

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



Gideon Lincecum Chapter

The GLC Tidings

From the President – Cindy Hobbs



Chapter Business - this is the time of the year when we slow down during the hot days of summer and we are certainly in the heat of it now. Some work is being done.

Judy Deaton and crew got Indian Creek looking great again after the floods. Dave Redden has a burn workshop coming up this month. The Chapter Meeting is approaching and we will discuss water, water, water. September is looking like we will have advanced training about trees and bird banding.

Check the website about the Annual TMN Meeting this year, a great way to get a large number of AT hours quickly and interact

with people all over the state. This will be my third year and I always learn something.

Please report your volunteer and AT hours promptly, this will prevent you losing hours because of time constraints. I am looking forward to seeing you all out and about this summer.

*October 21-23 in Montgomery, Texas: Save this date and plan to join us.
Registration will be opening soon.*

<http://txmn.org/2016-annual-meeting/>



Chapter Meeting & Program for July



All members are encouraged to join us at the July chapter meeting. We will be serving AIR CONDITIONING! In attendance will be chapter members Albert and Wilda Pecore who recently received the 2016 Land Stewardship Award from TPWD.

Saturday, July 16, 2016 at the LaGrange AgriLife Extension Office, 255 Svoboda Lane, La Grange, the chapter meeting starts at 9:00 a.m. and the program (offering AT hours for TMNers) begins at 11:00.

This program is free and open to the public. The topic is **"Water, Water, Water: Now What?"**. Our guest speakers are **David Van Dresar** (General Manager of the Fayette County Groundwater Conservation District), and **Jacob Daniel Apodaca** (Water Quality Coordinator for the Colorado River Watch Network of LCRA). Bring a sack lunch and join us. See the event on our chapter website for all the details.

Into the Woods



At our May 23 chapter meeting we enjoyed a wonderful program on useful plants of ancient Texans, presented by Dr. Leslie Bush. Then, undaunted by the mud, it was into the woods at Monument Hill where we talked the plant walk AND spotted a tree-climbing reptile. Many of us are familiar with this venomous native and many have had numerous close encounters this year. But, not everyone knew they were tree climbers too. Can you identify this snake? Learn more here:

<http://tpwd.texas.gov/education/resources/texas-junior-naturalists/be-nature-safe/venomous-snake-safety>

Undaunted by the Heat



Outdoor Education with Kids: The American Beautyberry was blooming on the trail at Lake Somerville as 3rd graders from Caldwell enjoyed a day of outdoor education. Helping TPWD staffer Joy Nutt, her mom Carol and her daughter Faith, were TMN-GLCers Carol Paulson, Tom Yates, and Lori Buffum along with a couple of Ag agents. What fun we had! Watch our website for our next kids in the park adventure.

Editor's Note: We were just in time with the Lake Somerville event. Sadly, state parks in our region were badly damaged by flooding

and Lake Somerville and Stephen F. Austin remain closed as of this writing. We were scheduled to participate in summer day camp at SFA but will have to try again next year.

Highway 159: On the road figuratively and literally on June 22...6 brave souls, enduring humidity, heat and buckets of sweat, made good on the chapter's commitment to clean up our adopted 2-mile stretch of the highway. Mary Ann & Dave Butler, Ron & Mary Ann Peach (pictured grinning through it all), Terry Rooney and Donna Mueller got'er done!



For those of you interested in "water" in Texas, you will enjoy the latest **Texas Watersheds Spring 2016 Newsletter from TPWD** "**Conservation News from Headwaters to Coast.**" Here's the link:

http://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_br_t3200_003_6_16.pdf



Indian Creek Nature Park: American Gothic Master Naturalist Style: 10 of us moved a mountain of mulch onto the trails at Indian Creek Nature Park in Burton on July 1. Thanks Lori Buffum (taking picture), Judy Deaton, Susan Scanio, Jim Weatherly, Royceanna Kendall, Steve Jackson, Belinda Weatherly, Mark Brown, Dave Redden, and Tom Scanio (camera shy). And Dave brought his big boy toy to help load our carts and move mulch onto the upper trail - a big help.

A couple of weeks before that, "A small but mighty team of 4 worked to rebuild trails and clear brush. The power of water to change this little

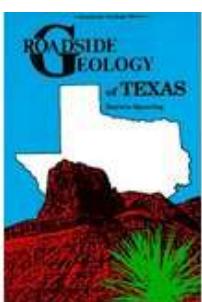
landscape was evident everywhere but with a little help, Nature will heal. Thanks to Lori Buffum, Judith Anne Deaton, Jim Wilson, and Tom Scanio (the chain saw master), the little park is navigable again. And, the pollinator garden is flourishing." We are right behind the Cotton Gin in Burton.



Bookmark the TMN-GLC Chapter website: <http://txmn.org/glc/>

Keep your contact information up to date with the chapter. Send any changes or corrections to

glcmembershipcommittee@hotmail.com



Karen Woods recommends this classic book as a wonderful companion for a Texas road trip:
Roadside Geology of Texas by Darwin Spearing

Photo Gallery

So many great finds on the Ranch - photos by Donna Mueller. [RIGHT] Prairie Iris (*Alophia drummondii*). [LEFT] Button Snakeroot, Rattlesnake-master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) - ancient medicinal uses, gave to children to ward off whooping cough. Root is strong stimulant. Also used as remedy for snake bite.



Hunting for dinner – Near the shores of Lake Livingston in the East Texas Piney Woods, my daughter and I were delighted to watch this bird wading in the swampy roadside ditch. Yellow-Crowned Night Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*).

Chapter Meetings (and AT programs):

July 16, September 17, November 19

TMN Annual Meeting:

October 21-23

TMN-GLC Flickr Group

Thanks to Betsy Palkowsky (Graduate, Class of 2016), a photo sharing website has been created for our chapter. The [Gideon Lincecum Master Naturalist Chapter](#) group has been created on the [Flickr website](#). This is a place to share the great nature photos you've taken on your property or in the field, and to ask questions and/or discuss topics you'd like to learn more about. Sharing photos and ideas from our experiences as fellow naturalists enables others to enjoy the things we see and do as we help ourselves and others preserve the land for which we are stewards. Please contact Betsy for assistance with Flickr: email bpalkowsky@outlook.com phone 281-728-3555. Full instructions and guidelines can be found printed in our *May 2016 GLC Tidings*.

The Fly (not the one starring Jeff Goldblum – who remembers?) by Cindy Hobbs

Is it just me? I swear the flies have quadrupled this summer. I can't open a door that 3 or 4 houseflies don't fly in. The housefly (*Musca domestica*), is found throughout the world and lives close to humans. They can carry many diseases that affect domesticated animals and humans. Understanding their habits and life cycle can help eliminate the most flies at the lowest cost to you or the environment.

The housefly is a nonbiting fly measuring about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long. Adult houseflies have 2 wings and four lengthwise black stripes on their backs. They are often confused with flesh flies or stable flies. The flesh fly has 3 stripes and its stomach is usually red. The stable fly feeds on blood and its mouthparts protrude from the front of its head.



An adult female lays 50 to 100 eggs at a time and about 500 eggs over a lifetime. They hatch after about 12 hours. A maggot passes through 3 larval stages and then forms a pupa, or cocoon. The adult fly emerges from the cocoon. They go from egg to adult in about 10 days.

There are three types of control methods used to suppress houseflies: cultural, biological and chemical.

Cultural control means changing the environment to prevent the flies from developing. The best cultural method is to properly dispose of any organic matter, such as veggies or food by-products. Clean your trash can, tie all trash bags tightly. Other cultural means are sticky fly strips, the bug lights (zap them), and screen all windows and doors.

Biological Control – Parasitic wasps and fire ants suppress housefly populations naturally. You can order treated fly pupae from insectaries in Texas and across the US. The pupae, which is already infected with a parasite, can be spread around the house and near where you notice a large number of flies. This method requires time and some work and is best used with other controls.

Chemical Control – Fly baits, such as QuickBayt and Golden Malrin, are usually sugar based and kills adult flies. There are numerous chemicals used to combat flies, please read the labels and use as directed.

I personally will only use chemicals as a last resort however, this maybe the year to bring out the big guns. Flyswatters anyone?

Interested in Learning More About Prescribed Burns? – by Dave Redden

On July 16, there is a chapter meeting and AT program on Water to be held in LaGrange. But for those of you who prefer fire over water, there is an opportunity for learning about prescribed burning that same day in Flatonia. The annual



meeting of **South Central Texas Prescribed Burn Association** has a training program scheduled from 10 AM – 3:30 PM. See the TMN-GLC chapter website for details, cost, rsvp, etc. Our state TMN office has approved this program for AT for TMN, so you can get about 5 hours if you are there for all of it.

The conflict between the chapter program on water and the prescribed burn training was not intentional. The prescribed burn program had been planned before the chapter meeting was announced, but it had not been publicized because we were waiting on confirmation from TPWD and the Flatonia VFD for the instructors and location. If you are not a member of SCTPBA, attending the SCTPBA business meeting from 8-10 AM would not be of much interest to you. You will have to choose whether fire or water is more important to you for AT.

Update on Quebe Prairie by Charlotte von Rosenberg

My photographs just can't convey the essence of well-watered prairie grasses gearing up for bloom time in August through October. Haymaking was accomplished back on December 9, 2015, 7 months ago. Regrowth was sufficient to prevent soil damage from hard rains in May. Now the sun is out and Quebe Prairie is lush beyond belief. It is almost hip

high in places, so thick it feels like walking in water. The color, structure, and growth habit are helpful for grass ID. I can see Little Bluestem, Big Bluestem, Indiangrass and Switchgrass: the Big Four. Distinguishing characteristics of Little Bluestem are the blue color at peak bloomtime, cascading leaves and vertical inflorescence. Look for Indiangrass by the color – vertical blue leaves with slashes of purple. Blooms will look like golden ears of corn. Big Bluestem is



green with slashes of purple. Its distinctive feature is the very tall bloom shaped like a turkey foot. Although I have not inspected a turkey's foot I'll take their word for it – very distinctive. Switchgrass grows in mounds of tall lush light green foliage. Seeds are in an open panical, not unlike johnsongrass seeds.

Prairie grasses are warm season perennial bunch grasses. They are excellent wildlife plants, providing shelter, nesting area and food for many native species of birds including bobwhite quail. Prairie grasses have roots 10 feet deep for water and nutrient cycling. Quebe Prairie was closed this spring for regrowth. Soon, when grasses bloom, we will be scheduling summer field trips to Quebe and other prairies for plant ID, seed collection and pure enjoyment of the sea of grass. See you there!



Sea Turtles of South Padre Island, Texas by Carol Paulson

On a recent vacation with my family to South Padre Island, we decided to visit the Sea Turtle Sanctuary on the island. You are probably already familiar with the story of Ila Fox Loetscher "The Turtle Lady of South Padre Island", who founded an organization on South Padre Island in 1999 to aid in the protection and recovery of the endangered Kemp's Ridley sea turtle. If you want to know more about her story, you can find it at www.seaturtleinc.org.



While Ila originally founded the organization to focus on Kemp's Ridleys, today it helps to conserve all species of sea turtles. Of the 7 named species of sea turtles in the world, 6 are defined as threatened: Leather backs (vulnerable) [pictured], Greens (endangered), Loggerheads (endangered), Hawksbills (critically endangered), Olive Ridleys (vulnerable), Kemp's Ridleys (critically endangered) and Flatbacks (data deficient). We viewed all of the threatened species in the tanks at the Sanctuary. All of the turtles brought to the sanctuary are evaluated for amount of damage and either healed and returned to the wild or if the injuries are too great, they are given a home at the Sanctuary.

What can cause a turtle to be so badly damaged that it might have to live in a tank, rather than the sea? Man is the principal source of their woes. Most threats are from entanglement in fishing gear – we saw evidence of this over and over in the tanks as most turtles have lost one or more flippers to fishing line entanglements. Another threat includes careless disposal of plastic and other plastics. One turtle was found trying to excrete a plastic bag. Obviously the tossed aside debris from our shore picnics can cause a lot of pain to a turtle's digestive system. Ocean pollution, poaching and illegal trade of eggs, meat and shells, coastal development and global warming are also contributing factors.

I was so impressed with the Sanctuary's devotion to the public's education, to rehabilitation and to conservation. There are biology scholarships, internship programs and of course, necessary everyday stuff like medications, filters, water, electricity, heaters, filters, etc. So much is going on that you would have to visit the website, or better yet the Sanctuary, and talk to the people who volunteer and work there. They are an amazing group of people with a forward focus. All of this is funded by your suggested donation of \$4 per adult and \$2 for children over 4. It doesn't seem possible does it?



Scholarship Award Time is Near – by Donna Mueller

Our chapter has committed to awarding a \$500 scholarship to a student in each of our 5 counties. The student will be selected by the Ag Agent for each county. At the award banquets, 2 or 3 chapter representatives will set up the recruiting table, make a short presentation, and present the check. If you would like to help represent our chapter in your county, please contact Donna Mueller, Scholarship Committee Director (979-966-2612 call or text msg). Here are the tentative dates: Washington County August 12, Colorado County August 14, Fayette County August 14, Austin County August 20, and Lee County August 21.

Book Review by Greg Walker

How to Grow Native Plants of Texas and the Southwest, by Jill Nokes, Revised and Updated Edition, University of Texas Press, 2001.

When first encountering this book, one can be forgiven for thinking that it could serve double-duty as a weight for pressing flowers. At 566 pages, this book promises a wealth of information, both dense and detailed, for the native plant enthusiast. The first 70 pages contain five chapters devoted to all aspects of native plant propagation including seed collection, seed germination, planting, vegetative propagation and transplanting. There are illustrations of seed shapes, leaf shapes and types of vegetative cuttings.

The remaining and by far the largest part of the book contains detailed information on the propagation of individual species. This section covers 155 genera, most of which include discussion of several individual species. Each genus is given a section to itself with description of flowers and fruit, range and preferred habitat, collection, storage and propagation. Each individual species is given a paragraph description of its distinguishing characteristics. Although it is not intended as a guidebook, the species descriptions can help distinguish between members of a particular genus.

As large as this book is, many Master Naturalists will find themselves wishing for more. The book is explicitly written for the nursery trade and the focus is on large landscaping plants. The plants presented here are trees and woody shrubs with only the occasional decorative vine (green-briar, really?). Range land restorers will need to look elsewhere for information on propagating grasses and forbs. This book deserves a place on any native plant reference shelf.

Local Seeds for Local Needs: the GLC Seed Bank by Greg Walker

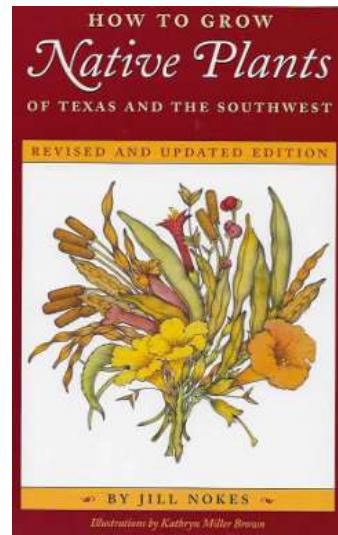
If you see someone stalking through the weeds with a bundle of paper lunch sacks clutched in hand, it just might be one of our Chapter's seed collectors. The GLC Seed Bank is a way for chapter members to share our native plant diversity.

In recent years, native plant seeds have become more and more available as an item of commerce. Why then would we want to collect these seeds by hand?

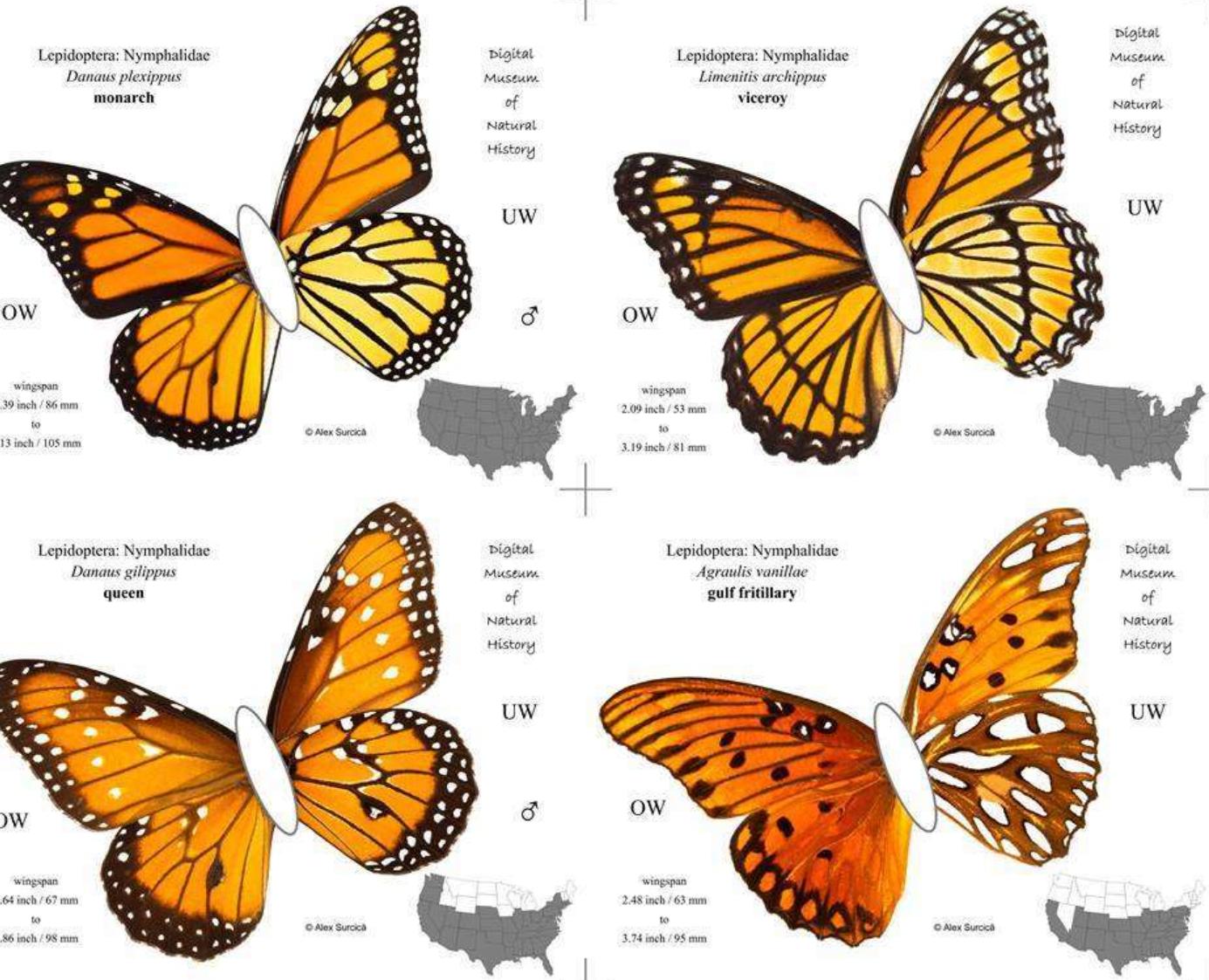
"Act locally" could well be a motto for Master Naturalists. The beauty and usefulness of native flora are also strong motivators.

The natural regions that cover our counties have a broad geographic extent. Even so, it is generally thought that native plants from the local vicinity will thrive better than the same species brought in from a distant location. Collecting and planting local seeds is a way to preserve our floral heritage and encourage the spread of native plants. Think of it as "crowd sourcing" native plant restoration.

Our seed bank functions like an exchange. Chapter members that contribute seeds to the collection can then withdraw seeds. At present the seed bank contains 37 samples of grasses across 10 species and 25 samples of forbs (wildflowers) across 15 species. We are looking to increase the breadth of the collection as well as getting some of these seeds back into the soil!



A handy comparison chart of 4 similar butterflies



Chapter Resources Keep You Informed, On Track, and In Touch

Texas Master Naturalist Website <http://txmn.org/> - the state website

Gideon Lincecum Chapter Website <http://txmn.org/glc> - visit often for event listings and more; no login required

TMN – GLC Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/21969044537/> - find us on Facebook and ask to join

Online Volunteer Management System: Go to the state website to log your volunteer and advanced training hours: <http://txmn.org/tmn-vms-users/> and then to the login page: <http://txmn.org/tmn-hours-entry/> You can bookmark the login page for easy quick access to your logbook.

The GLC Tidings newsletter is published 6 times a year. Submit articles and photos to Editor [Lori Buffum](#).