



# Highland Lakes Steward

November 2012

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**MISSION**

The Texas Master Naturalist program is a natural resource-based volunteer training and development program sponsored statewide by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The mission of the program is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the state of Texas

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## INVASIVE MALTA STAR THISTLE

By Fredi Franki

It’s back! And the fight is on, again. I see the rosettes around my property, but so far it seems to be in the same places. I hope this means it has not spread to new areas. The first two years I lived here, I let everything grow unchecked, curious to see what developed. I now know that can be a dangerous approach. It is much better to identify, identify, identify.

Malta Star is in the Sunflower family, Asteraceae. It is an annual that is insect pollinated and reseeds itself. Each plant has numerous small, prickly, yellow flowers and the seed head can contain up to 60 seeds. Seed heads form between April and September and the seeds can be dormant for up to 10 years. Plants have a long taproot and are very competitive, crowding out grasses, wildflowers, and other desirable natives, ultimately having a negative impact on wildlife. Each plant grows 1 – 2 feet tall, with hairy leaves, and at maturity is just plain ugly.

There is no one method of control, and certainly no easy method. You will be fighting these Ugliers for several years. First, identify the rosettes and attack them in the fall. Select methods according to size of the area, other vegetation, and available resources. Herbicides can be used from fall until early spring or when the plants bolt.



Flower



Rosette

Once flowering begins herbicide use is much less effective. If possible spray only the offending plant(s). I have used a card-

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## FEEDERWATCH

by Sue Kersey

Feederwatch started on November 10<sup>th</sup>!!!!!!! Be sure to sign up now and enjoy this wonderful project.

It is such a wonderful program and so much fun to do. Thanks to everyone that has done it the last few years. I hope some new HLMN members will sign up this year. If you have any questions Mike & I have done it for years and we would gladly help you to get started. It is so much fun to look each day and see who shows up to be counted. Happy Bird Watching & Counting!

<http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=b35ddb671faf4a16c0ce32406&id=a6d50498ec&e=66dbc5e820>

## NOVEMBER MEETING

by Linda Onan

Thirteen year old Benjamin Shrader (Commander Ben) is an invasive species warrior. His knowledge, enthusiasm and speaking skills were remarkable. We all felt invigorated and inspired at the conclusion of his presentation. Go to [commanderben.com](http://commanderben.com) to be amazed. His thank you note is below.



November 12, 2012

Dear Miss Fredi, Miss Linda, Miss Sheryl, and all the great people of the Highland Lakes Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist group,

I want to thank all of you so much for the warm welcome you gave me when I came to speak to your group. My day with you started with a great Italian lunch which was delicious. Then when we headed over to the area where I was going to be speaking, I was surprised by what a large group you are! I actually felt a bit nervous when I saw the size of the crowd but you were all so kind to make me feel at home right away. It was so much fun to be able to share my "Invasive Hunter" experiences with you. And I look forward to seeing you all again one day...maybe out in the field! :-)

Also, I want to thank you so much for all the great gifts. I never expected anything, so that was a real surprise. I look forward to wearing my new hat proudly!

Thank you again for the very special day and all the nice gifts. It was a wonderful experience. My Mom says "Thank You" too! We both had a great time.

Your friend,  
Ben

## FRIENDS OF THE UPPER HIGHLAND LAKES NATURE CENTER (UHLNC)

by Billy Hutson

The fund raiser sponsored by the Mah Jongg ladies of Marble Falls and Horseshoe Bay netted the UHLNC approx. \$2,450 (money still coming in as I write). This is a HUGE amount for our little efforts and we will be able to do so much with it. I want to especially thank the HLMN members that had so much to do with it: Cindy Sterling, Jean Schar and Maggie Booth for organizing and participating the day of the event, Linda Fleming for registering, taking money for the silent auction, collecting silent auction sheets and depositing the money in the friends account. Linda did this in Ed Myatts absence and also filled in for me as the speaker at the event. And lets not forget the ladies that baked goodies M.J., Linda F., Linda O., Andrea, Jean Schar and Fredi and the ladies that helped in the actual performance of the event, Andrea, Linda F., Judy Parker, and

Sondra Fox.

We outlined the work load for the winter of erecting a Juniper fence, developing one and possibly two buildings, and developing several childrens programs by spring

We now have some working monies and have recently been donated and purchased enough structural materials for the framework and roofing of 6 separate satellite bldgs. By spring we should have enough working structure to start having self guided and interpretive hikes with maybe two bldgs completed along with childrens and family events.

We're starting to sound like a real nature center and will soon look like one (in progress).

*(Continued from page 1)*

### MALTA STAR THISTLE

board box with no top or bottom. Set it down over the selected area and spray. The box keeps the spray from drifting.

I also pull plants, fairly easy this time of year, especially after a rain. This is a good approach if you have a small area, don't want to, or cannot spray. Get as much of the root as possible. Later in the summer, I find it almost impossible to pull the mature plants. If you have mature plants to dispose of either burn them or leave them in the sun in something like a black plastic bag to "cook" the seeds. Then put the bags out for trash pickup.

And I have mowed, but mowing after seed heads form is problematic. I used a push mower and bag but seeds can still spread on the wheels of the mower and stick inside the bag. Also my push mower could barely handle the thick plants. If you mow them now, as small

plants, mow every week and set the blade down as far as possible. Otherwise, they grow back even bigger. There are other methods I have not tried such as controlled burn, plowing, and grazing. Be aware that Malta Star can be toxic to horses. See reference material below.

None of these methods is a one-time shot. You must use multiple methods and repeat often. As with any invasive control, research is important because each site is different as well as each plant type. And yes, you will destroy some good plants along with the bad. Part of the whole management process has to include replanting of desirable plants after gaining control of the offending invasive.

References: [http://texasinvasives.org/plant\\_database/detail.php?symbol=CEME2](http://texasinvasives.org/plant_database/detail.php?symbol=CEME2)  
[http://www.fs.fed.us/outernet/r3/publications/documents/managing\\_starthistle.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/outernet/r3/publications/documents/managing_starthistle.pdf)



**Don't Forget!!**

*Highland Lakes  
Master Naturalist*

## *Holiday Dinner*

Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>

Blanco Courthouse

Bring Your Own Beverage  
Side or Desert

Bring Silent Auction items to this week's  
meeting or bring evening of dinner.

*Let's enjoy & have fun!*

## 10 Reasons to become a member of The Friends Group of Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery

The Hatchery has it all - fish, birding, hiking, fish, native plants and wildflowers, Peters Creek, fishing on the Colorado River, tours, fish, photography, 30 ponds and did I mention fish?

You will get to know a wealth of knowledge from Paul Dorman - hatchery manager - and the other biologists and staff members.

The Friends' Education Building is already built, updated, landscaped and working!

You get to work with some exceptionally fun and knowledgeable people.

They have tasty, homemade delicious goodies at their monthly meetings

You get 2 free months with not having to pay dues of \$10.00 'til Jan. 2013.

The Hatchery closes at 3:30 so you can make it to Happy Hour...seriously!

Your car, you and your friends and family can come FREE anytime any day - did ya'll get that F-R-E-E !!!!! NO charge and NO pass needed!!!!!!

You get to wear a really, really cool fishing shirt with their logo.

You can say the word Dam without cursing.

If you are interested in having a good feeling about your community and having fun, please email Lyn Davis at [ldavis511@gmail.com](mailto:ldavis511@gmail.com) or call (830) 385-1115 . Thank you.

## SONG SPARROWS AND FALL BIRDING

### *MELOSPIZA MELODIA*

by Sherry Bixler

Song sparrows winter in south central and south-eastern states and live year-round in most northern states. Many breed in Canada before heading south for the winter.

Song sparrows are the most variable bird in North America with 31 subspecies. There are differences in both color and size but all have streaked breasts which usually have a central dark spot. The pale throat is bordered by a bold dark malar stripe and there is a wide gray eyebrow. The melodia subspecies found in the hill country has medium brown coloration but desert species are much lighter while the California subspecies is streaked with black. All have pinkish legs and feet.

These sparrows are almost always found in thick brush near water. They will make a distinct chimp sound when alarmed. Nests are usually built in this low brush, within three feet of the ground. Three or four eggs are laid but there can be two to three broods in one season, occasionally even four. Baby birds fledge in less than four weeks and the male song sparrow takes over care of the infants before they fledge so the female can begin the next clutch.

Sparrows are seed-eaters but may occasionally eat berries, insects and small crustaceans. They will come to feeders but much prefer seed that is scattered on the ground.



They are the number one cowbird host but do occasionally attack cowbirds that are attempting to lay eggs in their nests.

Late summer and fall in Texas are excellent bird-watching times as migrant sparrows and other species begin to cross the state or find a winter home here. Recent trips to the northern edge of Lake Buchanan near Tow produced a wonderful array of shorebirds and waders including stilts, avocets, six species of sandpipers, pelicans, three species of egrets and three species of herons including a rare Tri-colored Heron. Even more unusual were five Roseate Spoonbills. Another fall trip to Doeskin Ranch produced 32 species of birds. Both Great Horned and Eastern Screech Owls were heard early that morning and birds seen included an American Redstart, a Dickcissel and a Mourning Warbler, all uncommon in our area. Note that there is a quarterly bird hike at Doeskin.

Summer tanagers were widespread and the September Honey Creek bird count tallied large numbers of these beautiful birds – immatures can range from yellow to orange to red and sometimes have patches of different colors.

Ducks are also beginning to arrive and remember that Project Feeder Watch is a great tool for helping scientists chart the movements and numbers of birds that are found here in the winter. Check the Cornell website for information on participation.



Joanne Fischer and Marcy Westcott on the Doeskin Ranch fall birdwatching hike

## 2012 TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST CONFERENCE by Sue Kersey & Mike Childers

Below is the picture of the members that represented our chapter at our annual meeting. I really thought all of our classes were better than ever and Mike & I learned so much. The food was great, Camp Allen was beautiful and we loved our time together. We had 21 attendees this year and hope to have even more next year. Several of our members who were present were honored for reaching various volunteer hour awards. Jerry Stacy joined the 2500 hour group on stage, Mike and Sammye Childers likewise joined the 1000 hour group, and Linda O'nan was honored for her 500 hr and 250 hr attainment. Cathy Hill won Best photograph in Plants and Best of Show (judged). Mike Childers won 1st place Scenic by popular vote. Sue Kersey won 1st place stitchery by judges choice and popular vote.





2500 Hour Honorees



1000 Hour Honorees



500 and 250 hour honorees



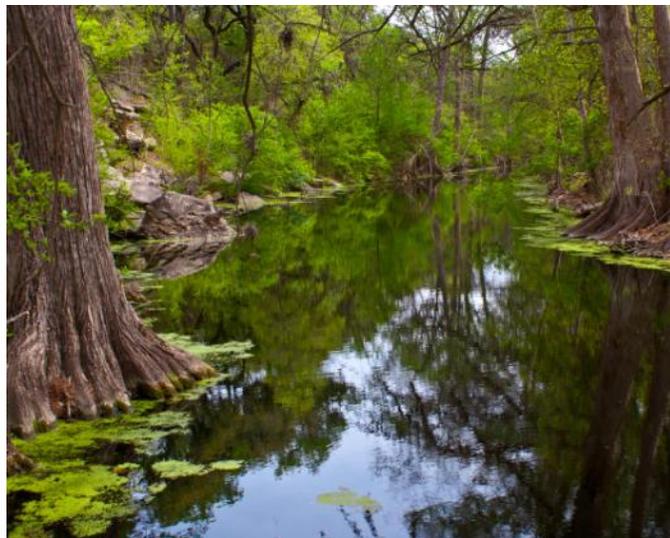
Chapter Photo and Stitchery Winners





1st place judged Plant Photo, Judged Best of Show –Cathy Hill

1st Place Stitchery by Judges Choice and Popular Vote  
- Sue Kersey



1st Place Scenic by Popular Vote - Mike Childers

## TIDBITS ABOUT SUMAC (PRIMARILY FRAGRANT SUMAC, FLAME SUMAC, PRAIRIE SUMAC, EVERGREEN SUMAC AND POISON SUMAC)

by Phil Wyde

There is not much in Texas that reminds me of New York. However, one thing that does is the sumac that I see turning red and orange along the roadsides during this time of the year. I do not want to give you the idea that the sumac displays in Texas are anywhere near as vivid or outstanding as those in the Northeast. Indeed, they are a pale imitation. Regardless, it is about all that we have and the changes in leaf color in the stands of Texas sumac are one of the major signs of autumn's presence in this state. Indeed, I like sumacs so much that I have some planted in my front yard. I like them so much that I would like to recommend that you consider planting some on your property – or if you find them growing on your property – to let at least some of them remain. What follows is a justification for these recommendations.

It turns out that there are many species of sumac of which only a few grow in Texas. I would like to primarily limit my discussion to the five non-harmful species that do grow naturally in this state and only say a few things about their three infamous, “poisonous” sumac relatives: poison ivy (*Rhus toxicodendron*, synonym *Toxicodendron radicans*), poison oak (*Rhus diversiloba*, synonym *Toxicodendron diversilobum*) and poison sumac (*Rhus vernix*, synonym *Toxicodendron vernix*). We can leave more detailed discussions of the latter species for another day. Note that I put quotations around the word “poisonous” when talking about these latter species since of course these plants are not truly poisonous but can cause severe contact dermatitis and sometimes lethal allergic responses -- especially if smoke containing their primary allergen, urushiol, is inhaled. Also, for people like Billy who like to learn things by touch and feel, you should note that all parts of poison sumac (e.g., leaves, flowers, fruit) contain the urushiol. (I will mention how to differentiate poison sumac from the non-harmful sumacs below.)

The five non-harmful species of sumac that I am going to discuss are *Rhus copallinum* (flame-leafed sumac), *Rhus lanceolata* (prairie flame-leafed sumac), *Rhus glabra*



Figure 1. Poison sumac (top left), fragrant sumac (top right), flame sumac (bottom left) and prairie sumac (bottom right); images obtained at the WEB site given in reference 9 and made into a composite photo).

(smooth or scarlet sumac), *Rhus virens* (evergreen sumac) and *Rhus aromatica* (fragrant sumac). As their scientific names indicate, all of these species belong to the genus, *Rhus*. All of them also belong to the plant family, *Anacardiaceae*. This is particularly interesting because that makes both the harmful and harmless varieties of sumac related to cashews, pistachios and mangos (i.e., all of these are in the plant family, *Anacardiaceae*.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, raw cashew nuts are enclosed in a tough, leathery shell that is caustic and toxic – and this exterior shell must be processed before the cashew becomes edible.

Of the non-harmful sumacs that I have selected to highlight, all but the fragrant sumac grow into small trees (i.e., they generally stay less than 35 feet in height), and all but the fragrant sumac have leaves that are compound and pinnate (see Figures 1 and 2). The fragrant sumac differs from the other sumacs under

consideration since it usually remains shrub-like (i.e., it seldom grows greater than 10 feet tall) and has leaves that are trifoliolate (see image in upper right corner of Figure 1). The flowers of the flame-leafed, prairie flame-leafed and smooth sumacs are generally arranged in dense, striking panicles or spikes. The fruits (called drupes) that eventually develop from these flowers form in dense red clusters called sumac bobs. The fruits of the fragrant sumac (see Figure 1) and evergreen sumac form more like individual berries.

Sumacs propagate both by seeds and by rhizomes. The seeds are disseminated by birds and other animals and result in wide spread distribution of the different species. The rhizomal propagation can lead to large “clonal colonies” or clumps of sumac that you commonly see. These clonal colonies can be striking in the fall when their leaves turn red and orange in mass.

The flame-leaf sumac prefers to grow in well-drained soils of hillsides. It is found in the eastern 1/3 of the Texas and up through the mid western states to New England. The prairie flame-leafed sumac (the species that predominates here in the Hill Country) grows primarily in the western two thirds of Texas, usually in calcareous soils. It is also common in Oklahoma, New Mexico and Mexico. The smooth or scarlet sumac grows in east Texas and is wide-spread throughout the United States. All three species tend to appear in scattered groups along fence-rows and edges of woodlands.

Evergreen sumac (*Rhus virens*) grows on dry hillsides and rocky bluffs and slopes of the Edwards Plateau and the Trans-Pecos at elevations of 2000 to 7500 feet. (It also grows in Mexico and New Mexico.) Because of its shiny, dark green leaves (see Figure 2), this sumac makes a very nice ornamental plant. In late summer and fall it forms creamy white, fragrant flowers that attract bees and butterflies. The flowers form a red fruit that birds and small mammals really like. In “olden times” the fruit was used to make a refreshing drink. Comanche Indians mixed its sun-cured leaves with tobacco for smoking, and it was also used as a remedy for asthma.

A word about the fragrant sumac is required. This bush is often planted as an ornamental bush. However, don't be taken in by its common (“fragrant su-

mac”) or scientific (*Rhus aromatica*) names. Other common names for this species are “skunk bush” and skunk berry.”

Sumac species often are practical as well as showy. In the Middle East *Rhus* drupes are ground into a powder and used as a spice. I am not sure if the drupes of



**Figure 2. Evergreen sumac (take by PW in his front yard)**

the Texas sumacs can be utilized similarly. However, I expect that Billy will tell us in a few months time. Interestingly, in North America the drupes of smooth (also known as scarlet) sumac and staghorn sumac (*R. typhina*) were used to make a drink termed “sumacade, Indian lemonade or rhus juice.”<sup>1,2</sup> The drink was made by rubbing and soaking the drupes of these species in cool water and then straining the mixture through cotton cloth. (Some sweetening appears to have been necessary to make into a palatable drink.) Native Indians also added the leaves and drupes of the smooth and staghorn sumac to their tobacco to enhance their smoking mixtures.<sup>1</sup> Again I expect Billy to

tell us if these processes can be duplicated.

The next two paragraphs were inserted particularly for Debbie McClintock.

Rhus species have been used as a source of dyes by both Indians and non-Indians. The Cherokee made a black dye from the drupes and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sumac was also used as a source of a dye used to dye wool. At the turn of the century the majority of American sumac was used to make dyes for dyeing cotton. Dyes from sumac were also used for dyeing leather black.

In reference 7, Delena Tull states that the tannins in sumac act as a natural mordant, so that fibers do not need to be chemically treated in order to absorb the dyes. The colors in the dyes made from American sumac apparently ranged from tan to a dark reddish brown. However, grays, purples and gold could also be obtained.

The leaves of many sumac species contain tannins which can be, and were, used to in vegetable or leather tanning. Sumac was also used as a medicine to treat a number of different ailments in medieval times. Sumac trees were also used in a less healthful way. Their stems were sometimes hollowed out and utilized as pipe stems. Here is one for Blair Feller. The wood harvested from sumacs can be turned by some wood turners into exceptionally beautiful items. Unfortunately, you have to find large sumac specimens so that you can get enough wood to work with.

I do not want to spend much time on poison sumac except to give you a description so that you can have a chance of identifying it before you actually come in contact with this tree. However, this description is not so important since poison sumac is not prevalent in the Texas Hill Country or even much of Texas. (It is in far east Texas where there are swamps and marshes, the habitat that this species of sumac prefers.) Regardless, here is the description: Poison sumac can be a shrub or small tree and looks much like many of the non-poisonous sumacs that we have been talking about. This includes the leaves which are pinnate, oval-to-oblong and which taper to a sharp point (see Figure 1). The base of these leaves is wedge-shaped and their undersides are either hairless or covered with white downy hairs. Poison sumac is most readily identified in

the fall when it can be identified by the white, upright drupes that form (the harmless sumacs that we have been considering have upright drupes that become RED. This is true even with the evergreen sumac, whose white flowers are shown in Figure 2). I am sure that Cindy Sterling is thinking what she should do if she sees a sumac that is not fruiting. How can she tell if it is harmful or harmless? In short, Cindy, if you see a sumac-looking plant in a wet, marshy area, stay away from it. If you see a sumac-looking plant in a well drained area, it is very likely to be harmless.

There are other reasons for having sumac trees on your property besides its beauty: 1) Sumac tree seeds are an important source of bird food – particularly in the late fall, winter and very early spring when the birds have a hard time finding food; 2) sumac blossoms attract a number of butterflies; and 3) Sumac are true natives and thus require little care, water, fertilization or the addition of any supplements .

I would like to end by again saying that I recommend your considering planting (or not eradicating existing) sumac plants. Their fall foliage (leaves and spikes) can be striking and unlike their more infamous relatives (poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac), they are not harmful. Indeed, for people like Billy, Debbie and some others in our chapter, you can try to duplicate what people of earlier times did, and try to use parts of these trees to spice up meats and salads, make smoking pipes, make ornamental flower arrangements, or make sumac drinks and dyes. For the rest of us, as I have already mentioned, one of the most positive things about planting the sumacs is that they are native and need virtually no care.

The main negative to planting sumac is that you will probably have to spend some time restricting their spread. I have had no problem with my evergreen sumac. I have had some spreading associated with my prairie flame sumacs. However, I have found that any new unwanted sumac trees are easy to remove when they are small. And if unwanted one did get big, you can.....Dare I say this?..... you can kill the unwanted sumac tree by spraying them with a chemical such as Ortho's Brush-B-Gon. Another alternative is to cut the trunk of the unwanted tree and spray Roundup on the stump.

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[q=sumac&hl=en&tbo=u&rlz=IT4ADBR\\_enUS273US275&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ei=6zacUO2xOIPy2QXF94GICA&ved=0CDkQsAQ&biw=1280&bih=821](http://www.google.com/search?q=sumac&hl=en&tbo=u&rlz=IT4ADBR_enUS273US275&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ei=6zacUO2xOIPy2QXF94GICA&ved=0CDkQsAQ&biw=1280&bih=821)

## WATERSHED MODEL PROJECT

By Sammye Childers



Sharon Drake is shown demonstrating the effects of non-source point pollution on our watershed using our Enviroscape Model. Team members including Sharon Drake, Barbara Booth, Becky Breazeale, Mike Childers, and Sammye Childers presented the demonstration to 113 students at Highland Lakes Elementary. If you would like to be a member of the team, contact Sammye at [sammyenmike@yahoo.com](mailto:sammyenmike@yahoo.com).

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE GALVESTON ADVANCED TRAINING AND VOLUNTEER SERVICE TRIP

by Phil Wyde

I was asked to write this review and to keep it brief. It is not easy to do the latter as we had so much to do and experience. Please also keep in mind that what I write is based on my experience. I am sure that if Linda Fleming, Lyn Davis or Jerry Stacy were writing this article you would be getting a much different – and much more exciting -- story. If Billy were writing, you would probably think that you were reading fantasy.

As a Texas Master Naturalist, one of the things that really made an impression on me was the utter contrast between the ecosystems of Galveston Island and our own. The Galveston coastal plain is so very flat and its grasses, trees, plants, birds and other animals so very different from those found here in the Hill Country. We saw alligators, sea turtles, ibis, spoonbills, brown pelicans, white pelicans, marsh hawks, crabs, jelly fish, shrimp, ghost shrimp, dolphins, and numerous kinds of different macro invertebrates. And I am sure that we did not see but a tiny portion of their unique flora and fauna.

What was especially neat was that we saw a lot of these things through the eyes and minds of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department people, through the eyes and minds of Galveston Island Texas Master Naturalists, and through the eyes and minds of professional biologists and very enthusiastic volunteers. In other words we saw the area through the eyes and minds of devoted stewards of that area. We would have missed so much without their participation.

Two of the most interesting places that we visited were Brazos Bend State Park with its nature center, alligators and unique ecosystems and the Sea Turtle Facility at the National Marine Fisheries Center where they had hundreds of baby turtles and a fabulous turtle recovery effort. Another highlight of the trip was a two hour tour of Galveston Bay. On this tour we saw dolphins and numerous sea birds, we seined the bay and looked and discussed what was recovered (e.g., sting ray, squid, whippet fish, flounder). We also learned things about the harbor, different channels and the importance of Galveston Bay to the area and nation.



Probably one of the most rewarding experiences that our group had was our participation in an ongoing dune restoration project. We dug holes, planted six different grasses and lugged water to help get them started. Better than that we got a good perspective of what hurricane Ike did to the island and how nature – with help from groups like Texas Parks and Wildlife Service, Texas Master Naturalists, Texas Agrilife Extension Service and hundreds of volunteers – is helping the area to “come back.”

I also found the Dune and Beach Walk led by the Galveston Texas Master Naturalist a most rewarding experience. Although I lived in Houston for 33 years and frequented Galveston, Galveston Island State Park, Texas City Dike, Bolivar and the surrounding areas, I learned things about the beach and dunes that I had no idea about. I was particularly intrigued by the fairy shrimp and “jellies” that looked like clear marbles and jelly fish but were neither. I was also impressed by the amount of life living in the sand that was intermittently

covered with water. I came back from this outing with a much greater appreciation of the area and its ecology – and especially how important and fragile this estuary area was.

Those of you that did not go on the trip are probably wondering if we had any fun. Well, first off, we had a lot of fun participating in the different advanced training events, and at the dune restoration volunteer service activity. Our hosts were enthusiastic and almost all had great wry humor. The lead host, Julie Massey, Wade Hibler's Agrilife Extension Service counterpart, was particularly charming (and much better looking than Wade, especially in her pirate costume). They kept us plied with coffee, water and treats. Moreover, they were always mindful of our age and limitations. Not that we really needed them to provide humor and entertainment. Our members certainly know how to entertain themselves. No event was even close to being boring or dull.

As you might imagine, our group also provided their own entertainment. Every evening we came together from camping sites, fine hotels and a YACHT to eat, drink and be merry. Food ranged from lobster and crab to seafood gumbo – and with few exceptions it was really good. (Ask Ed Myatt and Ralph Herter about "Big Daddy" gumbo.) In addition to eating out, one night we had a "shrimp boil" get together at Galveston Island State Park and two nights we had people gather around a campfire built by Ralph Herter and Kim Bacon. Billy played his guitar and he and many of the people around the fire sang. I am not sure what the other people and animals in the park thought about all this, but I suspect that Galveston Island has not had a similar experience since indigenous peoples gathered around campfires in pre-Columbian times.

In addition to the scheduled events, there was plenty of time for people to do things on their own. There were several birding outings, museums to visit, shopping or time to just lie around. Several of us did "special" fish surveys. Based on everybody's results, but Billy's, there are flounder, croakers, whittings and redfish in Galveston Bay. If we went with Billy's survey, there are NO fish in Galveston.



Lest you think that everything was perfect, I need to tell you that it was very cold and windy three of the days that we were there. And those of us that were in TENTS (Ralph Herter, Billy, Kim Bacon and myself) were COLD, especially that first night when the winds were probably up to 30 mph and it rained hard. Ralph had his hands and FEET full trying to keep the tent upright (ask him about that). I guess that I better add here that Kim was in her own, very cute, tent.

In summary, we learned a lot and had a number of adventures. It would take at least 10 pages to talk about all of the things that we did or were exposed to. This trip was organized by a committee consisting of: Linda O'Nan, Sharon Drake, Billy Hutson, Helen Smith and myself. Julia Massey and the Galveston Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists played a huge role in its success.

I think that when you look at all of the pictures that Mike Childers, Jerry Stone, and others took during the trip, you will have a better idea of the details. I hope that all of you can participate in our future trips.

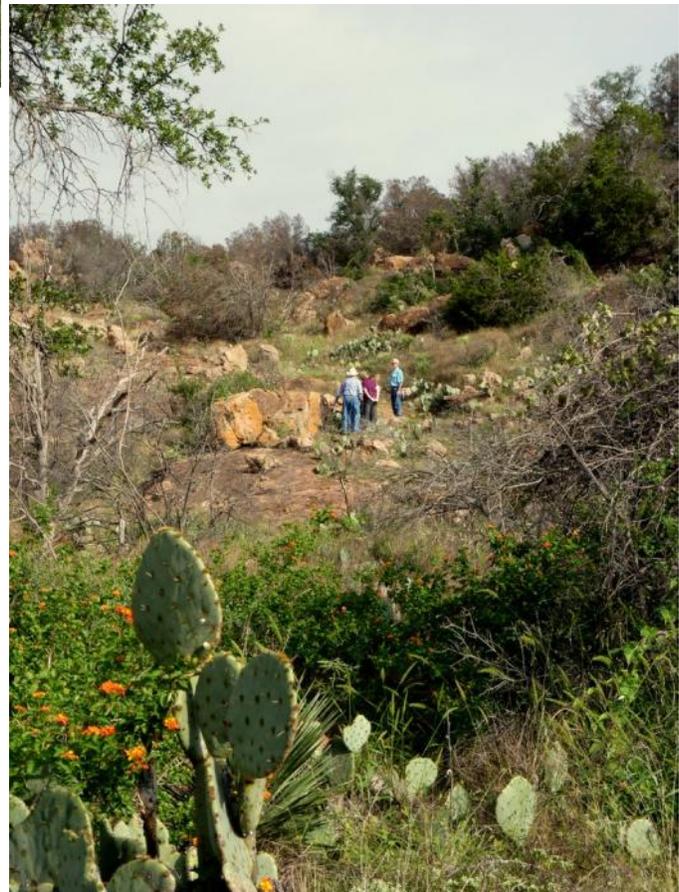




# NATIVE PLANT FESTIVAL

by Linda Fleming, Photos by Sue Kersey

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Native Plant Festival so successful as a celebration of Native Plant Week. If you were not able to attend you missed a great display booth and Sammye's inter-active displays plus her bees. Sondra Fox volunteered with an inter-active game. "Hike the Hill" was very popular with Jerry and Marvin - the two guides I saw. Fredi adopted out 50 trees to happy families with help from her great crew at the welcome table.



# GALLERY

by Jerry Stone



Moon taken on 10/31 (Halloween) with 400 mm lens, 1/200 sec, f/10, mirror up, remote release on tripod



Cherry Sage (*Salvia Greggii*) taken 11/5 in HSB.



American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa Americana*) taken 11/5 in HSB.



Mexican Hat (*Ratibida columnaris*) taken 11/5 in HSB.



Blue Mist-Flower (*Eupatorium coelestinum*) taken 11/5 in HSB.



Plumbago (*Plumbago auriculata*) taken 11/5 in HSB

## GALLERY



Poinsettia (*Euphorbia cyathophora*) taken 11/5 in HSB  
by Jerry Stone



Turk's Cap fruit (*Malvaviscus arboreus*) taken 11/5 in HSB  
by Jerry Stone



This wonderful osprey has decided that the TV antenna on the house next door is a perfect roost for the night. He comes in just before dark and is still there each morning before leaving to fish for breakfast! What a beautiful bird!  
by Sue Kersey



Pelicans, wood, and rope  
by Phil Wyde

### NOVEMBER - DECEMBER EVENTS & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Reveille Peak Ranch Hike - Hill Country Trekkers Reveille Peak Ranch	Nov 26 9:30am
Annual HLMN Awards Banquet Old Blanco Courthouse	Dec 5 5:30am
4th Annual State of the Prairie Conference Kingsville, TX	Dec 6-9
HLMN Board Meeting Agrilife Extension Office, Burnet, TX	Dec 7 1:30pm

For volunteer opportunities and events scheduled at Inks Lake State Park, Blanco State Park, and Balcones Canyonlands, Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, check these websites for information:

[http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/inks-lake-state-park/park\\_events/](http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/inks-lake-state-park/park_events/)

[http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/blanco-state-park/park\\_events/](http://beta-www.tpwd.state.tx.us/state-parks/parks/find-a-park/blanco-state-park/park_events/)

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/balcones/>

<http://friendsofbalcones.org/>

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/water/wildland/online/registration/ecowebevents.cfm>

Please submit pictures, articles, reports, stories, calendar and event entries, etc. to [chili865@gmail.com](mailto:chili865@gmail.com). Photos should have captions and appropriate credits. The deadline for submissions to each month's newsletter is the 10th of the month and publication will be by the 15th.

### Stewardship

An ethic that embodies cooperative planning and management of environmental resources with organizations, communities and others to actively engage in the prevention of loss of habitat and facilitate its recovery in the interest of long-term sustainability