



*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.*

## TRAINING CLASS

The Committee met on June 15 and at this time, we are planning to continue with our Fall Training Class. Discussion was held on how we can provide a safe environment for students, presenters and class leaders. Sandi Wheeler and Kathy Pearson are exploring the use of web-based instruction [ZOOM] if necessary for some classes.

All presenters are confirmed. We have a wonderfully talented group of speakers again and I'm excited to offer such quality instruction to our students.

Upcoming Events:

### Meet N' Greet Open Houses

Wednesday, July 15  
6 – 7:00 PM  
AgriLife Extension  
210 E. Live Oak, Seguin

Tuesday, July 21  
6 – 7:00 PM  
Schertz Senior Center  
608 Schertz Parkway, Schertz

## 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:

July 15<sup>th</sup> / 12:00 noon

How Insects are Beneficial or Harmful and the Truth about Asian Giant Hornets!

Molly Keck

Bexar County Extension is offering other webinars but they center on veggie gardening. You might want to watch for your personal pleasure and knowledge, but they are not Master Naturalist topics.

Also, to watch past webinars, go to this YouTube link.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWMk6LqNJUB6ZzZyH1UVGFw>

## Texas Stream Team San Marcos - Standard Core Water Quality Citizen Scientist Training



Date/Time: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 / 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM **OR**

Date/Time: Sunday, July 26, 2020 / 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Description: Anyone with a desire to become a citizen scientist or learn more about the natural resources in Texas can be involved in our citizen scientist trainings and programs. Citizen scientists monitor a wide variety of habitats from rivers, creeks, ponds, and lakes to bays, bayous, and estuaries. Citizen scientists range from school age to senior citizens, from individuals to organized groups like Master Naturalists.

Standard Core monitoring involves performing tests for parameters such as conductivity, dissolved oxygen, pH, total depth, water and air temperature, and water transparency using a chemical Standard Core kit. In addition to these parameters, Standard Core citizen scientists also conduct various field observations. Texas Stream Team citizen scientist data assist communities, government agencies, businesses and industries, and educational organizations in promoting informed natural resource management decisions.

Location: Ramon Lucio Park, 601 S CM Allen Pkwy, San Marcos, TX

Contact: Rachel Sanborn [San Marcos River Ranger citizen science coordinator] at [riverrangers@sanmarcosriver.org](mailto:rivrangers@sanmarcosriver.org) for more information or reserve a spotlighting

## E. coli Water Quality Citizen Scientist Training

Date: Saturday, July 18, 2020

Time: 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Location: Spring Lake Hall, 201 San Marcos Springs Dr, San Marcos, TX

Description: *E. coli* monitoring involves performing tests for *E. coli* which can be performed at the same sampling time and location as your monthly Core monitoring. *E. coli* is measured to determine the relative risk of swimming (contact recreation) in a water body. *E. coli* is a bacteria that originates from the wastes of warm-blooded animals, and the presence of this bacteria indicates that associated pathogens from waste may be reaching a body of water. Sources of *E. coli* include inadequately treated sewage, improperly managed animal waste from livestock, pets, aquatic birds and mammals, or failing septic systems. Texas Stream Team Standard *E. coli* citizen scientists are certified by completing a three-phase training that measures the physical and chemical parameters of water mentioned above.

Contact: RSVP by emailing [TxStreamTeam@txstate.edu](mailto:TxStreamTeam@txstate.edu) and please note your name, email, phone number, and if you will be staying for the entire duration of the training.

## **Bexar Audubon Society ZOOM - “The Edwards Aquifer – Our Unique Treasure”**

Date: Wednesday, July 22, 2020

Time: 6:30 – 7:30 PM

Description: The Edwards Aquifer is the lifeblood for dozens of communities – and millions of people – in Central and South Central Texas, so too for over 60 species of plants and animals that live here and nowhere else on the planet. Blind salamanders, catfish, crustaceans, and other “cave critters” have evolved in isolated habitat “islands” within the aquifer, in the dry caves above the water table, and at the Great Springs. The Edwards Aquifer and its Great Springs are highly vulnerable because of their unique geology and hydrology.

Speaker: Annalisa Peace, Executive Director of Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance. She holds an MS in Urban Administration from Trinity University and has over thirty years’ experience working with government and non-profit organizations in a variety of capacities.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86062042973?pwd=WVE1ZFVEaW9qelpVUDNFZHBkQU56QT09>

Meeting ID: 860 6204 2973

Password: 422557

*Be sure to enter a First and Last Name to Join the Meeting; otherwise, you will not be admitted*

## **WEBEX: Dragons and Damsels Oh My – The World of Odonates**

Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2020

Time: 10 – 11:00 AM



Description: Join TPWD Texas Nature Trackers Biologist **Craig Hensley** for a look at the world of dragonflies and damselflies. These ancient predators, around since the time of dinosaurs, are well-adapted predators of both water and air. You’ll be introduced to their adaptations, natural history and meet a host of species from both groups, learning how to go about identifying these amazing creatures.

To Join Webex meeting:

[https://tpwd.webex.com/webappng/sites/tpwd/meeting/download/6d7ae53a8e6444689445933617a9d846?siteurl=tpwd&MTID=m3276290024148ab6a03682fad34a26c9in meeting](https://tpwd.webex.com/webappng/sites/tpwd/meeting/download/6d7ae53a8e6444689445933617a9d846?siteurl=tpwd&MTID=m3276290024148ab6a03682fad34a26c9in%20meeting)

Meeting number (access code): 133 191 9049

Meeting password: Psvj8uF5BX6



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

**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 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

### Mexican Primrose Willow

By Clara Mae Marcotte



Walking along Walnut Creek behind the Seguin library, I discovered a Mexican primrose willow growing beside a concrete drain. It was in full bloom and was a lovely surprise. Once I started researching, however, I discovered several Internet sites which referred to it as an invasive weed. Luckily, it is native and is growing where being invasive doesn't really matter. When growing in water, the plant has two types of roots, one which anchors the plant to the soil, and the other containing air sacs keeping the plant afloat.

Ludwigia octovalvis has many other names including narrow-leaf water primrose, seedbox, and false loosestrife. Linnæus named the genus after the German botanist Christian Gottlieb Ludwig. The plant blooms from July (according to Geyata Ajilvsgi, although I took the photo May 31) to October. It is a perennial and grows along streams, ditches, edges of marshes, and basically in wet areas. The flower is yellow with 4 sepals and 4 petals. The leaves are alternate. Fruit is 1 ¾ inches long and 1/3 inch thick according to Michael Eason. Ajilvsgi says the fruit is very attractive and is used in dried flower arrangements. When I went back today to take more photos, the maintenance men had cut it down. They left all the giant ragweed, however.

Supposedly, according to an Internet site author named P.H. Raven, the leaves can be made into tea. The plant also has medicinal uses that are carminative, laxative and also as a vermifuge. It is used as a treatment for almost everything according to this author. (Please remember that neither I nor Master Naturalists go along with this. ONLY ingest plant material if you have a reputable source.)

Another Internet site ([ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)) listed an article claiming anti-aging effects of *L. octovalvis* on *Drosophila melanogaster* (the fruit fly) and SAMP8 mice (senescence-accelerated-prone 8). Extract of the plant extended the lifespan of flies on a high calorie diet. This study is dated 2013 so perhaps other researchers will look into how supplements of the Mexican primrose willow can treat our own age-related disorders.

## NATIVE WILD GRAPES OF TEXAS

By David Benbow

It is wild grape picking season in Central Texas. I know this because the large Mustang Grape (*Vitis mustangensis*) vines on my place are loaded with clusters of dark purple fruit. I usually consider July 4 as the average grape harvest time, but they seem to be a little early this year. Luckily for wild grape enthusiasts, they will normally stay ripe on the vine for a couple of weeks, allowing plenty of time to harvest them.



Mustang grapes are dioecious, which means only the female vine produces fruit. I've never done a scientific assessment, but it seems that every time I go out looking for grapes in unexplored territory, most of the new vines I find are without fruit and therefore male. I'd like to see some real science to confirm (or refute) my amateur findings on whether male-female vines are present on a 50-50 basis or 90-10, as my observations suggest.

In my grape research, I found references that say there are 14 different natural varieties of wild grapes in Texas, with the Mustang and Muscadine (*Vitis rotundifolia*) being the most common. The wild grapes are generally resistant to Pierce's Disease, caused by the pathogen (*Xylella fastidiosa*.) The prevalence of Pierce's Disease has been a major obstacle to the development of a mature wine industry in Texas.

The wild grape's resistance to another problem, the parasite Phylloxera (*Daktulosphaira vitifoliae*.) is reputed to be the mechanism by which the French wine industry was saved. It seems that Phylloxera, a microscopic, parasitic louse-like parasite, nearly destroyed the French wine industry in the 1800s. Phylloxera is a pathogen native to North America, and was accidentally introduced into Europe by vine-growers who were importing French wine stocks to America. Phylloxera is found in the soil, where it destroys the roots of the grape vines. No sure-fire way has ever been found to control the parasite, but the best solution found (to date) was grafting the wine producing stock onto root stock that had a natural resistance. Since Phylloxera was a North American pest, the native North American root stocks happened to have a high resistance level to the little insect.

This is where the Muscadine grape came in. French wine producers collaborated with French and American scientists and a Texas viticulturalist named Thomas V. Munson. Mr. Munson used a certain species of wild Mustang grape of North Texas to develop other varieties; then some of these Phylloxera-resistant rootstock varieties were grafted onto the French vines to produce viable, healthy French wine grapes. And, that, in a small nutshell, is how Texas saved the French wine industry. Note that there are some dour nay-sayers who insist that the Texas root stock vintages don't quite have the same taste as the pre-disease varieties, but I suspect that these skeptics are not native Texans.

A few more points about the local Mustang grapes. They are not inedible, but they are definitely not a table grape. They are primarily used for home-made jelly (which can be excellent) and home-made wine (which is, by necessity, very sweet, and therefore utterly rejected by wine bibbers as unpalatable.)



If you are thinking about harvesting some grapes, I'd like to offer some tips and guidelines; expertise which has been acquired by painful experience. Here they are:

1. Wear thin rubber gloves when picking. The grapes are very acidic and can really irritate sensitive fingers. And, do not rub your face or eyes while picking.
2. Pick entire clusters and include leaves and vines, if need be, to make the harvesting go more quickly. Separate the grapes when you get home, where it's cooler.
3. Bring a big open container or box to drop the clusters into.
4. Watch out for dangerous situations. Some of these are
  - a. Yellowjackets – the heavy foliage of grapevines provide a great shelter for wasp nests. Before picking, move the foliage around with a stick, to see if any wasps come swarming out. If they do, avoid that area.
  - b. Poison Ivy likes the same growing areas and conditions as grape vines. It has three leaves and no thorns.
  - c. Snakes – Copperheads hang out around shady areas, which is where the grape vines grow. Always look at the ground first before taking a step.
  - d. Fire Ants – Don't get so excited about those huge grape clusters that you fail to notice that the loose soil upon which you are standing is not a gopher mound.



In summary, most property owners would rather be without grape vines. They can smother a tree, and can literally overwhelm trees along a river bottom where the rich soil allows them to grow completely out of control.

*I encourage anyone who would like to share with the Chapter to submit an article or pictures.*



**NEXT NEWSLETTER**

Please send announcements and news items for distribution in the newsletter to Marilyn Anderson, [MarilynA@access4less.net](mailto:MarilynA@access4less.net).

**Deadline for next issue** – Friday, July 31 for the August 2020 edition.

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<https://txmn.org/guadalupe/>



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