



## *Projects on Target and Elm Fork Chapter Around the Community*



**Green Acres Monarch Station**  
is doing well, despite the lack of rain. In May most plants there were blooming—from Becky Bertoni



Photos and information came from Becky Bertoni



*"But I only came to help!"*

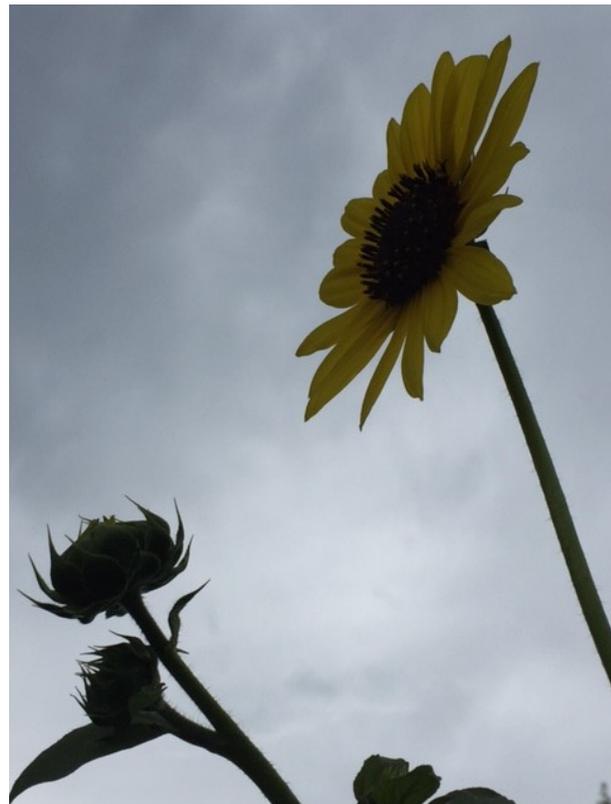
**A**t the Tuesday June 6 tour and lunch at Green Acres we had unexpected company--a calf from the neighbor's herd came through hole in the fence! Flower Mound Animal Service came to the rescue and the calf got home, with some help from Amy Garrett and Brenda Tucker.

Bottom photo--most of our group around the prairie sign that Amy and her husband made and installed.



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**Common sunflower**, not so common beauty (*Helianthus annuus*) — Dorothy Thetford



# Amphibians 2017

From Bob Ross



Scott Kiester

**O**n May 24<sup>th</sup>, EFC member Scott Kiester gave a presentation at the Flower Mound Library entitled *All About Amphibians*. The attendance was large consisting of both adults and school-aged children.

Scott stated that the first amphibians were here 400 million years ago. He continued by saying that amphibians have a life cycle consisting of: a) they lay eggs in moist areas, b) they become larvae or tadpoles, c) they metamorph (tadpoles with legs or frogs with tails), and finally, d) they become adults.

Scott explained that young tadpoles are vegetarian, yet adult frogs or toads are carnivores. He spoke about the singing or calling of frogs and toads by explaining the frogs tend to croak and toads tend to trill. Only male frogs and toads sing and call in trying to get the female frogs and toads interested. Part of the presentation consisted of audio of the frogs and toads that were being mentioned. When Scott would play the call of each frog and toad the audience became very quiet and listened intently, especially the children.

Scott discussed the various toads in Texas. He talked about the Green Toad (which is the smallest toad in Texas), the Gulf Coast Toad (which is the most common toad in the world), the Woodhouses' Toad (which is attracted to lights near water because the light attracts insects, and insects attract the toads). He continued by discussing the Texas Toad and the Red Spotted Toad. He mentioned the Narrowmouth Toads which consist of the Eastern Narrowmouth and Great Plains Narrowmouth Toads. He also mentioned The Spadefoot Toads, which includes the Eastern (Hurter's) Spadefoot Toad and the Couch's Spadefoot Toad.

Scott then talked about the different types of frogs in Texas. He began with the Tree Frogs which consist of the Northern Cricket Frog, Cope's Gray Tree Frog, Gray Tree Frog, and the Green Tree Frog. He discussed the Chorus Frogs which include the Spotted Chorus Frogs, Strecker's Chorus Frogs and the Western Chorus Frog which has many aliases (Southeastern Chorus Frog, Upland Chorus Frog, Cajun Chorus Frog or Striped Chorus Frog). He talked about the Tropical Frog known as the Rio Grande Chirping Frog that hops aboard potted plants in the Texas Rio Grande Valley and eventually gets distributed into North Texas, as well as, many other locations. Then, Scott discussed the True Frogs which consist of the three Leopard Frogs in North Texas: Southern Leopard Frog, Plains Leopard Frog, and the Rio Grande Leopard Frogs.

Immediately following the presentation at the library, those attendees who were interested, assembled at LLELA for a *Frog Walk*.

## EASTERN BLUEBIRD (*Stalia stalis* (Linnacus)) SYMBOLS OF HOPE AND HAPPINESS



**H**ow were we to know that the project that past members, Jana and Pat Smith, created for Clear Creek Natural Heritage Park would provide educational experiences for our Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist (MN) members for 10 to 12 years ongoing?



Jana and Pat's sons built and installed Eastern Bluebird nesting boxes in various locations across the Clear Creek prairie as their scouting project. However, improvements and baffling have been added along the years with the energy and materials provided by MN members.



The boxes have withstood several years of weathering as we MN members have enjoyed the nesting boxes. Yes, some of them have been relocated (to accommodate human logistics) and, even though the boxes have endured all kinds of abuse, in addition to accepting new nails and screws, the Eastern



Bluebirds have never missed a nesting season. They, too, have enjoyed those gifts, and occasionally even share their boxes with the Wrens.

Members of our chapter volunteer to monitor the 12 boxes on a weekly basis during the Bluebird nesting season, which is normally mid-February through July, and those findings are relayed to the national Cornell Lab Nest Watch Program by our Clear Creek project coordinator, Jonathan Smith.



Trekking through the tall prairie grasses is a great time for visiting with the monitoring team and collecting chiggers. Judy Riley (MN 2014), Brenda Wellenreiter (MN 2014) and I gathered data (and chiggers) on two visits which involved finding 5 Bluebird eggs in one nest, 4 Bluebird eggs in another nest, and 7 Wren eggs in a third nest. Granted, some chicks may have already fledged by the dates that we monitored in May, so not every nest had eggs or nestlings, but the lessons in identifying nesting material and construction design were available with each inspection.

**Dorothy Thetford**

**MN 2001**

