

The EFCTMN Newsletter

June , 2007

Vol 8, No.6

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June Meeting at the Extension Office 9:30 AM, 6/21/07:

Professor Pete Gunter will be speaking on "Environmental Ethics." Here's his bio:

Professor Pete A.Y. Gunter is past president of the Big Thicket Association (1972-74), chairman of the Big Thicket Coordinating Committee (1974-82) and present chairman of the Texas Conservation Alliance (formerly the Texas Committee on Natural Resources). Among his books are The Big Thicket (Jenkins, 1972; University of North Texas Press, 1993) and Texas Land Ethics (University of Texas Press, 1997, with Max Oelschlaeger). He has also published numerous books, articles and reviews relating to philosophy and to environmental concerns. He has been a professor of philosophy at the University of North Texas for 38 years.

July Night Meeting at the Extension office. 7PM, 7/19/07:

Ken Banks with the City of Denton will be speaking about "Water Flow & Urban Design".

Thank You Note From Fritz & Yvonne:

Yvonne and I want to express our deep gratitude to all the members of the Elm Fork Chapter who were so kind to us in thoughts and prayers and actions at the accidental death March 25th of our dear daughter Andrea Thomas while she and her husband Robert were on a wildflower tour in the hill country. She collected replicas of the Texas Horned Lizard (horny toads) and delighted in watching deer friends raise fawn in the natural back yard of their home in New Braunfels. She is sorely missed Yvonne & Fritz Poppe

Time To Recruit for the Fall Class:

Please start talking to your friends, neighbors and co-workers about possibly coming to our Roundup in August. Applications for membership and informational brochures will be brought to the June general meeting, or you can also contact Donna Wolfe for copies. Please also note this info will be on our webpage shortly www.efcmn.org.

EFMCM Nature Photo Gallery: Exhibit has been moved to the North Branch Denton Public Library. We hope to set up an exhibit in Lewisville also, but we need pictures from LISDOLA and LELA in order to do so. If you have pictures from these locations, please contact Cheryl Kesterson at greengardengal@yahoo.com

Carolyn Richard has agreed to be the refreshments coordinator for the August Roundup meeting. Please let her know what you would like to bring c.richard@comcast.net.

Sherill Campbell will be the refreshments coordinator for the first day of the new training class in the Fall. Mentors please let her know what you would like to bring. sherrillcampbell@verizon.net

Grant Money: EFCMN in partnership with Lake Ray Roberts is providing interpretive programming to schools and has received a \$3000 TP&W grant to help with this project. George Kragle is helping to build displays at the visitor center with some of this grant money. Please contact Dave Rowley with your questions.

Howdy, All! Just wanted to say "THANK YOU!" for last Friday's nature walk on Lost Pines Trail with Pilot Point's 3rd grade. One of our seasonal office workers has a daughter that was on the hike, and he told me this morning that she has been ranting and raving all week over how much fun it was. Y'all made it happen, and I appreciate your time, energy and excellent

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presentations. Had to put some numbers together for a grant proposal, and our school /scout nature hikes had 184 kids in FY '05, 696 kids in FY '06, and a whopping 1,137 so far this FY (which ends Aug. 31)! Couldn't do it without you! Thanks again. D Whited

The Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT) works with landowners to protect native Texas prairies in perpetuity via conservation easements <<http://www.texasprairie.org/terms/protect.html>>, which can have significant tax benefits.

Service Hour Opportunities (SH)

Newsletter Articles (SH): You can receive service hour credit for the time it takes you to research and write articles for the EFCMN newsletter. Articles must pertain to Chapter interests and cannot be political in nature. Furthermore, copyrighted materials cannot be used without the original author's written permission. Send submissions to Theresa Kavi at TLKavi@earthlink.net.

White Wing Dove (SH): "Texas Parks & Wildlife Department is asking for your help in a white-winged dove banding project. If you have feeders that currently have white-winged doves visiting, or have access to areas that you can bait and attract white-winged doves, and would like to trap, band and release the doves, please volunteer. This project will assist TPWD with determining population and distribution of white-winged doves, which are expanding their historical range of the Rio Grande Valley into other areas, including north Texas.

Good areas for trapping include backyard feeders, church parking lots, school yards, or any area that you can put a trap without fear of it being taken or birds being bothered while they are in the trap. TPWD will provide all materials for trapping and banding, including bait (sunflowers), traps, leg bands, banding pliers, and data sheets.

Trapping can be at your convenience, during early morning or late afternoon hours, through August 15. You will not be asked to trap every day, but only when it's convenient for you. Training for volunteers will be conducted immediately following the EFCTMN meeting on Thursday, June 21, at the Denton County Extension building. Depending on the ending time for the EFCTMN meeting, a lunch break will be taken either before or during the white-winged dove training. Please contact Jennifer Barrow at (940) 627-5475 or jbarrow@urnet.net for more information and if you would like to be involved."

If you have any questions, please call or email me. We would appreciate a reply of you would like to help & if you can attend the training.

Thanks,
Rob Roy 214-668-3233

Project List (SH): There is a project list online at our webpage www.efcmn.org. Just about any of these projects can probably use your help. Please get in touch with the contact person listed on the list if you would like to help out.

Note: Standard service hours are available at any time at the Fort Worth Nature Center, BRIT, LLELA and at LISDOLA. It is highly recommended that you contact these sites and let them know you want to help out before you go there. Please see the Fort Worth Nature Center's calendar at www.fwnaturecenter.org, & BRIT's website at www.BRIT.org for details about their service opportunities. You can also contact Rica Potenz at 972-874-7514 about service opportunities available on an ongoing basis at Lewisville Independent School District Outdoor Learning Area (LISDOLA).

Advanced Training Opportunities (AT):

Earthkind Online Modules (AT): If you are short on advanced training hours, we now

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have a way for you to earn 4 hours of AT from the comfort of your own home. Go to <http://earthkind.tamu.edu/EKOnLineModules.html>, complete all three Earthkind modules online ("Roses" is not available) and pass the quiz at the end of each of the 3 available sections. Once the 3 quizzes are passed, please print out the certificates of completion to attach to your service record when you go to record your 4 hours. If you are already getting credit for these modules as a Master Gardener, you may not also get credit for the same modules as a Master Naturalist.

Ongoing bird talks at the LBJ grasslands count as AT. Please contact Mary Curry at mary@lookingout.net for more info.

Activities of Interest: May qualify for AT

Ray Roberts Lake Stargazing Parties (dusk - 11pm), Isle du Bois Unit

Saturdays: June 16, and Aug. 4
Please call 940-686-2080 or email don.whited@tpwd.state.tx.us for more information.

Birding on the Greenbelt, Elm Fork Park (just east of dam on FM 455)

Saturdays, 7-9am, June 9, July 14, August 11
Please call 940-686-2080 or email don.whited@tpwd.state.tx.us for more information.

Did You Know? The Cottontails

Save Future Easter Bunnies! By Theresa Kavi

It's just a fact of urban life. Almost everyday, someone runs over a rabbit nest with a lawnmower, or the family dog turns a long-eared visitor into a chew toy, leaving orphaned and injured bunnies in need of urgent care. Once the damage is done, few know how to help these suffering creatures.

Wild Rescue, Inc. is working to change this sad state of Leporidae affairs. They provide a sanctuary for rabbits in need of care, and offer one-day seminars to those who are interested in becoming bunny rehabilitators. Anyone can learn how to render basic care with very little training, equipment or space.

So if an injured or orphaned bunny makes an appearance in your life, contact the DFW Wildlife hotline at 972-234-9453 (www.dfwwildlife.org), and they will refer you to a rehabilitator at Wild Rabbit Rescue or to another qualified agent at no charge.

If you are interested in learning how to become a rabbit rehabilitator, see contact info for Diana Leggett at www.wildrescue.blogspot.com.

If interested in natural & homeopathic medicine training for rabbit and small mammal rehabilitators, see <http://www.ewildagain.org>.

Here are some interesting facts about Cottontails:

Eastern Cottontails are only native to North America.

Mother Cottontails leave babies alone in the nest during the day as to not attract predators to their young. Mothers return generally at dusk & at dawn to feed their babies.

Cottontails need to mature for about a month after birth before they can be self-sufficient. They are slightly larger than a tennis ball at this age.

They are born furless, blind and deaf. Ears open in about a week. Eyes open in about 10 days. Urination process has to be stimulated in babies by the mother.

The main diet of a mature Cottontail is native grasses. They receive a great deal of their water intake through lapping the dew on grass.

Orphaned baby Cottontails should never be given cow's milk. Warmed goat's milk can be acceptable.

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Cottontails live 1-2 years in the wild. They are sexually active at 4 months, and can have litters year round.

It's not true that a mother Cottontail will not accept her baby once touched by a human. Would you reject your human baby just because another mammal touched it?

Cottontails are an important part of the food chain, preyed on by more species than almost any other animal. Their amazing fertility is Mother Nature's way of compensating to ensure their survival as a species.

There are 58 species of rabbits and hares. 12 are endangered, and 6 are threatened.

Butterfly Habitat Instruction Packets: Can be purchased from Texas Discovery Gardens for \$25. Packets include detailed info about more than 70 nectar and host plants recommended for planting in the North Central Texas area plus gardening tips. Proceeds help fund educational programs for school children. Call 214-428-7476 to order. www.texasdiscoverygardens.org

The Armchair Master Naturalist by Theresa Kavi:

From Karen Magnum: This link has a calculator for folks to estimate how much CO2 they personally contribute to the air quality problem and has several interesting projects folks can contribute to through "carbon credits" if they wish to support projects that clean up the air so they become "carbon neutral".

You can see by entering a hybrid vehicle vs one they now own for example or other energy reducing measures how much you lower the CO2 footprint. Did you know that the average consumer in Texas contributes 16.64 tons of CO2 per year! The main website is www.carboncounter.org the calculator is <http://www.carboncounter.org/offset-your-emissions/personal-calculator.aspx>

If you know of any good books, movies, webpages or art exhibits that feature nature, email me at TLKavi@earthlink.net and I will try to pass on your suggestions to our fellow members.

Spotlight on: Operation NICE! & Website Calendar

Operation NICE! Plant of the Season – Summer 2007

Perennial: Mexican-Hat (*Ratibida columnifera*)

Description: *Ratibida columnifera* goes by several names: Mexican-Hat, Upright Prairie Coneflower, Long-headed Coneflower, and Thimble-Flower. This prairie perennial grows over most of the US, including our region. Mexican-Hat will usually grow 1 to 3 feet tall. It has a branching growth pattern, with deeply lobed leaves 2 inches wide and up to 6 inches long.

Blooms: Mexican-Hat blooms from May through July with occasional flowers later in the

summer. The flowers resemble sombreros, giving Mexican-Hat its most common name. The flower petals range in color from solid yellow to red with a splash of yellow to reddish-brown.

In both types, the petals surround an upright 1- to 2-inch brownish cone that develops seeds.

Planting sites: Mexican-Hat should be planted in full sun to light shade in well-drained soil. It tolerates a range of soil pH, from weakly

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acidic to moderately alkaline. It will grow well in sandy loam, loam, or clay-based soil. Plants should be spaced 2-3 feet apart. Mexican-Hat seeds can be planted in the early spring or in the fall.

Watering Instructions: Mexican-Hat should be watered well immediately after planting and then every other week during the first growing season. Like most native plants, Mexican-Hat should not be over-watered and should not be planted where it might experience “wet feet”.

After the first growing season, Mexican-Hat is very drought tolerant and should survive with existing rainfall.

Comments: Mexican-Hat is a stalwart of our prairies and deserving of a place in our gardens. It does very well in the heat of a Texas summer and can also withstand high humidity. It will slowly spread and performs well in average to poor soil, making it well-suited for North Texas xeriscapes. It can be propagated from plantlets that grow on the main branches of a parent plant.

Mexican-Hat keeps a green foliage rosette during our mild winters and during the summer, makes a nice cut flower for bouquets. Look for the NICE! Plant of the Season signs and information sheets on your next visit to a participating North Texas nursery. Thank you for using native plants in your landscapes.

Trinity Forks Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas Meetings are the 4th Thursday in Jan, Feb,

Mar, Apr, May, Sep & Oct, TWU's
ACT building 6:30 pm, 2nd floor.

A LOOK AT THE WEBSITE CALENDAR

As most members are probably aware, there is a behind-the-scenes effort to design, test, and implement a new database on our website. When it is completed and online, it will offer chapter members an easier way to record and track service and AT hours; stay abreast of current projects, training opportunities, and chapter events; and communicate with other members.

Let's take a look at one of the features available on the website right now: our calendar.

The calendar is accessible at the bottom of the list on the left side of the home page by clicking on *View Full Calendar*. You are presented with a monthly view of the current month (click arrows backward and forward to view previous and upcoming months). You will notice that each listing has a colored bar on it. These are codes for the type of event listed. You will find a guide below the calendar that tells you what each color indicates. There are four options for viewing the month's listings. The default is *Monthly View*, which is laid out as most wall calendars are and contains only the title information but not the specifics of the event. You may also choose the *Flat View* to see all the month's events in list form with the first line of the specifics shown (click on the listing to see more). *Weekly View* lists the events for the current week (or choose previous or upcoming weeks) with the first line of specifics shown (click title to see more). *Daily View* works the same as *Weekly View*. If you want to find out what is coming up in a particular category, choose *Categories*. **Upcoming events** are those in the future and **Total events** are all events listed (past and future). Choose a category and it will

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show you all the events listed Past and future). The *Search* function allows you to enter a keyword and do a search for a name, event, date, etc.

Please use the calendar. Try some searches, navigate around it, and test it. We welcome feedback. It will be easier to make changes (if possible) at this stage rather than later when we have accepted it with any flaws. The same goes for the rest of the website. The team designing and implementing the database need user input so try navigating the site and e-mail your comments to Jan Hodson who is working hard with others to make it work.

Final Notes: Submit photos or newsletter articles to Theresa Kavi, Newsletter Editor at News@EFCMN.org. Our webpage address is www.EFCMN.org.