

July 2021

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Cross Timbers Master Naturalist Newsletter

President's Pen — Sharon Hamilton

Humans, like our fellow primates, interact with our world mainly through sight. The first thing we do each morning is open our eyes to perceive the day. Outdoors, we see changes through the seasonal cycles of trees, wildflowers, birds, and weather.

When we stop to take in our surroundings, we are fortunate to hear the world around us. The sounds of our environment cycle through the seasons, too. I am especially grateful for the sounds that assure me it's summer time.

In my neighborhood, the loudest sounds of summer are those made by human workers—most every year, roofers tear off and install new roofs on homes following the regular spring hail storm. The year 2021 didn't bring hail, so I hear few roofers hammer or staple shingles; however, tree trimmers wielding chainsaws are busy taking down the oaks, crepe myrtles, and ash trees that did not survive February's snowpocalypse.

Providing percussion in the symphony of nature's sounds are cicadas, who announce their arrival with thrums and buzzes, reminding me of drivers gunning the engines on their hot rods. Crickets, frogs, and toads take up the refrain most evenings, using their bodies to chirp and thrum. When the porch light comes on, unlucky moths and June bugs whop against them, stunning themselves and falling to the ground.

Birds, although mostly finished with spring courtship, continue to mark territories with song. Cardinals provide abridged versions of spring melodies. Robins and mockingbirds belt out their medleys each evening, marking twilight with their refrains.

Summer weather provides a tremendous range of sound, from the whisper of the breeze among countless leaves to mighty crashes of thunder. Raindrops hitting the ground or roofs announce the blessings of summer rain.

I smile at the sounds of children laughing, screeching, and splashing water at swimming pools; of ice cream trucks and dogs barking at passing neighbors. The ability to hear—to sense the rhythms of the seasons through sound—is a magnificent attribute we are fortunate to have. I hope that when you take a breath and recognize the sounds around you, you feel your body relax and your load lighten.

Per our AgriLife sponsor, Jacklyn Jones-Doyle,

“No Program Preparedness forms nor Screening Forms are required unless it’s an overnight event. Social distancing and masks are encouraged but not required. Sign-in sheets are required to be kept but this is in line with what we’ve been doing all along (we’ve always required these).”

Project Leaders: please continue to maintain sign-in sheets for each workday. Hang on to them in case they are ever needed. Either paper or electronic records are acceptable.

All Volunteers: please attend work days only if you have no unexplained symptoms. Your safety and health are the most important factors, so participate when and how you feel safe doing so.

From our State Leadership, <https://txmn.tamu.edu/welcome/covid-19-response/> (accessed June 22, 2021):

“Please note regarding vaccines: Our program and agencies currently have no legal authority to develop policy based on private health information (HIPAA laws) at this time and we don’t anticipate the program drafting its own policy or allowances, etc. addressing whether individuals (members or the public) with vaccines can/cannot participate in any TMN activities and where, when and how.

Texas Master Naturalist members or members of the public should not be asked about their vaccine status.

There shall be NO EFFORT (including casual comments made publicly or privately) to DISCOURAGE the use of face coverings or any COVID related safety precaution. Those who wish to wear masks and practice COVID protocols should be respected and their wishes supported.”

October 21-24, 2021

Registration should open August 2, 2021. Sessions fill very quickly, so don't hesitate! Cost information available soon.

In past years, cost for registration and hotel was about \$350 per person. Cost for virtual attendance should be less than \$100.

Change from past meetings:

Registration for the annual meeting sessions will be separate from hotel reservations. To help our State staff, please do not reserve rooms at the DFW Airport Hotel early—as part of our contract, TMN must fill a certain minimum number of rooms.

Find your roommate before August 2 nd ! If you need help finding a roommate, email Sharon at shamilton16@gmail.com or president@ctmn.org.

Why attend the Annual Meeting?

The Annual Meeting provides an opportunity for TMN volunteers from around the state to gather virtually and/or in-person, participate in educational seminars, and fulfill all Advanced Training requirements for the year in one event. This year's meeting is a new hybrid format which will include a combination of virtual and in-person events such as field sessions, keynote speakers, educational sessions, training workshops, networking, and more.

What is a Hybrid Event?

Participants will be able to register to attend the event as either an "in person" attendee or a "virtual" attendee. Certain aspects of the event will be available for each audience type. Field sessions will be hosted for in person attendees only. Virtual attendees will be able to participate in the majority of advanced training by streaming live or viewing recorded sessions after the live event.

To view recorded sessions after the live event, you must be a paid registrant. All virtual aspects of the meeting will be available for in person attendees.

Location of in person event:

Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Marriott, just northwest of the airport on Highway 114 in Irving.

Covid Contingency

The Texas Master Naturalist Program will continue monitoring federal and state health and safety guidelines for Covid-19. We are committed to creating a valuable and engaging educational and networking experience, while also keeping the safety of our membership and speakers at the center of our planning. Any decision that may change the final format of the Annual Meeting will be shared immediately and travel/registration considerations will be made alongside these updates.

For more information, go to <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2021-annual-meeting/>

Mexican Hat, *Ratibida columnifera* Asteraceae (Aster Family)

This lovely wildflower decorates the Texas countryside from May to October although it might take a break during the hottest summer months if no water is available.

Mexican Hat is not picky about soils and is very drought tolerant requiring only lots of sunshine in order to flourish.

This perennial looks very pretty even without the flowers because of the lacy texture of the leaves. It sends up a profusion of bare stems about 18 inches long holding the sombrero shaped flower which can vary in color, from solid yellow to streaked in various shades of red or maroon making the flowers of each plant look different from each other.



This plant is very widespread over many states and is very prevalent in prairies and along roadways where it delights motorists with its lovely colors waving in the breeze.



Above– Open-up flower

Middle Left — Multiple Flowers

Middle Right– Mostly Yellow

Bottom– Foliage

Get to Know CTMN Member: Hollie Carron- Carol Marcotte

I was in the 2020 class for CTMN, the first to be in virtual classroom sessions due to COVID. I missed a field trip due to a Yellowstone adventure but was able to certify in 2021 after making up the required field hours at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge. The instructors did an amazing job of teaching but especially of sharing their enthusiasm for the topics.

Growing up in Texas allowed me to spend a lot of my time outdoors. I have continued that practice through gardening, riding horses, dog activities and long walks. I volunteered for my professional organization during my career, serving on committees and the board as well as teaching on the side. Volunteering after my retirement has always been in my plans but I did not know it would include sharing my passion for the natural world. Volunteering with a group of like minded individuals is rewarding and I learn something new every time I get together with other volunteers.

I volunteer at the FWNCR greenhouse project and the White Settlement Monarch Waystation garden to earn my volunteer hours. I retired in late 2019 and took a nice vacation to Alaska. Then the pandemic scuttled all previous plans to volunteer and I discovered the Native Plant Society which is where I heard about the Texas Master Naturalist Program. My husband works at Lockheed, and after 41 years, still likes it. My daughter lives in Denver and is an avid gardener and outdoors person.

Currently my garden, my dogs and vacations to National Parks are at the top of my fun list. I have friends who share my passion for outdoor adventures and I have recently started taking photographs of flowers and iNatting my finds from outdoor time, which is really fun.

I advise the class of 2021 to embrace every opportunity to learn as you volunteer your time and educate yourself. Then share that passion every chance you get.



Even though I am a proud member of the Cross Timbers Master Naturalist sometimes it's nice to bust loose and go out on an adventure elsewhere.

I travel a lot around Texas, and sometimes I have gone to Colorado, Arizona, Oklahoma, Missouri, even Arkansas. I have been working on filling in more and more data on my iNaturalist account. Making connections with other people outside, learning about other parks and areas interests me. iNaturalist has been the main tool I use to make those connections and to connect with my life before.

When I was younger, I was like the way I am today; always on the go and a natural born explorer. However, as I grew up, I was not always keen about carrying a camera around.

So now, when I go to a new area, I always try to take images of things to remember. This method helps fill in information gaps, pick up missing data and adds new data to my accounts. iNaturalist has become my tool of choice to connect to other areas. If you don't know me by now, you should know that I am bit of a land rover. I love to take my photography and my love for nature on the open road.

On many trips I love to stop at local museums and information bureaus. Call me old fashioned but I love to start my trips off right when I get to a particular area. Museums and Information Bureaus always give me clues for good areas to photograph wildlife, to explore history and the local culture. That is one of the many ways I love to explore with iNaturalist. I am kind of the Indiana Jones type and love to explore cultural significant areas as well as wildlife rich areas.

When you are out and about on your trips keep in mind the depth you can take your adventures. I also love to study geology in many parks. There is an order I like to follow when I explore. First look at the geology, then I look at the plants and the animals. The geology will show you what could be out there. Third, I look at what could have made an area culturally significant. This will help you make even deeper connections.

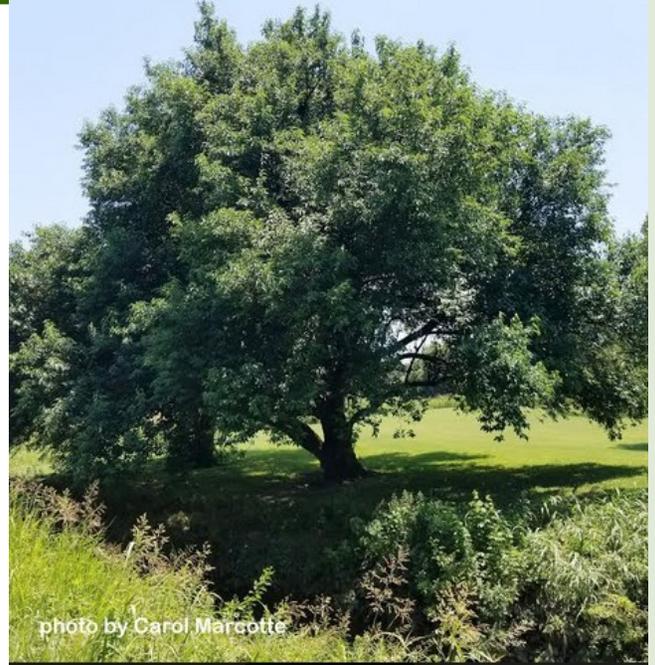
Nature exploration using iNaturalist has helped me learn so much about local geography and more about the world around me. Not just about wildlife and species but when I am hiking or walking. I spend a lot of time looking at the terrain and studying the ecosystem. Watching how everything fits together shows me how we must be when we are doing our things here in Texas.

We must find the connections within our community and in our own world to fully understand the needs of our areas. We also must take a trip to our own past to connect with ourselves and how we fit into the natural realm.



The Bois D’arc tree has many common names including Osage Orange, Horse Apple, Hedge Apple, Bow Wood, Bodark, Yellow Wood, Naranjo Chino and more. This is the tree that Native Americans, especially the Osage Indians, preferred for their bows and arrows. This tree was described by French explorers as “Bois D’arc” which means bow wood. Different parts of this tree are used as insect repellent, leather tannin, fence posts, wheel rims, tool handles, home foundations, etc. The list goes on and on, but the old barns and fences built using this wood are so sturdy, practical and lovely.

Almost all of the names relate to the interesting fruit or strong wood. In the Cross Timbers, there are several large specimen trees. Vandergriff Park in Arlington has several large Osage Orange along Johnson Creek. That’s where I took most of these pictures. The State Champion is located on Oak St in the City of De Kalb. The circumference is 267” and it is 62 feet tall with a spread of 88 feet.



TYPE: Deciduous shade tree
HEIGHT: 40 to 60 feet
SPREAD: 40 feet

FINAL SPACING: It is definitely native to the Great Blackland Prairies of Texas. Male and female trees grow to about 50 feet in height and have strong spines on the stems. You can often see Bois d’ Arc leaning over in landscape situations because the root system has failed. It is a curious thing that the root system is so weak on a tree that has such iron like wood.

FLOWERS AND FRUIT: The insignificant flowers form in the spring from April to June. Milky sap is acidic, bright green, bright green leaves with yellow fall color and large lime green wrinkled fruit 4 to 6 inches in diameter that form in the fall, more related to the mulberry family. The horse apples form on the female plants only.

The fruit is not usually eaten by animals or humans because of its hard-dry texture.

Placement of uncut hedge apples around the foundation, beneath the boards of outhouses or inside the basement is claimed to provide relief from mosquitoes, cockroaches, spiders, box elder bugs, crickets, ticks and other pests. One study found elemol (found in the fruit) to be as effective a mosquito repellent as DEET. It's interesting that squirrels certainly aren't repelled by them. They apparently love the taste.

<https://www.dirtdoctor.com/>, <https://texashomesteader.com/>,





photo by Carol Marcotte



photo from Dirt Doctor



Above— Randol Mills

Below— O. S. Gray





Above— Knapp Heritage Park

Below— Molly Hollar



Above— Fielder House
Below— River Legacy







First Place Photo Contest Results



Birds - First Place_ Immature Red-Tailed Hawk at Lunch - Christopher Castoro

Wildlife - 1st place - Winter Snow Shimmy Fox Squirrel style_Zach Chapman

Historical_Tie 1st Place_FWNC Greenhouse Farewell honoring Michelle Villafranca- Banjo Moore
AND Historical_Tie 1st Place_River Legacy Fall Festival_Carol Marcotte

Plantlife - First Place - Texas bluebells - Dick Schoech

Scenic - 1st place - Yellow Leaves on Trail - Mary Beth Lampe





Bird - 2nd Place_Roadrunner After Dip in Possum Kingdom Lake - Kakkie Cunningham

Scenic - 2nd Place_Winter in Big Bend - Vicki Brooks

Wildlife - 2nd place -Mr and Mrs - Lori Chernosky

Plantlife - 2nd place_Morning Dew - Lori Chernosky



Avon Burton 250 Service Hours - Bronze Dragonfly
Sharon Hamilton 500 Service Hours - Silver Dragonfly
Kikki Cunningham - 500 Service Hours - Silver Dragonfly
Glenn Butler - 1000 Service Hours - Gold Dragonfly

Class of 2020 newly Certified TMN
Hollie Carron

Re-Certified Members as of June, 2021
Joan Carey
Debbie Stilson
Leah Breitenstine

Announcements

Adorable, friendly, and an ever-present feature in BRIT's pollinator pathway and BRIT-scape, **Glenn Butler & Avon Burton have been named favorite volunteer couple of 2020.**
Congratulations, Glenn and Avon Butler!

BRIT

BRIT Luchtime Lecture Series (online):

“Plant-Pollinator Network Dynamics of the Little Fork Shale Barren”

Sarah Brown (USGS)

Tuesday, Jul 6th, noon to 1pm

USGS Biological Field Technician and recent James Madison University graduate student Sarah Brown will discuss her Masters research work on the ecology of shale barrens in Sugar Grove, West Virginia. Lunch and learn with us!

Event page: <https://brit.org/events/little-fork/>

July 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				I A, B,	2	3 B, F,
4	5 E, L	6 K	7 F	8 A, B, J	9	10 B, M
11	12 N	13	14 F	15 A, B,	16	17
18	19 D, O	20	21 F, C	22j A, B, J	23	24
25	26	27	28 F	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.
- G– BRIT Events, see page 17 for more details.
- 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– Fielder House Butterfly Garden 9-12 am [HERE](#)
- M– OS Gray 9-12 am/pm.
- N– Knapp Heritage Park Garden 9-12 am [HERE](#)
- O– River Legacy Science Center Garden 9-12 am [HERE](#)

- 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
- N- Chisholm Trail Community Park, 4936 McPherson Blvd, FW