

At The Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge near Eagle Lake last Saturday I participated in collecting seeds for the plant materials facility in Kingsville. I learned to recognize Knot-Root Bristlegrass, Gulf Muhly and Florida Paspalum. Several beautiful clumps of Gulf Muhly were displayed among the diversity of the Attwater Prairie. I could easily recognize Yellow Indian Grass and Switchgrass. The Little Bluestem, Big Bluestem, and much of the Yellow Indian Grass seed were not ready for harvesting, but we were able to collect quite a lot of Switchgrass seeds. It was a fabulous day to be out on the prairie.



Yellow Indian Grass



Gulf Muhly



Florida Paspalum



Knot Root Bristlegrass



If you are trying to learn to identify grasses, now is the time to get out and look around. Did you know that in 2009 the Texas Legislature designated the third week in October as Texas Native Plant Week? I learned this from the LBJ Wildflower Center E-Newsletter. LBJWC has special events planned throughout the week beginning Sunday, October 14.

I'm looking forward to attending The Lone Star Water Forum in Brenham on October 13. The topic of the water forum this year is "Science and Politics of Water". I have become more aware of water issues this past year by attending the monthly Fayette County Ground Water Conservation District meetings and am looking forward to hearing from the remarkable line-up of speakers at the forum.

The annual TMN State Meeting is also this month-October 26-28-at Camp Allen, TX. Those attending will be exposed to members of other chapters across the state who are like-minded in their enthusiasm for sustaining and conserving our natural resources. There will be some great speakers and information that I hope our members will record and share with our chapter throughout the coming year. To keep our chapter momentum going and provide educational and entertaining programs, your input is critical.

On Friday, November 9, at Cat Springs Ag Hall, the Wildlife Habitat Federation will be hosting a field day on learning how to manage grasslands for livestock, turkey, quail, dove, deer, and other wildlife. There will be equipment and field demonstrations, landowners with expertise in native grasslands, university researchers, as well as TPWD specialist in the field of upland bird management.



SAVE THE DATE, *Saturday, December 8, 2012*, to attend our TMN-GLC Christmas social, at St. John's United Church of Christ, in Burton. (more details to come). There will be a brief business meeting to complete chapter business and introduce officers for 2013. As announced at our September 15 meeting, nominations for chapter officers---Pres, VP, Treasurer, Secretary--- are currently being considered. If you wish to nominate a chapter member for any of these positions, please contact me. Participation as a board member or committee member is a great opportunity. Challenge yourself to learn and expand your reservoir of experiences and expertise

Cindy

Festival Hill's Third Workday

Contributed by Judith Deaton

At 9am on September 26th seven members of the Chapter, who had taken the invasive plant training course, Tom Yates, Elisa Henderson, Bill and Judy Deaton, Mary Ann and David Butler, and Dave Redden, arrived at Menke House just in time for a kindly employee to ask if we were expecting breakfast. We assured her we were there to work.

The cooler September weather offered the first opportunity to start our planned clearance of invasive plant species from the woodlands inside the 200+ acre compound. We were unsure of the scope of the day's project as we drove in tandem through the student residences and over fields to the Saint Francis of Assisi woods. The day's agenda was initially to clear most of the of Chinaberry trees that had opportunistically sprung up along the woodland trail amongst the beauty berry, yaupon, cedar elm and oak cover, but by the end of the day we had no doubt that the project was going to be a long term commitment. On arrival Elisa led us to an area where we could park just out of the work area and we went through our assortment of equipment and made sure everyone was sprayed with Deet and had brought along gloves and a hat. Deaton Aussie, Sofie, trotted along after us as our mascot for the day.

The first part of the trail close to Elisa's home was quite overgrown with large Chinaberry trees and we set right to work in a slightly confused manner that quickly became organized into teams of two or three.



Those wielding chain saws (Dave, David, Tom and Bill, you were awesome) began taking down the large trees and Mary Ann, Elisa and I lopped brush and painted on a mixture of 15%

REMEDY in old cooking oil with blue dye that was poured into old cut away bleach bottles. We found this system worked very well. Clean up was easy, although Elisa's lovely yellow outfit took on a distinct blue tinge as she worked hard at painting stumps.

Proceeding along the main trail we realized that when the teams (that switched members from time to time) were working close to one another and not communicating too well, circumstances once led to a shout of "timber" and, although we are all very responsible, it seems we should all revisit safely rules for working in close



quarters in the woods. The only actual casualty of the day was the loss of Tom's hearing aid in the brush.



Half way down the main trail we gathered on the benches under the statue of a serene St. Joseph watching David finish felling the last Chinaberry that was hidden by yaupon and wondering where he got the energy. There is still one half of the trail left to clear, but we were all looking quite tired by this time and, for sure, each of us had a bubble over his head with thoughts of picnic time.

Once again at our vehicles we mustered the gear in one pile for claiming and broke out a small medical kit that came in handy for the odd scrape.

Back at Menke house, we gathered around a table in the garden under a beautiful arbor and were joined by Henry Flowers, the director of the gardens, for turkey and avocado salad sandwiches, fruit and other goodies, hibiscus/peach iced tea and great conversation. Thank you so much Elisa,

for the repast and thank you, Henry, for the home made cookies.



Picnicking certainly reinvigorated the crew and we journeyed home. Dave, Tom and Elisa returned later with Elisa's little dog, Lola, and searched for Tom's hearing aid. By some miracle he leaned down to pet the pup and there it was.

So folks, we should take advantage of the cool weather for another workday soon to continue clearing the woods and hope to have more members out there to enjoy this beautiful campus.

[*A Master Naturalist Looks at Nature's Remedies*](#)

Contributed by Kathy Cihlar

Golden Flowers- Sunny Medicine

Fall has finally arrived---well some days it feels like it. We've got leaves turning colors (I'm going with the fall thing not the drought thing), cooler temperatures at times, and the sneezing, sniffing, watery eyes and leaky, drippy noses. Yes its hay fever time in Texas---the fall version.

I'd like to talk of an herb/weed that is gracing the countryside now and sometimes called "Golden Glory of Late Summer". It is useful for the sinus drippiness and allergies, as well as coughs and colds with a lot of gunky drainage and congestion. It is astringent and anti-inflammatory in nature. The herb is Goldenrod and its sunny blooms can be found in disturbed

places, along roadsides and fields. For proper I.D. of this plant try Merriweathers guide to edible plants of Texas at <http://www.foragetexas.com>.

Goldenrod flowers can be infused into honey or honey and brandy for an elixir. This can soothe raw throats, calm congestion, and has been used successfully for S.A.D. when feeling cold, gloomy blues, and frustration. Also may lower B/P. I plan to make an elixir but teas can also be used.

Recipe: #1 Goldenrod elixir

Fill jar with Goldenrod flowers

Add 2/3 full with Brandy

Top with Honey

Let sit for 4 weeks, then strain out flowers, squeeze as much juice out as you can, compost flowers and put elixir back in jar, label it---used especially for congestion, drippy sinuses, or emotionally SAD days---try teaspoon at a time.

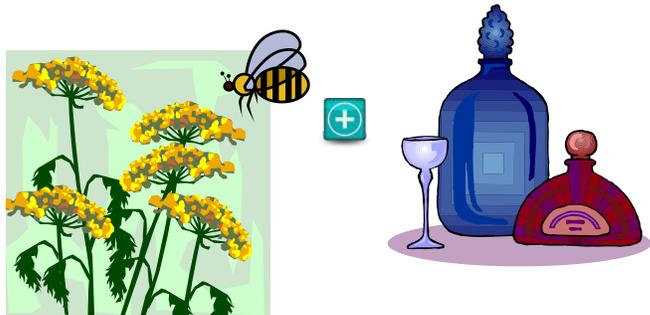
Recipe #2 Goldenrod Oil (topically for strains, sore muscles and joints)

1 cup Olive Oil or Almond, Grape seed, whatever organic oil you prefer

Handful of flowers and leaves

Place in double boiler and cook until plant parts are crunchy (usually couple of hours), use your vent on stove hood to keep moisture from dripping into oil. When infused, may change color of oil, strain (I use cheese cloth from Walmart), squeeze all out of plant parts, compost plants, and pour your oil into a jar with lid. Add a couple of vitamin E gel caps---puncture them and put the oil in the jar---this is a preservative. Label for sore muscles and joints and rub on several times a day. One can also add little bit of cayenne while cooking and/or essential oil drops when cooled--Lavender or Bay are good.

Goldenrod was called “Liberty Tea” following the Boston Tea Party. Americans turned to Goldenrod as a tea substitute. Its flowers and leaves have also been used as a dye and make a



nice yellow color. Legend says that if it grows near your house, occupants will have good fortune---another good reason not to mow all those weeds down. Be careful where you harvest--- busy roads are sort of toxic areas.



Hope you will get out and check out the Goldenrod---there's lots of "bugs" on the flowers, so dress accordingly. They will make sunny flower arrangements too.

KC out.

Native Prairies of Austin County

Contributed by Charlotte von Rosenberg

Below are pictures from Thursday September 6 when Luann and Lefty Yarnold, Jim Weatherly and Charlotte von Rosenberg visited several native prairies in Austin county. Our guide was Ken Blezinger who, along with Jim Willis of Wildlife Habitat Federation (WHF.org), is harvesting native grass and wildflower seeds from this prairie. They are experimenting with harvesting seeds mechanically. The market is there for native grass seeds. Work is needed to develop efficient and affordable production. Our group harvested seeds manually, using paper grocery bags. Pictured is big bluestem, the premier prairie plant. It was a bit early for big bluestem but we did get some seeds for our next greenhouse planting. Earlier in the year we harvested Illinois Bundle flower, purple and white prairie clover, and Mexican blanket. Also from Austin county we harvested rattlesnake master, gayfeather and native bergamot.

In October the Prairie Committee will plant another round of seeds at the Brenham High School greenhouse. This time we will plant big bluestem, partridge pea, Illinois bundle, rattlesnake master and echinacea. The question is -- will we be as fortunate with germination as last time?





CALENDAR FOR THE NEXT MONTH OR 2?

Make sure you mark all of these on your calendar. Each opportunity here will increase your knowledge as a Master Naturalist. (The camaraderie is a big bonus too!) These are in date order:

Friday, Saturday & Sunday, October 26-28 – TMN Annual Meeting

On-line registration available now at http://www.regonline.com/TMN_13th_annual_meeting
Camp Allen, Navasota, TX

Wednesday Nov 07 at 8:00am Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup (and in case of rain one week later Nov 14 Meet at St. John's Lutheran Church on the west side of Rutersville

Friday, November 9, Native Prairies & Wildlife Field Day - 8:15 am

Hosted by the Wildlife Habitat Federation at Cat Spring Ag Hall

13035 Hall Road, Cat Spring, TX 78933

Registration & Refreshments: 7:00 – 8:15am

Lunch Provided

Program End Time: 3:00 pm

Vendor Booths Close: 5:00 pm

Registration Cost: \$20 per person and \$35 per couple

Opportunities at Stephen F. Austin Park (See Cindy's e-mail of Oct. 10 for Flyer)

Saturday, December 8, 2012, GLC TMN Christmas Social St. John's United Church of Christ in Burton. Look for details soon. This will also be our next business meeting



There will be a short business meeting during our Christmas Social at St. John's to elect our roster of Officers for 2013. If you would like to nominate someone for any position, please contact Cindy Rodibaugh at cindyr@devonindustries.com