



Mission. To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.



**Master Naturalist Guadalupe Chapter
Treasurer's Report
from 04-28 to 05-25, 2020**

**A LOOK
at the
BUDGET**

BEGINNING BALANCE (Includes \$5.00 in savings)

\$4,022.18

INCOME

4/30/2020	RBFCU Interest	\$0.16
5/8/2020	2 memberships Donation to Young Naturalists	\$150.00

TOTAL:

\$150.16

PAYOUTS

1128	Nancy Masterson	Nature Education	199.71
		Chapter Publicity	108.45
		Citizen Science, Forest Health	35.99
		Class Advertising	13.25

TOTAL:

\$357.40

ENDING BALANCE (Includes \$5.00 in savings)

\$3,814.94

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Undeposited funds	\$ 0
Unpaid expenses	\$ 0

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John Edson, Treasurer

Committee Reports

Citizen Science Committee Report:

by Chris Dyess

Activities which fall under the Citizen Science Committee have also been affected this spring by the shelter-in-place guidelines. The Forest Health Initiative at Park West started out well with most of the ligustrum being girdled in the “oak motte” area near the park pavilion. We broadcast native wildflower seeds along sections of the hiking trail and worked with TLU students in early March during their day of community service. Trash and overhanging limbs were removed from around the pavilion at this time. We have currently suspended work on the Forest Health activities at Park West, but plan to resume in late fall.

Earlier this spring we completed construction of the bird viewing blind at the Irma Lewis Seguin Outdoor Learning Center. Our chapter birders have also been submitting data on eBird to Cornell Laboratories, recording and reporting information on the Great Backyard Bird Count and Project Feeder Watch, and have been keeping the feeders full of seed at Warbler Woods and SOLC.

Craig Hensley with Texas Parks and Wildlife presented a training class on how to use the iNaturalist app in early March. The class was well attended, and members have been entering data into the system. We now have iNaturalist project areas delineated for the Seguin Outdoor Learning Center, Walnut Creek Park in downtown Seguin, Park West, Warbler Woods, and Crescent Bend. Several members do identification confirmation work on iNaturalist.

Water quality monitoring at Plum Creek and the San Marcos River, monarch butterfly monitoring, and ongoing work at the butterfly garden in Park West are just a few of the other activities we have been involved with this spring.

So far this year, our chapter has logged in over 300 volunteer hours into VMS on Citizen Science projects!

Membership Committee Report:

by Michelle Darnell

What an amazing group we have, everyone has been working so hard on getting volunteer hours and AT hours done during this time of shelter in place. I am amazed at all the things people are still able to do while staying safe.

At this time, we would like to congratulate seven of our members who have earned their re-certification pins for 2020, the Bumble Bee.

Marilyn Anderson, Michelle Darnell, Mark de Kiewiet,
Chris Dyess, John Edson, Nancy Masterson, and Sandi Wheeler

We also have 3 Master Naturalist from the Class of 2019 who have earned a double certification.
Bobby Cowley, Elaine Cowley and Kathy Pearson

We would also like to honor one of our members for receiving her Bronze Dragonfly pin. This pin is awarded to members once they have logged 250 volunteer hours.

Congratulations and Thank You,
Sandi Wheeler

If you have any questions about recording your VMS time, I am available to help you, Just send me an email or text and I will get back to you, usually within a couple of hours.

Michelle Darnell, Membership chairperson
mdarnelltex@gmail.com, or text 210.601.8957

Nature Education Committee:

by Nancy Masterson

Our sponsor, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, has issued its TMN Guidelines for Return to Service. In light of public safety, we will not hold Discover What's Swimming in June or Discover Rocks in July at either Seguin Public Library or Crescent Bend Nature Park in Schertz.

We intend to restart our nature education programs for families with **Discover A Bug's World** on Saturday, September 12 in Schertz and Monday, September 14 at Seguin Library. Sign up now with Mark deKiewiet (mark.dekiewiet@att.net) to join the team to revise this program with no-touch guidelines.

The new **Horns and Thorns** program team has formed with Tom Hardaway as leader, and Kathy Pearson, David Pearson, Liz Romero, Chris Dyess as members. The theme is "Stayin' alive is tough" and will focus on camouflage and defenses in plants and animals. It is slated for October 10 and 12. Contact Tom at tehardaway@yahoo.com to join the planning team.

Kate Schnautz will lead the new **Discover Nature Journaling** team, with the theme "Real naturalists record and remember" for November 2 and 14. Sign up with her at kates_schnautz@yahoo.com.

We, as Master Naturalists, have enjoyed taking our nature programs to families in parks, schools, non-profits and libraries. However, we understand people will be cautious about group settings for some time to come. Going forward, let's explore revising our Discovery Programs into .pdf versions for parents to download and lead their own children in outdoor nature education activities. We have many models to explore, including TPWD's own Project Wild curriculum. I would like to hear from any of you who were former teachers on how best to organize our programs into backyard activities. Contact me at nsethermasterson@gmail.com.

Mark deKiewiet is already working on revising **Discover Buzzing & Blooming** and was able to try out a new activity with his Junior Master Naturalists kids in March. He is working with Matt Miranda from 4-H in a test program for older students.

Program Committee:

by Clara Mae Marcotte

The following programs have been arranged:

- Clara Mae Marcotte on Wildflowers
- Tom Hardaway on Making Dirty Water Clean Again: How Waste Water Plants Operate
- Liz Romero on Soils of Guadalupe County

Training Class Committee:

by Marilyn Anderson

Working under the Covid-19 constraints, the committee has moved forward to recruit students for the Fall class. Nancy Masterson and Kathy Pearson were charged with the task of producing a new recruitment flier. Professionally produced copies are now available and are being distributed at various locations. Michelle Darnell has the fliers; please contact her if you would like one [or more!] to put somewhere. **We encourage you to share class information and the application with contacts you feel would be interested; a copy is attached to this email.**

The committee has completed most of the tasks necessary for the class to begin on August 11. We will be prepared to accommodate whatever requirements are necessary for face-to-face meetings – social distancing, hand washing/sanitizing, and sanitizing the meeting areas we use. Our one unknown will be the ongoing developments out of our control.

We have two “Meet and Greet” events scheduled in July for the purpose of introducing class prospects to the Master Naturalist program. The Seguin session will be held on Wednesday, July 15 and the Schertz session on Tuesday, July 21; times for both will be 6:00 – 7:00 PM. Again, we will be waiting to see what requirements are in place for face-to-face meetings.

Bringing in new members is one of the most satisfying aspects of the Master Naturalist program. The Committee looks forward to an exciting new class this Fall.

ADVANCED TRAINING

Weekly Webinars from Bexar County AgriLife Extension Service

To join, go to the Bexar County AgriLife Extension website <https://bexar-tx.tamu.edu/> at the date and time of the presentation. Please note you cannot join until about 10 minutes before the lecture is about to start:

June 3rd / 12:00 noon

The "Other" Beneficial Insects Part 1, Molly Keck

June 10th / 12:00 noon

The "Other" Beneficial Insects Part 2, Molly Keck

Online Aquatic Vegetation Identification and Management

Date: Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Time: 21:00 – 1:00 PM

Description: Aquatic weed growth is a serious management problem for Texas pond owners. Sam Womble, AgriLife Extension agriculture and natural resources agent, said the program will be presented online via Microsoft Teams and cover various aspects of how to identify and manage different types of aquatic vegetation. It will be presented by Womble and Brittany Chesser, AgriLife Extension aquatic vegetation management program specialist and lead diagnostic scientist at the Texas A&M University Aquatic Diagnostics Laboratory, College Station.



(Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service photo)

To register, email Chris Lambert at the AgriLife Extension office for Bexar County at christopher.lambert@ag.tamu.edu

Free.



If you are aware of other webinars, please send information to me at MarilynA@access4less.net and I will distribute to our members.

CURRENT GUIDELINES FROM STATE OFFICE

You are encouraged to read the policies below for changes in Master Naturalist requirements.

Advanced Training Annual Requirements – 2020 INTERIM POLICY

- **Online-based training and webinars will accepted for all of the minimum of 8 hours of advanced training hours required for certification.** Additional AT hours can be earned through distance or in person courses once shutdown lifted.
- We encourage members to consider attending in person advanced trainings in the fall once travel & health restrictions lift.
- We encourage chapters to host multi-chapter or regional advanced training webinars/online programs to limit stress on presenters.

- We encourage the priority of those online training/webinars that are live, allow for speaker/audience interaction and allow for questions/discussion at the end.
- We encourage chapters to host post-training discussion groups if speaker isn't available for questions/discussion.
- We encourage limits to those advanced trainings that are pre-recorded, not live or not interactive in their online format. **No "learning by YouTube"**.

Volunteer Service Requirements – 2020 Events & Situations

- There will be **no change in the minimum requirements for volunteer service** for certification/recertification in 2020
- But there are some options to switch to distance service:
 - Write a newsletter article spotlighting a local SGCN species or make a presentation to give in the fall.
 - Verify or assist with curating observations in iNaturalist or eBird * (*more guidance on CitSci volunteer service coming soon.)
 - Contributing to the chapters blog/newsletter
 - Planning your chapter's 20th anniversary events/celebration/etc.
 - Planning for fall trainings, ATs and projects
 - Grant writing
 - Updating chapter websites
 - Updating chapter brochures and outreach materials
 - Reviewing/making comments to the TMN bylaws, CMOP and COH documents for possible considerations to state program office should consider for 2020 updates.
 - Join a planning committee for the TMN Annual Meeting and events.
 - Assist leadership with managing your chapter, going through and organizing chapter files whether they are electronic or paper files.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE** – ALL volunteer service MUST meet local and federal guidelines for limited travel and social distancing. Local Guidelines currently vary city to city and county to county.
 - Some considerations – We encourage members to limit engaging in service at parks, nature centers, gardens even if following distancing and cleaning guidelines – consider your travel there (i.e stopping at a gas station) or the potential safety situations when working by yourself at a remote site. It is strongly recommended that these types of service be limited out of an abundance of caution and are not required to complete under social distancing restrictions.

Latest Activity Guidelines from the State office:

TMN Chapters should follow the three waves of guidance outlined in the AgriLife Reopening Guidance Document and summarized below. TMN Volunteers will adhere to guidelines that apply to employees, office and events by wave and as set by local county offices.

Wave 1 – Beginning May 18th

- No gatherings until Wave 2 is in place.
- Local offices should consider setting a schedule with rotations if a large number of volunteers are frequently present.

Wave 2 – Beginning June 1st

- Group meetings of 10 or fewer people only if social distancing can be practiced.
- Additional volunteer may return to work with the office capacity not exceeding 50% but should practice social distancing. Wearing masks is encouraged when in public spaces.

Wave 3 – Beginning July 1st

- Group meetings of 25% capacity of space or fewer people only if social distancing can be practiced.
- All volunteers may be at work site but should practice social distancing. Wearing masks is encouraged when in public spaces

Nature Articles for Your Enjoyment

Pearl Milkweed Vine, a Jewel for your Yard

by Clara Mae Martcotte



One of my favorite plants is Pearl Milkweed Vine or Matelea reticulata. It goes by many names including green milkweed vine, net vein milkvine, and netted milkvine. The plant is a Texas native and is found throughout central, south and west Texas according to Wildflower.org. Michael Eason adds that it becomes less common as you get further south to Mexico or west to Big Bend. Locally it can be easily found in Seguin's Park West.

Pearl milkweed is a perennial vine growing from six to 12 feet. The white or green flowers bloom from April through June. Seedpods are long, slender and spiny. As with most native plants, pearl milkweed gets by with low water usage. The plant likes part shade. In Park West, it is growing along the tree line, usually up against a cedar. Wildflower says that it has high deer resistance.

When searching the Internet, I found an interesting 2013 comment from the Texas Butterfly Ranch saying that there doesn't seem to be evidence that Monarchs and Queens use it as a host plant. Wildflower.org has an ambivalent comment under the *M. reticulata* heading: "Members of the Milkweed family are host to Queen and Monarch butterflies," while avoiding saying, one notes, that pearl milkweed vine is a host. Neither Eason nor Geyata Ajilvsgi mention butterflies.

Another interesting comment I found in Ajilvsgi is her directions as to placement. She says to put the vine in a place where the foliage "will not be disturbed because of the obnoxious odor." I right out and smelled my vine. It certainly doesn't smell like mint, but I wouldn't call it obnoxious. And besides, the flowers are so beautiful that who cares what it smells like!

If the plant is blooming, you will have no problem identifying it. If you only have foliage to observe, the leaves are opposite, 4.5 long and 3.25 wide, with a long stalk and tapered tips. They look like a long heart to me and are somewhat reminiscent of violet leaves. When you press your thumbnail on a leaf, you get the characteristic drop of milk found in most of the *asclepiadaceae*.

Plant pearl milkweed vine for enjoyment, for the pollinators, or for the seedpods which Ajilvsgi recommends you use in dried flower arrangements.

Sources: Wildflower.org; Wildflowers of Texas by Geyata Ajilvsgi; Wildflowers of Texas by Michael Eason; Texasbutterflyranch.com/2013/04/25/got-milkweed-updated-plant-guide-for-central-and-south-texas/.



In keeping with the May BioBlitz theme of Invasive Species identification, let's take a brief look at a few subjects that might be of interest to Texas Master Naturalists.

First, exactly what is an invasive species, anyway?

According to an Executive Order from the USDA's National Invasive Species Information Center, www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov, "an invasive species is any species that is:

- (1) non-native (alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and
- (2) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm to human health."

When the thought of invasive species crosses our minds (or at least, my mind,) it is usually when we are facing some annoying intruder into our yard, garden or dwelling. A few examples of these pests are (1) imported fire ants (2) Johnson Grass (3) Bermuda Grass, (which loves tilled or disturbed soil) and of course, (4) feral hogs. None of these invaders are native to Texas. But, let me add another quick point. There are a lot of troublesome species (which tend to invade) which ARE native to Texas and these species escape many lists because they are native. A few of these little offenders are (1) poison ivy (2) huisache (3) pocket gophers (4) sennabeen (or, seenie beans, as we called them when I was young) and (5) stinging nettle.

How hard is it to identify invasive species? The website www.texasinvasives.org is really a handy site for determining what is alien and what is not alien to Texas. That's great if you are on a field trip and spot some uncontrolled Bahiagrass. Some really bad invasives, though, are really hard to identify. These can include pathogens which kill individual plants and animals. Often, the first time we notice these deadly pests is by the devastation they have left behind. My first example is the problem of Oak Wilt. This disease is caused by a fungus called *Bretziella fagacearum*. There are three known treatments, each of which is only partially effective, and then only if you catch it soon enough. The tragedy is that it is usually too late by the time you take notice and your centuries-old landmark Live Oak is gone.

According to the Texas Invasives website, Oak Wilt is now present in 22 states, and www.forestinvasives.ca (Canada) tells us that the same species of fungus is killing oak trees in Canada.

Fortunately, for reasons unknown to me, many Live Oaks seem to be unaffected by the fungus. I know this from examples on my own property, where I have a motte of Live Oaks with some old dead tree carcasses, but other healthy looking trees just a few feet away. The disease is also rare or unknown along the coastal states of the Deep South.



A couple of other imported deadly tree pathogens are Dutch Elm Disease and Chestnut Blight. Texas was not in the historical range of the American Chestnut, but the entire United States has suffered greatly from what is almost the total loss of one of the most economically important forest species.



And there is at least one case where an invasive species seems to have had a somewhat indirect effect on a native species. Here I am talking about the Imported Fire Ant and its impact on an old Texas Favorite, the Horned Lizard (we called them Horney Toads). I have read that the Red Harvester Ant (we had several beds of them around our house when I was growing up) was the favored food of the Horned Lizard. The Imported Fire Ant has greatly reduced the population of the old Red Ants, and this then led to the loss of the

Horned Lizard, (along with loss of habitat and possibly a deadly pathogen, as well,) which has virtually disappeared from DeWitt County. (By the way, I used to handle Horney Toads with my bare hands. They were harmless and I never saw one shoot blood out of its eyes, like the books say they will.)

A couple more websites that are essential reading are (1) www.tsuinvasives.org and (2) www.stateimpact.npr.org/texas, which has quite a few news articles about invasive species.

Thanks Thanks

Clara Mae and David for contributing these wonderful articles to the Chapter Newsletter.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Please send announcements and news items for distribution in the newsletter to Marilyn Anderson, MarilynA@access4less.net.

Deadline for next issue – Friday, June 26 for the July 2020 edition.

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