

# THE TEXAS STAR

JUNE 2007 VOL. 5 No 6



HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER

Chapter Website: <http://www.hillcountrymasternaturalist.org>

## JUNE PROGRAM AND PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Even though it feels like it's been summer for a while already, summer's official start is the solstice on June 21 (6:06pm, to be exact). The name is derived from Latin *sol*, meaning sun, and *sistere*, to stand still, because at the solstice, the sun seems to stand still in declination; that is, its movement north or south is minimal. The sun reaches its northernmost point on this, our longest day of the year, and the North Pole will see a midnight sun, or polar day. The southern hemisphere has a June solstice as well, corresponding to the shortest day and the sun's southernmost point for those Down Under. Antarctica and all places south will experience the polar night, when the sun will not appear above the horizon at any time of the day.

So let's get together a few days after the solstice and enjoy the extra hours of daylight at our annual chapter picnic. On June 25, in lieu of our regular monthly meeting, my husband, Dan Behringer, and I will host this get-together. This is always a good opportunity to meet and visit with other members on a casual basis.

Before dinner, we'll have a 'show and tell' of our rainwater harvesting system, including a discussion of collection, storage, and purification. Some of our chapter members who have rainwater collection systems may also wish to comment on how their systems

are set up. We've relied on rainwater as our sole source of water for over 10 years, and have seen a number of other systems, no two of which are quite alike!

The chapter will provide soft drinks and dessert. Bring your spouse/partner, a picnic dinner, and anything you would like to drink other than soft drinks or rainwater. It would also be helpful if you remember to bring a folding chair. We've got plenty of rainwater right now, so bring a jug or drinking water bottle to fill and take home if you like.

The picnic will be on our regular monthly meeting day, Monday, June 25, but a little earlier than usual. Meet at 6pm for the rainwater harvesting presentation and we'll plan to eat around 7pm. Directions to our place will be sent later in a separate e-mail. We look forward to seeing you all there!

*pgm*



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## CLASS OF 2007 APPLICATION DEADLINE COMING UP

Is someone YOU know a potential member of the HCMN class of 2007? Do you remember why you signed up? Did someone point out the program to you, or encourage you to look into it? If your training, accomplishments, and volunteer efforts as a certified Texas Master Naturalist have been meaningful to you---pass it on! The deadline for applications for the class of 2007 is July 12.

Here are some talking points:

-Any adult in Bandera, Gillespie, Kendall or Kerr County may apply.

- You will meet other active, involved, residents who care about and want to be good stewards of our beautiful hill country environment

-The Master Naturalist program involves *research-based, scientific training* in wildlife and natural resource management taught by experts from various state agencies and universities.

-Topics include all of the major plant and animal groups and their interaction, deer

management, basic ecology, geology, range science, plant identification and more.

-The training is customized to focus on the Hill Country. Classes will be held in Kerrville at the Lions Camp on Hwy 27 on Wednesdays from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm beginning August 29 and ending November 14.

-To become certified, in addition to the training, participants complete two requirements: a minimum of 40 **volunteer hours** a year on approved projects of their choosing within the Chapter's four-county area; and a minimum of eight hours of **Advanced Training** each year in areas of their interest.

If someone you know would be interested, they may contact John Huecksteadt at 830-456-5061 or [jhuecksteadt@earthlink.net](mailto:jhuecksteadt@earthlink.net) or go to the Chapter's website at [www.hillcountrymasternaturalist.org](http://www.hillcountrymasternaturalist.org). If you would like brochures to distribute, contact Donna Robinson (830-257-9452, [dsrassoc@ktc.com](mailto:dsrassoc@ktc.com))



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## AWARDS, CERTIFICATIONS, AND MILESTONES...



**Special 1<sup>st</sup> Year Recertification:**  
Warren Ferguson

**2007 Certification:**  
Donna Snow Robinson

**Milestones:**  
Bronze (250-hr) – Thomas Collins, John Huecksteadt

Brushed Silver (500-hr) – Maggie Tatum

Polished Silver (2500-hr) – Priscilla Stanley

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## COMING UP...

### MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Wednesday, June 20, 1:30 p.m.—Monthly meeting of the board of directors of the Hill Country Master Naturalist chapter, Riverside Nature Center

Monday, June 25, **6:00 p.m.** — **Annual Chapter Picnic** at the home of Phyllis Muska and Dan Behringer (*See page 1 for details*).

Tuesday, June 26 7:00 p.m. — Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT), Fredericksburg Chapter, Gillespie County Historical Society Bldg., 312 W. San Antonio Street, Fredericksburg. For information: fredericksburg@NPSOT.org

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Saturday, July 7, 8:00 a.m. — **Butterfly Count** at C.A.M.P. Camp in Center Point Center point. *The project code is CC-09-A.* For more information, contact Bob Tanner ([bintense@hotmail.com](mailto:bintense@hotmail.com)), or Tom Collins (830-634-3236; [towhee@maverickbbs.com](mailto:towhee@maverickbbs.com)).

### ADVANCED TRAINING

Tuesday, June 19, 9:00 am to Noon — **Grass ID class** at Riverside Nature Center. Jim Stanley advises you may want to bring a grass book with you, if you have one, and any sample of mystery grasses you have so the class can identify them for you (please try to bring freshly picked samples with several stems/seed heads and some leaves.)

### AND... ONCE IN A BLUE MOON!

If you are heading north with your RV or camper, we hear from Susan Thompson, of the Panhandle Chapter of TMN: On **June 30** there will be a workday followed by a ***special night of camping in Palo Duro Canyon***. She notes that “because TMNs have special VIP status in Palo Duro Canyon, the Park is graciously allowing volunteers to camp for free on Friday night (June 29) in addition to the free camping Saturday night, all in the ***TMN-only Juniper Campground***, regarded by many as *the top campground in Palo Duro Canyon*. It has been closed to the public for the past few years, but it will be open that night. “Susan says, “A number of people have asked about this, and Park staff are so impressed with our plans, and especially with the number of non-locals coming in to help out, that they have made this change.” This looks like a great opportunity for “non-panhandle-locals” to experience a special place in our state, and (although the volunteer hours would not count toward HCMN certification) maybe help out with the Panhandle Chapter’s projects. For information, contact Susan at [suthomps@sbcglobal.net](mailto:suthomps@sbcglobal.net).



## IN MEMORIAM...

A dear friend has passed away. **Ernest Tremayne**, though not a member of TMN, was known to many of us who do volunteer work at the Butterfly Garden at Kerrville-Schreiner Park. A faithful member and early president of the *Native Plant Society of Texas*, Ernest designed the garden, helped raise the funds for its construction, and oversaw the installation. For the past several years, he was always present on work day, quietly checking the drip system, removing tree seedlings, and emptying the wheelbarrow. He was a gentle, devoted friend, and he will be missed. Barb Lowenthal



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## ...T.B.A.\*

--- Texas Cooperative Extension/TAMU publishes **Earth Kind News** online (EarthKind.tamu.edu). Their goals include “*water conservation; the safe use and handling of fertilizers and pesticides; and the reduction of yard wastes entering urban landfills.*” For additional resources, go to <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/index.html>

--- “Paper or Plastic?” – Neither! Consider using **reusable cloth bags** at the grocery store. HEB offers long-lasting, reusable fiber bags for a nominal fee. And check out [www.ecobags.com](http://www.ecobags.com) for other options.

--- From [www.thriftyfun.com](http://www.thriftyfun.com): “This is an old trick but maybe someone hasn’t heard about it yet. I save my **banana peel** after eating the banana and gently dig out an opening around my roses and place the banana peel, spread out with the inside of the peel facing the ground and cover. It adds potassium to the soil. My roses love it!”

--- In our house, we **recycle water from the shower**. We keep two small buckets in the shower stall. We let the water go into the buckets while waiting for it to warm, and when shampooing/soaping up. When one or both buckets are full, we take them outside to water the plants near the house. (Note: At this time, we are using this water for the *indoor* plants---no need for extra water outdoors!)

dsr



\***Help us come up with a heading** for this occasional feature, in which we will share tips, helpful websites, and other items gleaned from other organizations’ publications, and from you. What shall we call it? *Eco-Notes?* *FYI?* *Nature Calls* ©? We’re sure you can come up with something better! Send your suggestions and comments to: Editor, Hill Country Master Naturalist, 431 Timber Ridge, Kerrville TX 78028 ([dsrassoc@kctc.com](mailto:dsrassoc@kctc.com))

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## ***FROM THE HERBARIUM***

Photo: Raul Peña

### **Clammy-Weed**

*Polanisia dodecandra* Linnaeus

Clammy-Weed is an annual, slender to bushy forb that grows up to 3 feet tall. From May to July, Clammy-Weed can be found blooming in open areas and in alluvial gravels as is found along Kerrville's Guadalupe River. Weather permitting, the bloom period can extend from March to December.

Despite the beauty of the white (some subspecies pink to purple) flower clusters with its halo of numerous long purple stamens, the plant stinks when disturbed and it leaves a sticky or "clammy" residue on your hands. Not just the blooms, but almost all of the plant is covered with gland-tipped sticky or gummy hairs.

The leaves are alternate with the blade divided into 3 leaflets (tri-foliolate) with a smooth (entire) margin. The fruit is an erect 3" capsule containing small, flat, round, red-brown seeds.

Clammy-Weed is in the caper family (Capparaceae), but this genus is not the one that bears this common Mediterranean seasoning.

Enquist, Marshall 1987, *Wildflowers of the Texas Hill Country*, p. 43.

Ajilvsgi, Geyata, 2003, *Wildflowers of Texas*, p. 52-53.

Susan Longacre



## **THIS JUST IN... FROM THE STATE TMN OFFICE –**

The 2007 Annual Meeting will be held in San Antonio October 12 – 14, in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Alamo Chapter – the founding chapter of the Master Naturalist program in Texas. The gathering will be based at the Hilton San Antonio Airport hotel. Michelle Haggerty, TMN Program Coordinator for the state, says, “Don’t worry...we are...planning an agenda with as much out-of-doors time as our past annual meetings. San Antonio has more natural areas to see and Advanced Training field sessions than we can offer in just one weekend! You won’t be disappointed!” In addition to the Annual Meeting volunteer project and the Awards banquet, there will programs such as Geology and Plants Training at the Canyon River Gorge, and Rainwater Harvesting Stewards Training, and many new events being planned by the Alamo Chapter. Watch this space and your email for further information from Michelle.



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Please send newsletter contributions and comments to Donna Robinson at [dsrassoc@ktc.com](mailto:dsrassoc@ktc.com)



*Lindheimeria texana*: Texas Star

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