

August 2021

CTMN Board Members:

Sharon Hamilton -President

Mary Beth Lampe – Vice President

Beverly Moore– Secretary

Christopher Castoro– Treasurer

CTMN Chair Members:

Carol Marcotte– Memberships

Sharon Hamilton – Outreach

Melinda Pajak– Education

Theresa Thomas– VOL Service and AT Hours

Sandy Thornburgh– Hospitality

Theresa Thomas - Records

Carrie Moore– Newsletter

Frank Keeney– Webmaster

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Cross Timbers Master Naturalist Newsletter

Coming Soon! TMN Virtual Volunteer Fair



The Texas Master Naturalists' **Virtual Volunteer Fair (VVF)** is an opportunity for our partner conservation organizations to present service projects that needed volunteers from a distance or virtually.

The intent is to provide virtual service during the hottest months of the year when service in the field becomes less desirable and hits a typical lull until cooler months come around.

Save the dates of **August 31st and September 1st 2021** for this series of project presentations showcasing opportunities from around the state.

<https://txmn.tamu.edu/virtual-volunteer-fair-august-2021/#volunteer>

The Virtual Volunteer Fair is tentatively scheduled for 9:00am to 12:00pm (Central) each day. A series of 10-minute sessions, this online event highlights projects by partner conservation agencies and organizations. Presenters share project descriptions, expectations, outcomes, logistics, location, and contact information. They will discuss experience, equipment, and any advanced training that may be needed as well as the benefits to you, the volunteer.

For examples of past projects, see the catalog for the [February 2021 Virtual Volunteer Fair](#) Projects included: Butterfly Monitoring, Invasive Species Surveys and Verification; Aquatic Plant Photo Submission.

For those who cannot attend the live presentation, sessions will be recorded and uploaded to the txmn.org website after the event.

Registration will open soon.

TMN volunteers earn Volunteer Service hours for attending project proposal sessions – use the “TMN Virtual Volunteer Service Fair” Statewide Project Opportunity in the VMS list of opportunities for logging service hours.

If you've never used WebEx as a platform, click on this link: [WebEx 101 Guide](#).

How to sign up to volunteer: At the completion of EACH proposal and again at the end of the event, TMN will share the “Project Volunteer Registration” survey. Use the link to select which Service Project(s) you are interested in volunteering with. This survey will stay open for the month of September, but the first pull of volunteer signup lists will be done on or around September 15th!

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

Texas Master Naturalist

— 2021 Annual Meeting —



Agenda & Registration Prices

| | In-Person - \$325 | Virtual - \$100 |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Thursday 10/21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">11:00am-2:00pm - Chapter Leadership LuncheonAfternoon Field SessionsSocial Dinner | |
| Friday 10/22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Morning Field Sessions8:00am - 5:30pm - Technical Sessions12:30-1:30pm - Welcome & Keynote Address7:00pm - 8:30pm - Wonders of North Texas Nature Keynote Address | |
| Saturday 10/23 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">All Day Field Sessions8:30am - 5:00pm - Technical Sessions12:00-1:00pm - TMN Science Fair Winners Presentation6:30pm - 8:00pm - Awards Reception | |
| Sunday 10/24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">8:00am - 9:00am - Contest Awards & 2022 Certification Pin Announcement | |

*Lodging not included

Vermicomposting with Dick Schoech and Beverly Crawford– Interviewed by Carol Marcotte

Vermi...WHAT??? Yes, Vermicomposting! The process of using various species of earthworms to digest and convert organic material into a rich, dark soil that smells like earth and feels like magic. There's leaf composting, grass composting, food composting and vermicomposting. The main goal is worm castings, the dark liquid Compost Tea is secondary prize.

Fellow CTMN member, Dick Schoech, has been vermicomposting for over 10 years. He uses the 3 Tray Bin Box method. The bin looks a little like a bee hive, except the trays are horizontal instead of vertical. He estimates there are 10–12k worms in his bin.

Beverly Crawford is a Master Gardener and Master Composter. One of her many, many loves is teaching composting to elementary school aged children, usually scouts at Terra Verde Golf Course. For the past year, she has used the 2 Bucket method.

To Begin using the Bucket Method; get two 5 gallon buckets, you can stack. Drill holes in the top and bottom of the "upper" bucket. The buckets can be purchased from Home Depot or Lowes. It's best to use newly purchased buckets, because they will be free from chemicals and exposure to harsh minerals.

Load the aerated "top" bucket up with layers of 1) shredded newspaper 2) 250 -500 Red Wiggler worms, *Eisenia foetida* and *Lumbricus rubellis* (purchased at a bait shop, Walmart or Dick Schoech will give you some worms) 3) old castings and/or garden soil 4) kitchen food scraps (no meat, dairy, citrus, egg shells or pesticide ridden scraps) 5) another layer of shredded newspaper on top. Then moisten, not wet just damp, with water from a spray bottle. Your bucket should be about ½ full. Place your aerated bucket inside the second "bottom" bucket.

Tighten the aerated lid on top. Place in a climate controlled environment. Beverly puts hers in an extra bedroom. There is no smell or gnats because you're not using meat scraps.

To Begin using the 3 Tray Bin Method consider it is an upward migration composting worm system; Dick purchased a bin from Amazon. Each tray has a grid bottom for worms to migrate upward as new food is added into the top tray. If you start with 1/2 lb of worms they can eat a 1/4 lb of food per day. Select a dark area where the temperature may fluctuate 40-80F. Gradually increase kitchen scraps as the size of your community grows. Add moisten newspaper, garden soil, and special mixture delivered with your bin, and kitchen scraps to the top tray. More detailed instructions come with your bin. It takes a couple of months for your first harvest using the Tray Bin method.

Feeding – moist newspaper, heaping handful of kitchen food scraps 2 – 3 times per month and squirt with moisture. It takes about 6 months to get enough worms to harvest the compost using the Bucket method. If you want to use egg shells, grind them up to a powder. Kitchen scraps do not have to be organically grown, but pesticide free. No citrus. You'll get to know what your farm worms like to eat over time. Dick's farm worms like 6" cantaloupe rind once a week. Add more moisten newspaper and water.

Harvesting – Worms must be kept moist in order for them to breathe through their skins. This liquid Compost Tea collects and can drain from the holes in the bottom of the bin or bucket. Dick collects the liquid in a 16 fl oz jar placed under the bottom of the bin. Using Beverly's bucket method, the liquid collects on the "bottom" bucket. Use diluted Compost Tea in your veggie garden, houseplants – its liquid gold!

Page 4 **Vermicomposting with Dick Schoech and Beverly Crawford– Interviewed by Carol Marcotte**

Every 17 – 20 days, Beverly wears plastic gloves when she dumps the bucket contents out onto newspapers. She separates the worms, any undigested kitchen scraps and composted castings. The compost castings can be sprinkled around your garden plants. If using the aerated bucket method, put it back together with layers of newspaper, worms, newspaper and moisture to start again.

Using the 3 Tray Bin Method, harvest every 2 months. The more often you feed your farm, the more often you can harvest. Take the bottom tray out to remove and place composted worm castings and live worms in your garden. Lower the top and 2nd trays down a notch. Place the emptied tray on top. As a tray is filled another is added to the top, when the bottom tray is harvested it becomes the top creating a continuous loop system. For more detailed Tray Bin harvesting techniques, read your manual.

Benefits – worms, newspaper and kitchen scrapes = worm castings aka worm poop. Your harvest will improve soil structure, enriches soil with micro-organisms, improves water holding capacity, helps neutralize the pH of garden soil, and enhances germination of plant growth and crop yield. Microbial activity in worm castings is 10-20 times higher than in the soil and organic matter that the worm ingests.

Words of Wisdom from Dick and Beverly – keep a diary of when you feed, what you feed, when you harvest. Keep kitchen scraps for future feeds.

You can download a manual for the Tray Bin Method online at <http://youngurbanfarmers.com/wp-content/uploads/Worm-Factory-360-Manual.pdf>

Thank you Dick Schoech and Beverly Crawford for sharing your fun and enjoyable hobby of vermicomposting!

References: Dick Schoech, Beverly Crawford <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B002LH47PY>



photo by Beverly Crawford - typical kitchen scraps to feed worms.





photo by Carol Marcotte - Dick Schoech's 3 Tray Bin



photo by Carol Marcotte - one of tens of thousands Red Wigglers in 3 Tray Bin.



photo by Carol Marcotte - harvesting Compost Tea to dilute & spread around your plants.

Callirhoe involucrata Malvaceae (Mallow Family)

This lovely Texas native covers slopes along the highways with brilliant color from April to June, then takes a break during the heat of summer.

It is best planted in the fall from seed, and the bulbous root can also be transplanted. Cutting work too, but they are not easy to root. It will also self seed which is really the easiest method if you let the seed mature on the plant and fall on the soil and then let it germinate.

The plant will form a lovely rosette of leaves in the spring and then the branches will elongate and start making runners about two feet long with the flowers coming out of the leaf axils.

Winecup is semi evergreen and sometimes will put out a second show in the fall here in North Central Texas, if the weather is favorable which is really a bonus.

It likes full sun but can take a little shade and with a little water added it will be a very happy camper in your yard.

The leaves and roots are medicinal and it is also a nectar source for butterflies and bees as well as a larval host plant for the Gray Hairstreak butterfly.

Who could ever resist growing a plant with such great attributes? Certainly not me!!



Above– Close up flower
Below– Wine cups in the front yard.



Above– Gray Hairstreak by Berry Nall

Middle– new Foliage

Below– Winecups and Mealy Blue Sage



1) **What year did you certify as a TMN?** 2010

2) **What is your volunteer passion and where do you volunteer?** I can't say that I have a single passion when it comes to volunteering with the Master Naturalists. I prefer to work on projects where I can work quietly where I am building, maintaining or cleaning. I volunteer in the pollinator garden at Lake Mineral Wells State Park and Trailway to keep it attractive to visitors (humans and other animals.)

3) **Tell us more about Mineral Wells State Park. What are the volunteer opportunities for CTMN members? How and when are you there? How would a CTMN member contact you?** The park itself has many volunteer opportunities, especially for people who want to volunteer on a regular basis. The park rangers are always looking for volunteers to help with general maintenance of the park as well as engaging with visitors.

This year I am only volunteering to maintain the pollinator garden. We work at the pollinator garden every third Saturday, except August and December. During the summer we work from 9-11 am. You can contact me at cindyleecrump@gmail.com to find out more about helping with the garden and I can also send your contact information to the rangers if you want to help in other ways at the park.

4) **Tell us about your family. Are you married, children? ages?** Matt and I just celebrated our 31st wedding anniversary. We have three grown children, ages 29, 25 and 21. We usually move every few years and we love the opportunity to explore places new to us. The Fort Worth area is home to us, but we've lived in Virginia, South Texas, Nebraska, and the United Kingdom. I live about 30 minutes from the park.

5) **What advice do you have for new TMN members?** In your first year, volunteer at several locations to meet other members and find which projects appeal to you. Attend the state meetings whenever you can. For me, becoming a Master Naturalist opened up doors for job opportunities, finding new friends, and helped me to broaden my children's experiences with nature.

6) **Is there anything you want to add?** On work days at the garden, I usually have a couple of regular volunteers, but we would love to have more!

This picture of me was taken in Ireland.



Sapindus saponaria var. *drummondii*

A medium to large tree can attain a height of 40 – 50 feet and a trunk diameter of 1 – 2 feet.

Leaves are alternate, once-compounded, 6” to 18” long with 4 – 9 pairs of leaflets that usually alternate on the rachis (opposite each other or both); leaflets are lanceolate, about 1.5” to 4” long, smooth margin, pale yellow-green, with prominent veins. The leaves turn yellow in the fall.

Male and female flowers are borne on separate trees as large branched clusters of white flowers 6” – 10” long.

Fleshy part of the poisonous fruit is rich in ‘saponins’, and was used by Native Americans as a soap substitute. The seeds were used to make necklace beads and buttons. Baskets were made from the wood which splits easily. The yellow fruits and the common name “wild china” often confuse this species with the non-native Chinaberry tree (*Melia azederach*). Larger trees are susceptible to being killed by the soapberry borer (*Agrilus prionurus*).



photo by Carol Marcotte



photo by Carol Marcotte

Bloom Time: May , June

Water Use: Low

Light Requirement: Sun , Part Shade

Soil Moisture: Dry , Moist

Drought Tolerance: High

Cold Tolerant: yes

Soil Description: Rich, limestone soils.

Conditions Comments: An attractive and hardy tree, useful as a specimen or in groves. Can become a large tree in deep soil. In shallow soil it often remains a small tree. Soapberry often suckers and form groves. Tolerant of drought, wind, heat, poor soil, air pollution and other city conditions. Not affected by disease or insects. Currently difficult to find in the nursery trade.

Use Wildlife: Birds eat fruit.

Warning: The root and leaves are sometimes used in herbal remedies but can be toxic and sometimes fatal in high quantities or if misused. Sensitivity to a toxin varies with a person's age, weight, physical condition, and individual susceptibility.

Conspicuous Flowers: yes

Larva Host to Soapberry Hairstreak (*Phaeostrymon Alcestis*)

References:

https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=SASAD

<http://texastreeid.tamu.edu/content/TreeDetails/?id=116>





Above– BIRD - Full House - Lori Chernosky

Below PLANTLIFE - Life Finds A Way: Common Storksbill Growing in Asphalt - Avon Burton





Above— SCENIC - Wild Sky, South Padre - David Vestal

Below- WILDLIFE - Monarch Caterpillar Chillin on Antelope Horns - David Hunter

Page 14 **Clarification: Texas Master Naturalist Covid-19 Guidelines and HIPAA For Project Leaders and All Volunteers- Vicki Brooks**

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, 1996) prevents disclosure of protected health information by **health care providers and health plans, not lay people, businesses or organizations.**

As COVID-19 vaccines become readily available and the population is partially vaccinated and partially unvaccinated, issues are arising where people are being asked about vaccination status in order to take part in various activities. When asked about vaccination status, some people are taking umbrage and asserting that their “HIPAA rights were violated.” Businesses are being accused of “HIPAA violations” by members of the public who don’t understand that **HIPAA only applies to health care providers.**

Question: Is being asked about vaccination status is a HIPAA violation?

Answer: No, being asked about COVID-19 vaccination status is not a HIPAA violation.

Nor is it a violation for a restaurant to require proof of vaccination for inside seating or for a business to require unvaccinated people to wear masks.

It is **not** a violation of HIPAA for an employer to ask you if you have had the COVID-19 vaccine, but, you do not have to reply.

A person cannot be compelled to answer that question, but be prepared to possibly be denied entry to a store or event that has a vaccination requirement.

None of this, however, is a HIPAA violation.

Question: What is an example of a HIPAA violation?

Answer: If your **physician/healthcare provider/healthcare worker** told someone that you had been offered the COVID-19 vaccine but you hated needles and wouldn’t take it.

Note: TMN Guidelines exist because our organization is sponsored by Texas State Governmental agencies—TPWD and AgriLife, who must follow guidelines set by the Governor or his designated agent.

Members who have earned the re-certification Side Oats Grama Service Pin since January 2021

Christopher Castoro

Bill Collins

Wendy Elias

Gailon Hardin

Mary Beth Lampe

Ellen Long

Joe Martinez

Kimberlie Sasan

Kay Sekio

These members have earned Milestone pins:

Bronze Dragonfly: Mary Beth Lampe 250 hours

Silver Dragonfly: Avon Burton 500 hours

August 2021

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

- A– FWNC– Restorative Greenhouse from 9:30– 11:30 AM [HERE](#)
- B– FWNC– Natural Guard– Outdoor Conservation from 9 AM to 12 PM [HERE](#)
- 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. [HERE](#)
- G– BRIT Events, see page 17 for more details.
- H– Mineral Wells State Park [HERE](#)
- J-Southwest Regional Hulen Library Native Plant Demonstration Garden [HERE](#)
- K– Texas Master Naturalist Virtual Trainings #TMNTuesdays!
- L– Fielder House Butterfly Garden 9-12 am [HERE](#)
- M– OS Gray 9-12 am/pm. [HERE](#)
- 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