

# THE TEXAS STAR

**OCTOBER 2005**      VOL. 3, No. 10



HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

## OCTOBER PROGRAM

Our October program will be *Using Native Plants for a Successful Conservation Landscape* presented by Elizabeth Drozda-Freeman, a conservation landscape specialist with the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA). She will focus on native plants that are commercially available and work well in the Texas Hill Country, as well as how to create a successful landscape.

Before coming to LCRA, Ms. Drozda-Freeman was the Grow Green Coordinator for the City of Austin. She earned her master's degree in landscape ecology from Duke University and has worked as a landscaper, urban forester, and educator for the past 20 years.

This meeting will be held on Monday, October 24, at 7:00pm at the Riverside Nature Center, [150 Francisco Lemos Street](#) in Kerrville, with our social beginning at 6:30pm. We hope that you can join us.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*BY JIM STANLEY*

At the last meeting, the Board voted to allow advanced training (AT) credit for Kent Rylander's presentation on "Bird Behavior" at our August meeting, so if you attended that meeting you can add 1.5 hours of AT to your records. The Board will consider the September 26 presentation by Larry Eblen at our October Board meeting.

It has come to our attention that some folks are unaware of, or have not availed themselves of, the large body of information contained on our Chapter web site. So here is a partial list of the information contained in the website at [www.hillcountrymasternaturalist.org](http://www.hillcountrymasternaturalist.org).

- A calendar of events for the upcoming month listing numerous organizational meetings and talks, many of which are approved AT;
- The fall 2005 class training schedule;
- Contacts for many organizations likely to be of interest to our members;
- Current as well as past newsletters;
- The list of approved volunteer projects;
- Volunteer project guidelines;
- Volunteer project proposal directions;
- The Board minutes; and
- Links to many interesting facts and articles.

In addition, the web site contains a list of current Board members and links to their e-mails as well as the Chapter mailing address (you will love the frog), so anyone wishing to contact any of the Board members on any topic can easily

do so. It is hoped that the web site, this monthly newsletter, periodic e-mail messages and our monthly meetings keep you informed about what is happening in the Chapter.

We all owe member Kim Whitaker, our Chapter web master, a huge debt of gratitude for establishing and maintaining this website. . . *Thanks, Kim!*

## GARDENING IN THE HILL COUNTRY

BY ELIZABETH DROZDA-FREEMAN

It's time to get out in the yard again. Many of us rush to local nursery and garden centers to buy plants in March and April when the weather warms. But fall is for planting too.

Shrubs, cold-hardy perennials and trees especially can benefit from being planted now. Cooler temperatures and increased rainfall create great conditions to minimize stress on new plants. Trees benefit tremendously from being planted during their winter dormancy. Planting in the fall also reduces the need for excessive irrigation to get plants established, because with cooler temperatures soil does not dry out as quickly.

Here are a few simple things to remember when you are planting to get your landscape off to a great start:

- Dig holes only as deep as the root ball in the pot. If you want to dig the hole bigger, make it wider rather than deeper. This will keep the plant from sinking into the planting hole with time.
- Using hand pruners, carefully make a clean cut though any roots that are wrapping around and around the root ball. This will help the plant roots grow outward and prevent the potential for girdling roots in the future.
- Firmly pack soil back around the plant once it is in the planting hole. This will help remove any air pockets that might cause the roots to dry out.
- Use mulch around newly planted plants but leave a bit of clear space just around the stem of the plant. This will help keep roots moist and at the same time prevent problems with moisture and fungus against the stem of the plant.
- Thoroughly water your plants just after planting to help settle the soil.
- Keep the soil moist (but not wet) for several months after planting to help your plants establish their root systems. Let the soil become almost dry before watering. At this time of year you may only need to water once every couple of weeks if there is no rain.

Finally, don't forget to plant a few wildflower seeds in your garden. Plant spring-blooming wildflower seeds now and they will germinate in a few weeks. Growing over the winter gives wildflowers plenty of time to prepare for a beautiful spring show.

*Elizabeth Drozda-Freeman is the Conservation Landscape Specialist for the Lower Colorado River Authority. She can be reached at (512) 473-3200 Ext.2230 or [elizabeth.drozda-freeman@lcra.org](mailto:elizabeth.drozda-freeman@lcra.org) if you have comments, questions or suggestions for future gardening topics.*

## SEEN ANY HORNED LIZARDS LATELY?

A 2004 survey by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) indicates that the Texas Horned Lizard species is holding its own throughout much of the state. While sightings are still fairly rare, they are being reported in many counties. TPWD produces a map showing the latest sightings by county across the state, by decade – and in our chapter area, sightings have been reported in Bandera, Gillespie and Kerr Counties in the 2000s.



In addition to habitat loss, one of the reasons for the horned lizard decline in recent decades is the lack of harvester (or red) ants, one of their primary food sources. If you see harvester ant activity, there's a good chance that horned lizards are around, too. Both species like it hot – 80-95°F.

Through the Texas Horned Lizard Watch program, volunteers report breeding activity, egg laying, and baby horned lizards.

For more information on horned lizards and how you can participate in the Texas Horned Lizard Watch, visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/hornyloads](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/hornyloads).

## HOLIDAY PARTY PLANS

Hey, HCMNs, mark your calendars now for the chapter's fourth annual holiday get-together and awards ceremony. This year we've decided to do a catered luncheon rather than have everyone bring a dish – no more spills in the car!

When: **Saturday, December 3**  
Where: **Immanuel Lutheran Church fellowship hall, 318 High Street, Comfort**  
Time: **1:00 - 3:00 pm**

Details about the cost, menu, and directions will be sent out later. Spouses/guests are welcome. We hope every one of you will be there for the highlight of our chapter year! If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact one of the committee members: **Sharon Corley, Nancy Vaughan, Myrna Langford, or Sandy Peña.**

## LCRA SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR RIVER ADVISORY PANELS

The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) is seeking 38 volunteers to be members of its nine advisory panels for the Highland Lakes and major tributary rivers, including the Pedernales River. The panels meet regularly and provide valuable input to LCRA on issues affecting the lakes and rivers, including water use, water quality, lake management and lake access.

LCRA is seeking a diverse group of individuals and will take nominations October 10– 24. A person may nominate himself or herself or someone else. Selections will be made in January. Panel members serve three-year terms, and each panel meets at least six times a year.

Two of our chapter members, **Dan Behringer** and **Kathryn Harrison**, currently serve on the Pedernales River Advisory Panel and have found the experience to be rewarding and educational.

Anyone interested in serving on a panel can access information at [www.lcra.org/about/lap\\_default.html](http://www.lcra.org/about/lap_default.html). The site includes an online application as well as details on the job description and expectations. Applicants also can contact Missy Hearn by e-mail at [LAP-RAP\\_applicants@lcra.org](mailto:LAP-RAP_applicants@lcra.org), phone at 1 800 776 5272 X3265, or by writing to LCRA, Box 220, Austin, Texas 78767.

## TEXAS TECH AT JUNCTION ANNOUNCES WINTER SESSION

The winter session at the Texas Tech University Center at Junction will offer a number of classes of interest to Master Naturalists, including Principles of Ecology, General Ornithology, Texas Prehistory and Archaeology, and Prescribed Burns. These classes will meet from December 26, 2005 until January 9, 2006

Approximate costs for tuition and fees range from \$631 for undergraduate classes to \$781 for graduate classes. Students 55 and older are eligible for a waiver of tuition, reducing the above costs by \$387 (undergraduate) and \$537 (graduate).

Full information can be found at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/hillcountry/junction/junction%20acad%20programs.htm>. Contact Karen Lopez at TTU-Junction, [karen.lopez@ttu.edu](mailto:karen.lopez@ttu.edu) or 325 446 2301.

## MASTER NATURALIST MILESTONES/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS/KUDOS

**Joan Murphy** from the Class of 2004 has completed requirements for first year certification and will receive her Dragonfly pin. **Betty Gardner** and **Scott Magee**, also from the Class of 2004, have qualified for their special first-year recertification by completing an additional forty volunteer hours and an additional eight hours of advanced training within their first fifteen months. They will receive Blue Kingfisher pins.

**Jane Crone**, **Kip Kiphart** and **Nancy Vaughan** have re-certified for 2005 by completing forty hours of approved volunteer service and eight hours of approved advanced training this year and will receive their Blue Kingfisher pins.

**Sharon Corley** and **Alice Bulechek** have reached their 250-hour milestones – 250 cumulative volunteer hours since becoming Master Naturalists. Their Bronze Dragonfly pins will be awarded at the State TMN meeting this month.

**John Quinby** has been elected to the Riverside Nature Center board of directors.

Congratulations to all these achievers!

Thanks to **Betty Gardner** and **Kim Whitaker** for providing refreshments at the September meeting.

## CALENDAR

**October 17: Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter board meeting** – 2:00pm at Riverside Nature Center, [150 Francisco Lemos Street](#), Kerrville – chapter members may attend.

**October 20–23: NPSOT Fall Symposium and Annual Meeting** – Alpine and Fort Davis.

**October 21–23: Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting** – Statewide meeting & advanced training, Mo Ranch, Hunt. See <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu/pdf/2005reg.pdf> for program information.

**October 24: Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter monthly meeting** – 6:30pm, Riverside Nature Center, [150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville](#). (*See above for details.*)

**October 25: Fredericksburg Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas monthly meeting** – 7:00pm, Gillespie County Historical Society building, 312 W San Antonio Street, Fredericksburg.

**October 25–26 : Master Naturalist & Master Gardener Advanced Oak Wilt Training** – Hays County Extension Office, 1253 Civic Center Loop, San Marcos. Hosted by the Texas Forest Service & Hays County Horticultural Committee. \$45 per person includes lunch and materials. Reservations required no later than October 21. 512 393 2120. *Advanced training hours available.*

**October 27: LBJ National Park monthly presentation** – 7:00pm, LBJ National Park Visitor Center, at the corner of Avenue G and Ladybird Lane, two blocks south of U.S. Highway 290 (Main Street) in Johnson City. *Taking Advantage of Sunshine*, a program on solar electric systems, by **Andrew McCalla**, president of Meridian Energy Systems in Austin. For further information or specific driving directions, call 830 868 7128 X244.

**November 1: Boerne Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas** – 7:00pm, Cibolo Nature Center, Highway 46 east of Boerne. Eric Lautzenheiser, City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, will discuss how the natural parks are managed and what they have to offer to the visitor.

**November 1: Kerrville Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas** – 2:00pm, Riverside Nature Center, [150 Francisco Lemos Street](#), Kerrville.

**November 3: Riverside Nature Center Brown Bag Lunch and Learn Series** – 12:00 noon–1:00pm, Riverside Nature Center, [150 Francisco Lemos Street](#), Kerrville. Topic will be *Archeology: Reading the Hills of the Hill Country*. Bring your lunch; drinks and dessert will be provided. Admission is \$3 for the public and free for Riverside Nature Center members.

**November 8: Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center** – 7:00pm, Gillespie County Historical Society, 312 W. San Antonio, Fredericksburg. Program on Texas reefs and help with fossil ID, presented by **Ann Molineux**, Collections Manager of Non-Vertebrate Paleontology at the Texas Memorial Museum in Austin.

**November 9: Fredericksburg Garden Club** – 2:00pm, Central Texas Electric Co-op Building, 386 Friendship Lane, Fredericksburg. **Jan Fulkerson**, Texas State Forester, will present a program on being *Firewise Around your Property*, with great landscape ideas to keep your property safer.

**November 12: Bandera County Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas** – 2:00pm, Medina Community Library Meeting Room. Contact **Susan Tracy** 830 589 7124 for details.

**November 15: Second Annual Conference on Land Stewardship and Water Resources** – 8:30am–3:30pm, Uvalde High School Auditorium, One Coyote Trail, Uvalde. Hosted by Nueces River Authority with funding from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. Free admission. For more information, call 830 278 6810 or e-mail [info@nueces-ra.org](mailto:info@nueces-ra.org). *Advanced training hours available.*

**November 17–18: Invasive Plant Conference** – Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin. Co-hosted by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Texas Forest Service, Forest Health Protection branch of USDA Forest Service, and NBII. For schedule and to register, see [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org).

**November 19: Hill Country Archeology Association** – 1:00pm, Riverside Nature Center, [150 Francisco Lemos Street](#) Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville. Speaker will be **Dr. Grant Hall**.

**November 19: Invasives Public Awareness Day** – Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin. Expert presentations on invasive plants, exhibits of Central Texas invasive plant species. See [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org) for more information.

Please send newsletter contributions and comments to Phyllis Muska at [pmuska@omniglobal.net](mailto:pmuska@omniglobal.net).



Texas Star  
*Lindheimeria texana*

