

Gideon Lincecum Chapter Texas Master Naturalist™ NEWS



August, September 2014

From the President:

September 2014

September already! Looking through the calendar today I must say we have gotten a lot accomplished this year already. We have offered numerous hours of Advanced Training for the year and our September program will be on Migration. Thank you, Karen Woods. We have gotten a training committee together for 2015. I can't thank them enough. Now, the push will be on to find enough students to make up a class. We have a few signed up already, but need more. If you know of someone that might be interested, please send them to our website to sign up. I will be placing newspaper articles starting this month, advertising the 2015 class.

Signed up and paid for the "Better Lights for Better Nights Conference", in Dripping Springs, and then was unable to attend. I do have their recommendations on outdoor lighting fixtures which I will attach. They have another session in March 2015, with luck I will make that one.

Better Lights for Better Nights

Help eliminate light pollution. Select the best fixture for your application using this guide. Use the lowest wattage bulb appropriate for the task and turn off the light when it's not being used.



www.TexasIDA.org

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I was invited to a session with the “Teaming with Wildlife – True to Texas”, meeting. They have asked our Chapter to act as a Hub for them, to basically act as a liaison between them and the local population and businesses. I need more information before I commit the Chapter to something like this. I would be interested to hear from anyone that knows of or has worked with this group.

The Chapter Meeting and Advanced Training class is on the 13th of September, NOT 20 September please mark your calendars accordingly. The chapter meeting will start at 9:00am, the program at 10:30! Our training will be on Migrations. Please join us.

Am anticipating some cool weather, hope it finds us soon.

Cindy Hobbs, President, TMN-GLC

The Boarder At My House

Contributed by Elisa Henderson



For 3 months we have had a handsome new boarder at our house. She chose a shady upper space on the porch with no wind. She is a black and yellow argiope, also called golden garden spider or writing spider. It is the largest size spider in our area and is very beneficial as they consume pests. My grand-children call her “Dracula” because she attacks all kinds of insects, even large grasshoppers. With a venomous bite she paralyses her prey before digesting part of it. The rest drops to the floor, including blood-drops and the grand-children call it vampire-blood.

It's so interesting to see

her come running when her net gets vibrated. This spider is supposed to be harmless to humans.

Now she has laid a huge egg sack with supposedly up to 1200 little spiders inside. We don't know yet when they will be crawling out!! I hope they move on and don't all stay here!



Woodworking for Wildlife

Contributed by Lori Buffum



We just never know what we might be called on to do! Butch Young, who volunteers regularly out at the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, put out a “call” to Master Naturalists to help build 10 new transport boxes. Sure sounded like fun to me, bringing back memories of many childhood hours spent with my Dad in his home workshop.

Our first session in the wonderful workshop out at the refuge involved measuring and inspecting the model to determine how to cut the plywood for the parts. Then it was measure and mark and saw and drill under the patient project management provided by Butch (and refuge staff members). Our team the first day was Butch, Russ Healy, Ron and MaryAnn Peach, and me. We managed to almost finish our first new box and cut most of the parts needed for the rest. Parts list: bottom, back, top, 2 sides, center panel, 2 doors, slots for the doors, vent holes drilled in the back and sides then covered with netting.

Our next session was when the tricky work began of assembling and nailing so everything fit together allowing the doors to slide up and keeping as much light out of the “duplex” as possible. Dave Redden joined our team and he and Butch and Russ gradually mastered the assembly technique. Cindy Rodibaugh and Debra Healy and I worked together on making more parts (like door handles) and cutting cardboard to add a “ceiling” to each compartment. By now, the boxes were really taking shape and we finished 4.

When I arrived at the refuge for the 3rd session, I found out that refuge staff members had been working with youth groups and had finished assembling most of the final 6 boxes. Butch and Russ went out on the prairie for invasives clearing and seed collection while I worked with Ferris (refuge staff member) and a couple of delightful FFA high schoolers who had been interning for the summer. We tweaked all the boxes to make them even darker inside, to make sure the doors slid smoothly into place, to label them with the APCNWR letters, to add newspaper and hay to the floor of each compartment and to stack them in the ready room – they were going to be put to use the next day! What a great feeling.

Oh, by the way, what is a “transport box?” To help boost the population of these endangered birds, there are several breeding sites (Houston Zoo being one) where eggs are hatched and birds are raised until they can fend for themselves. Then, they are transported to the refuge with as little stress as possible (hence the secure environment made for them in the boxes). At the refuge, they are released into acclimation pens for a period of time where they are protected from predators and provided a little extra forage.



I'm looking forward to working out at the refuge again and doing my little part to help the wildlife and the prairie. The refuge is open to visitors so come on out to explore. Meanwhile, here is a great little video produced by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (the transport boxes even make a cameo appearance): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyIOPXsm_W4 .

Fun With Johnson Grass

Contributed by Jan Redden



By the end of the summer, the Brenham Elementary School Outdoor Classroom garden plot was all but obscured by Johnson grass. It was the job of MN Weed Busters, Carol Paulson, Tom Yates, Tom and Susan Scanio, Dave and Jan Redden, and Cindy Rodibaugh to defeat the weeds and to prepare for this year's 'crop' of 1st graders, who will plant a fall vegetable garden soon.

Day one: Where did the garden go? Fire up the weed wackers!



Day two: The beds emerge and the workers 'plot' to defeat the return of the weeds.



Day three: Master Gardener, Jerry Norman, taught us to construct a 'lasgana' weed barrier, with layers of cardboard, newspapers and garden mesh (left). A layer of mulch tops it off. (right)



Almost Ready to go!



Jim Weatherly and Lori Buffum join us on our last day of work, Sept. 11

[Prairie Notes](#)

Contributed by Charlotte von Rosenberg

This is the perfect time of year for identifying native grasses. Little Bluestem is sending up its unmistakable blue stems. Indiangrass is putting on showy golden blooms. Big Bluestem will soon pose with its famous turkey foot profile. Please mark your calendars for Saturday November 1, 2014. **The Seed Collection Workshop** will be held at Quebe Farm at the Main House. We will have USDA experts Shelley Maher and John Reilley show us how to collect, clean and store grass seeds. Everybody please bring your lunch. After the indoor instruction and lunch, we will go out on the prairie and collect seeds.

It has been suggested and I think it is a good idea to join forces with Native Prairie Association of Texas <http://texasprairie.org/> to help us determine if any prairies on our list are native remnants. Gate signs can be presented to the owners of true remnants at one of the Cat Spring events. Meanwhile, the focus has shifted to outreach and education on the subject of native grasses. On July 9, at Tom Yates's invitation, I gave a Power Point Presentation on Using Native Grasses in Landscaping to the Chappell Hill Garden Club. Creating the presentation was a challenge but now we can take this show on the road to any interested groups. Also, if you see or have any interesting usage of native grass in landscaping, please email those to me at quebefarm@yahoo.com as I want to improve the presentation. Really good photos are hard to find.

Another valuable website on the subject of native grasses is <http://www.ckwri.tamuk.edu/>. That's TAMU Kingsville. I had forwarded this site once, but it is worth repeating. This site contains the very latest information of prairie restoration/reclamation/reinvention and more. Those who are interested should sign up to receive their e-newsletter. The Native Prairie Association also has a most excellent e-newsletter and website. These sites make excellent summer reading. **See you on the prairie!**

Why it's called "Tall Grass:

Charlotte at home with Eastern
Gamagrass



[Snakes on my Bluebird Boxes](#)

Contributed by Carol Montgomery

I was having a problem with predators on my Bluebird nest boxes and actually saw a snake in one of my boxes. Even though I had predator guards of hardware cloth, apparently they weren't working. Betsy Hargrove told me to use garden netting and since I put that up I have caught two 5' rat snakes. They get entangled and cannot get out. I wait for them to die, (cruel) and then cut them out and renet. The birds are not bothered at all and they continue to build new nests.



Sept. 7.....I just tallied my bluebird fledgings today and did the same as last year...52 birds. However, I know I would have done better if I had figured out the snake problem earlier...I lost 15 to 20 birds to chicken snakes. That problem has been solved big time with



the garden netting. *What I have not*

been able to resolve is the wasp infestation. I remove wasps from the same boxes every week. I soap them with ivory soap, but am reluctant to spray the box. *If anyone has a wasp remedy, I am willing to try it.*



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:

Saturday, Sept. 13 2014– Winedale – Chapter Meeting at 9:00AM

Saturday, Sept. 13, 2014 – Winedale – AT Program - Migrations

This will follow immediately after the chapter meeting

Saturday, Oct. 4, 2014 – Lone Star Water Forum 8:30AM – 2PM

Washington County Fairgrounds Event Center 8:30AM; register at www.texas-wildlife.org/resources/events

Oct. 24-26, 2014 – Mo Ranch, -2014 TMN Annual Meeting

For more information or to register, go to <http://txmn.org>

Nov. 1, 2014 – AT Program, Quebe Prairie

USDA experts Shelley Maher and John Reilley show us how to collect, clean and store grass seeds. Please bring your lunch. After the indoor instruction and lunch, we will go out on the prairie and collect seeds

A Good Idea: Join us on Facebook. If you are already on Facebook, all you have to do is look for the Gideon Lincecum Master Naturalist group and ask to join. The more the merrier! Another good way to share your TMN adventures and pictures.



Please turn in your Volunteer and AT hours to Carol Daniels at glcmembershipcommittee@hotmail.com by Oct. 10!

Have You Helped With a Proscribed Burn Yet?

Allen and Karen Ginnard in Fayette County on Aug. 31, 2014

