

## Danger in a Star Jasmine Vine

Becky Bertoni



photo of the location of the paper wasp nest.

One July evening I was pruning a star jasmine vine growing up on a support, and I was surprised by paper wasps. First I felt a sting, then I saw my hand was close to their honeycomb style nest, and another wasp was on my other glove. Off came the gloves and into the house I went to treat the stings, one on one hand, and two on the second--they can sting more than once, unfortunately.

The stings were painful for a short while and then itchy and swollen, too, but after reading about paper wasps--usually non aggressive, good pollinators--I didn't want to destroy the nest.

The next day early in the morning I cut the nest out of the vine. When it fell to the concrete, the wasps stayed there still, continuing to construct their nest! I had hoped to urge them to find a different location. The nest was only about 2 inches by 1 inch, but their nests can get up to 8-10 inches,

and it still was in a place in the yard where we needed to be. I was resigned that we would have to use wasp spray, as I was still swollen from the stings and didn't want to risk more.

The next morning my husband moved the nest under a bush farther away from our path, and the wasps scattered. We were gone most of that day, and when we returned we found ants eating the empty nest; the second move did discourage the wasps finally. They abandoned their work, but perhaps they began again in a better location.

An hour or so later the nest was gone--I missed my photo opportunity. I don't know if the ants could have consumed it or carried it off, or some other predator took advantage of a nutritious meal.

About 4 days later, I'm still a little swollen and itchy where I was stung. I am aware now that a paper wasp nest can be in a shrub, and will be more alert to that possibility when I prune.



Photo by: Dr. Paul A. Zahl/Photo Researchers, Inc.

[www.everythingabout.net/articles/biology/animals/arthropods/insects/wasps/paper\\_wasp/](http://www.everythingabout.net/articles/biology/animals/arthropods/insects/wasps/paper_wasp/)



**Green Lynx spider** (*Pecucetia viridans*) comes from **Susan Pohlen**. Susan said it climbed upon the ladder she was using—I'm guessing the spider wanted to lend one of its hands!

The lynx is primarily vegetation dweller found on grasses, shrubs, and trees. Some are terrestrial or arboreal by nature.

Bugguide.net

## GREEN MILKWEED

(Asclepias viridis)

*Article and photo from Dorothy  
Thetford*

**E**very native wildflower of Texas has its own character of design, i.e., leaf shape, leaf arrangement on the stem, disk flowers, ray petals or no ray petals, height, aromatic or pleasantly fragrant, spring or fall-blooming with specific climate, soil, elevation, or moisture requirements. And, the flower designs range from being upward, open-faced to drooping, cup-shaped or tubular, to almost orchid-looking. However, when you see a milkweed flower, there seems to be no other similar pattern. It is extremely unique.

Green milkweed is only one of 15 milkweed plants that are known to grow in North Central Texas, as reported in FLORA OF NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS. It is also recorded as probably being the most common milkweed in north central Texas. It is extremely abundant in open prairies, pastures, disturbed ground and ditches from SE to E Texas and W to West Cross



Unique flowers of the Green milkweed (Asclepias viridis)

Timbers and Edwards Plateau. We see an abundance of blooms in this area in the Spring and then blooming again in the Fall, which seems to be very timely for the migrating Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) during both directions of their travels. Milkweed leaves and flowers are necessary as larval food on which the female Monarch lays her eggs, resulting in the metamorphosis process for the development of the Monarch butterfly.

As quoted from FLORA, many if not most species are poisonous; however, all species are distasteful to livestock and severe losses usually occur only when animals are forced to eat the plants. Abundant milkweeds in a pasture are often a sign of severe overgrazing. Even though we personally don't eat the plants, it should be known that the milky latex in the stems and leaves can cause dermatitis in susceptible individuals.

Asclepias is a genus of 100 species of the Americas where some are cultivated as ornamentals and others have been used medicinally since early times. Thus, named from Greek Asklepios, god of medicine, it is understandable that the plant originated as having medicinal properties.

Check out our local prairies and you can easily spot the 10 to 12" fall-blooming Green milkweed among the dry fall grasses that should be available just in time for the Mexico-bound Monarch butterflies as they routinely float through North Central Texas in late September thru October.

**Dorothy Brown Thetford, Class 2001**

# FIELD NOTES IN FOCUS



**Cloudless giant sulphur (*Phoebis sennae*) on diamond petal primrose (*Oenothera rhombipetala*) — From the Gallery of Marilyn Blanton**

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and fauna as you see them*

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“In every walk in nature one receives  
far more than he seeks.”

*John Muir*