inaccuracies, sometimes succeeding, but waking up every day knowing that new fallacies and mistakes spring up like dandelions every night.

Without enough sunlight, plants fail to thrive. Classroom teachers strive mightily to provide a welcoming, safe space for all students. But, unlike plants in our gardens, we can shelter our students for only a few hours each week; at other times and in other places, they struggle against damaging outside forces, trying to become men and women of character, grow healthy bodies, and emerge as skilled, well-balanced adults.

We water daily, providing encouragement, appropriate corrections, and support and hope, and may be rewarded with a flash of inspiration, confidence, and success. Not all plants root and bloom in our gardens, and despite our best efforts, not all students are destined to flourish under teachers' care. And yet, as excited as the kids to start a new school year, we teachers plan our gardens, share ideas, buy materials, and try new techniques in the hopes of reaching just a few more children. We stand with them at the end of the school year, because we know that many have struggled to reach that milestone. Because whether they find careers in health care or fine arts, some will become the adults we are most proud to have taught, oak trees or milkweeds, influencing their future.

Exchange the word "gardener" for "teacher" in this quote and you'll see what I mean.

"The gardener is the quintessential optimist: not only does he believe that the future will bear out the fruits of his efforts, he believes in the future." Joyce Carol Oates

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 perennial in zone 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 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, however 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.



Above— Close-up flower

Middle — At O. S. Gray

Bottom— Large Plant

What year did you become a TMN? 2017

Why did you recently move to CTMN from Blue Stem Chapter?

In one word, family. My wife Nancy and I have two children, Paul and Sara. She is blessed with two grandchildren, Harrison 4 yrs and Cora 9 yrs. We decided driving 90 minutes from Sherman was too far to see our grandchildren. So, we moved to Pantago, only 6 minutes away from them.

What did you do before you retired? I was a Family Practice physician for 42 years. For the first 13 years, we lived in rural Arkansas. Then we moved to Sherman Texas until a year and half ago when we moved to Pantago.

Tell us about your wife Nancy. We've been married 50 years in August of this year. Nancy has an Anthropology undergraduate degree and graduate degree in Sociology. We enjoy going on digs together with the Anthropology Society. Her interests are with the Caddo and Arkansas Native Indian cultures. And she enjoys genealogy.

What are your other interests? Before Covid, we loved to travel. Some of our favorite places are Galapagos Islands, Machu Picchu, Egypt and Greece. Funny story, we purchased our house in Pantago while traveling in Albania. Our daughter found it. We bought it sight unseen! We have always enjoyed hiking. These days we hike in River Legacy Park and Red Kane Park. We're planning our next adventure to Florida and Alabama in June. While my son, Paul was hiking the 2,600 mile Appalachian Trail, we joined him at Harpers Ferry, Virginia for a few days on the trail.

I learned how to tag Monarch butterflies and participate in the bird count at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge. I enjoy birding at the FW Drying Beds. What a place to see migrating birds!

Where do you plan to volunteer now that you are a member of the Cross Timbers Chapter? I plan to work at O.S. Gray Park in Arlington and other places that I hope people will tell me about in the Arlington and East Fort Worth area.





Field of Wild turnip-weed (By Alyssa Austin)



Picture of Indian Blanket with a Butterfly (Alyssa Austin)

Wildflowers and Spring are somewhat synonymous, as they both seem to cheerfully welcome warmer, sunnier days and bid farewell to winter's dormancy. As a native to the Dallas-Fort Worth area, I have always enjoyed viewing Texas bluebonnets (*Lupinus texensis*), Indian blanket (*Gallardia pulchella*), Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja indivisa*), Pink evening primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*), Wild onion (*Allium drummondii*), Winecup (*Callirhoe involucrata*), and Beebalm (*Monarda citriodora*) amongst many other species, but sightings of these wildflowers are becoming less plentiful each year it seems.

A new flower is "in town" or in the prairies, roadsides, and meadows, which is causing a severe species composition change. This new plant with a cursed name is rapidly blooming in medians, along highways, and in people's backyards. It is hard to pin down the origins of Wild turnip-weed exactly, but according to www.invasive.org it is native to "Central Europe, the Mediterranean, northern Africa and western, temperate Asia" - definitely not North Texas! To the common plant observer, they may wonder what the fuss is all about? After all, Wild turnip-weed (*Rapistrum rugosum*) is green, displays yellow blooming flowers, and can survive a Texas summer.

However, the problem does not lie in the plant's physiological or aesthetic characteristics, but in its ability to provide ecosystem services to our area. I would dare say that all Master Naturalists know to be weary of this cursed plant and the many reasons why to look for the rosettes in early spring, to pluck them up, and if all else fails to pluck the plant up before it reseeds in the late summer/fall. What many casual observers do not realize about plants growing in our area is the role they play or do not play within our ecosystem based upon the whether they

are native or non-native to our area.

Native wildflowers like Indian paintbrush, Winecup, and Evening primrose plant all provide various ecosystem services to nectar bees, various species of butterfly, and birds. Wild turnip-weed does not provide any of these ecosystem services; however, it does take up costly real estate in the plant world. By growing near the banks of the Trinity River, in area meadows, and along medians throughout the metroplex, *Rapistrum rugosum* limits and sometimes blocks the growth of native wildflowers by blocking sun exposure, taking up soil nutrients, which ultimately resources available to pollinators and birds.

With this tidbit of knowledge in hand, master naturalists and local citizens alike can collaborate and fight this invasive species side-by-side. If you see Wild turnip-weed growing in your yard (it is currently in full bloom with yellow flower pods), dig a couple of inches down and pull the plant up and dispose of it. If need be apply earth-friendly herbicides or invite a few friends over and have a gathering around ridding your yard of this nuisance of a plant. Whichever way you choose to rid the plant from your yard or area master naturalist projects be sure to reseed the area with native wildflowers, and look forward to frequent visits from your local butterflies, bees, and birds. It is not naivety that causes us to frown upon *Rapistrum rugosum*, but rather its non-native status.



Up close photo of *Rapistrum rugosum* in bloom (Alyssa Austin)

Sources: Invasive crowds out wildflowers (Native Plant Society of Texas article) by Marilyn Sallee

Lady Bird Johnson's Wildflower Center Website (www.wildflower.org)

FACT SHEET: ANNUAL BASTARD-CABBAGE (Enyedy, Karen) (invasive.org)

Eve’s Necklace is an attractive small tree that can be used under power lines, grows well in shade or full sun, plus blooms pink, fragrant, and wisteria-like flowers in the spring (March, April or May).

The yellow sap wood is used to make yellow dye. The seed pods look like the old pop string pearls which help provide year round interest.

These pictures were taken at the Fielder House, Arlington. This specimen of Eve’s Necklace was planted approximately 10 years ago by Josephine Keeney, CTMN member. She said “it only gets rain water, unless it has been unusually dry, then we water as needed.”

The National Champion resides in Real County (west of Kerrville) and is 37 feet tall, 77 inch circumference, a spread of 47 feet and an index rating of 125.



photo by Carol Marcotte



photo by Carol Marcotte

Native Habitat: Roadsides, Prairie, Plains, Meadows, Pastures, Savannas, Open woodlands

Duration: Perennial

Habit: Tree

Leaf Retention: Deciduous

Leaf Arrangement: Alternate

Leaf Complexity: Pinnate

Inflorescence: Raceme

Fruit Type: Legume

Size Notes: 15-30'

* <https://www.wildflower.org/>

* <http://ctufc.org/native-trees/eves-necklace-tree/>

* Josephine Keeney, CTMN

Above: Eve’s Necklace

Below– Bark at field house

See more on page

Entries must be submitted by **Friday, May 14, 2021**

Entries must be labeled with owners name, category and title of the work.

All entries must be original work and submitted by a CTMN volunteer.

Entries are limited to one per category per individual.

- Photos must be Texas specific (i.e. taken in Texas)
- Photos can be color or black and white.
- Photos must be unframed and have no unnatural/extreme digital enhancements
- Submit your photo entry(s) to Cross Timbers Masters

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=oa.1118670525272734&type=3> or email to carol@carolmarcotte.com or mblampe@gmail.com

- *Photos will be marked with attribution. Photographer will be credited for or identified with the photo.*

*Contest Committee reserves the right to place an entry into another category if deemed appropriate.

Photo Categories:

- (1) Plant life (with no wildlife)
- (2) Wildlife
- (3) Birds
- (4) Scenic
- (5) Historical photo of members at work/play (i.e. inaugural class, members then & now, early projects in our history)

Judging will be done by a panel of three (3) impartial judges. **Winners will be announced at the June 21, 2021 meeting.** If there are less than 3 entries in a given photo category , a placement ribbon may not be awarded.

Direct questions to Carol Marcotte, cell: (817) 793-3917 or email: carol@carolmarcotte.com

Not a member of CTMN Facebook page? CTMN is a Private: Members Only Facebook page. You must be invited. On the home page "Join Group" button. Mary Beth Lampe will accept your invitation request.



Opossum on Fence–
Carol Marcott



Fossil Valley Trail, Cedar Ridge Preserve

“Audubon Dallas is responsible for managing and maintaining the 603-acre Cedar Ridge Preserve on Mountain Creek Parkway in southwest Dallas County. This area has a remarkably diverse terrain – almost like a slice of Hill Country in the Dallas area. It hosts a wide variety of trees, plants, birds and wildlife, and represents a vital ecosystem in our area. The Preserve features nine miles of walking trails, and is open to visitors on Tuesday to Sunday, year-round.”

-Cedar Ridge Preserve Website



Butterfly Garden, Cedar Ridge Preserve



White Gaura -*Oenothera lindheimeri*



Wild Hyacinth_ *Camassia scilloides*

I had 5 small Tropical milkweeds that survived the winter under the tarps. They were very small and loaded with monarch caterpillars.

I knew that small milkweeds could not take care of feeding them, so I gathered them, and I am raising them with Milkweed vine. They are growing very fast.

Here they are, about 40 of them. I am so excited!!



This little bed at Knapp Heritage was built by Gordon with about 10 Green milkweed last year. The Blue bonnets volunteered during the winter and have bloomed very well. We shouldn't have let them stay because they are covering the emerging milkweeds. We won't let that happen again. To our surprise we found four Monarch cats on the milkweed on the upper left and are overjoyed.





“Permian Texas: Exploring an ancient tropical landscape”
by Dr. Rebecca Koll (Perot Museum), Tuesday, May 4th, noon to 1pm
More info at <https://brit.org/events/texas-paleozoic/>

Announcements!



Annual Texas Master Naturalist Meeting is October 21 - 24, 2021.
TMN hasn't decided on a hybrid or all virtual meeting. Mark your calendar.

BLACK SOLDIER FLY– A QUICK AND EASY METHOD FOR COMPOSTING

MAY 28, 8:00 AM – 12 PM

ZOOM LINK:

[HTTPS://AGRILIFE.ZOOM.US/J/92309100646?PWD=RTV1TMXSVVVGLZJ5ZW9QNS9TSWNYUT09](https://agrilife.zoom.us/j/92309100646?pwd=RTV1TMXSVVVGLZJ5ZW9QNS9TSWNYUT09)





Top— Full Tree
Bottom—Leaves



As of 4/20/2021 the following members have achieved Certifications.

These members are now a Certified Texas Master Naturalist: Nancy Curl (class of 2020)
Betty Starnes (class of 2020)

This In-Training member has earned Certificate of Completion:
David Hunter (class of 2020)

These members have Recertified, earning the 2021 Sideoats Grama service pin.

Charley Amos
Avon Burton
Glenn Butler
Donna Honkomp
Carol Marcotte
Jane Oosterhuis
Jim Prentice
Dick Schoech
Suzanne Tuttle

Spring Poem– Ann Anonymous

SPRING IS HERE
Golden Groundsel wakes up the bees and welcomes the butterflies.



May 2021

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

A– FWNC– Restorative Greenhouse from 9:30– 11:30 AM

B– FWNC– Natural Guard– Outdoor Conservation from 9 AM to 12 PM

C--Sierra Club Monthly Meeting via Zoom. Via Facebook or Meetup.

D– CTMN Monthly Chapter Meeting via zoom

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

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

G– BRIT Events, see page for more details.

H– City Nature Challenge April 30– May 3, info [HERE](#)

I– Tarrant County SW Sub Courthouse Garden Volunteer Opportunity from 8am –12 pm. 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– Texas Master Naturalist Virtual Trainings #TMNTuesdays!

L– City Nature Challenge

M– OS Gray 9-12 am/pm.

N

O– Black Fly Presentation

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