

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the

Texas Master Naturalist

Hill Country Chapter

October 2016 Volume 14 Number 10



Bald Cypress photo by Forest Mims III

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



OCTOBER 24 MEETING: BALD CYPRESS, TEXAS STAR FUNGUS, AND AIR QUALITY

Forrest M. Mims III will be our speaker. He is a prolific writer and a citizen scientist who uses instruments he has designed and made in his studies.

The monthly meetings of the Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country chapter are free and open to the public. We meet in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority's lecture hall, 125 North Lehmann Drive in Kerrville. Socializing begins at 6:30; the program starts at 7:00.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Brenda Fest

Hello Fellow Master Naturalists,

Fall is finally here and cooler weather brings lovely changes. The Snow On The Mountain flowers are beautiful, even from a distance as we drive down the highway. The fall grasses are beginning to bloom. I can see the red and green on the stems of the little bluestem grass. This year it is 3–4 feet tall, which makes me laugh as I call it LITTLE bluestem. The Lindheimer's muhly in front of our house (pictured here) is just beginning to show its full glory. This grass is so much lovelier than the nonnative pampas grass. I've noticed, as I walk around our property and along the side of the road, the difference between the plants growing in a suitable place and those in areas that are struggling to survive. We have a meadow dropseed grass growing near the side of our house that is so beautiful. I didn't plant it; It just appeared a few years ago and has thrived. I will collect seeds, plant more, and continue to learn as I watch our land heal.



photo by Brenda Fest

The frostweed is beautiful and abundant this year. The monarchs are making their way down to Mexico and desperately need the nectar from this wonderful plant. I love frostweed. Our deer don't eat it and it thrives in the shade of the understory. You can't say that for many plants around here, especially this time of the year. If you have it, share some seeds in a few weeks. If you don't have it, I will give you some.

I watched my herd of queen butterflies wake up this morning and fill up on Gregg's blue mist nectar. We've begun tagging monarchs as they come through. One female stayed for a few days; I guess she likes our meal plan. It's really hard to tag monarchs around here because we have so many queens and they resemble the monarchs, so it's hard to catch the monarchs amidst all the movement of orange and black. Not a problem I guess; I love all my butterflies. I am grateful for their appearance.

continued on next page

A few weeks ago, I helped teach the Native Plant Landscape Certification Class in Boerne along with Kathy Ward and Veronica Hawk. I was reminded of the wonderful relationships between our native plants and the food and shelter they provide for so many beautiful forms of wildlife. It is so important to spread the word and change the way many land and home owners think about landscaping. It's much more than making your yard pretty. It's about creating a balanced place of natural beauty.

I look forward to participating in The Texas Master Naturalist 17th Annual meeting on October 21-23 at Lake Conroe, and hope to see everyone at the October 24 chapter meeting, when we'll hear Forrest Mims speak about Bald Cypress, Texas star fungus and air quality in Central Texas.

Brenda Fest

This Month We Honor



Special Certification

Clarence Reed

Recertification

Robin Graham, Tim Graham, Lucy Griffith, Myrna Langford,
Bob McKinley, Sandra Meineke, Nancy Person, Paul Person

Milestones

Heather Barnes, Anthony Cieszkiewicz, Claire Mitchell - Bronze Dragonfly, 250 hours

Carla Brady, Karen Burkett - Brushed Silver Dragonfly, 500 hours



Congratulations to members who received awards at the September meeting.

Above, left to right: Linda Ross, Jim Jones, Christopher Keating (framed by Bridget Langdale), Tony Plutino, Barbara Marquer, Kris Bobbitt, Bob Wiedenfeld, Lisa Flanagan

Left, from left to right: Donna Dutton, Deborah Windham, Larry Eskridge, Diana Armbrust, Lisa Barrett

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley:

- 9/3/2016 Three Native Hill Country Small Mammals.
 Two Big Rats and a Pseudo Cat
9/10/2016 The Ogallala Aquifer. Lessons for Us All
9/17/2016 In Defense of Cows
9/24/2016 Screwworm Fly Eradication. Local Lab Played
 a Major Role in Eradicating the Pest from Texas

These and all other previous Kerrville Daily Times columns
can be found at www.hillcountrynaturalist.org



Harvest Moon Celebration
Noon to 9 P.M.
Saturday, October 29, 2016

A sweet and simple celebration of a time gone by when
people gathered to enjoy the Fall Season on the farm.

Live Music
Bird of Prey Flight Demonstrations
Arts, Crafts & Food Vendors
Children's Costume Contest
Pie Eating Contest
Blacksmith & Agriculture Demos
Herbalist Demonstration
Storytelling
Children's Activities
Mule & Cattle Exhibits
Hayride
Owl Discovery Trail After Dark

Muleshoe Farm
306 Highway 87, Comfort, TX
\$10 Adults, Kids Free
www.harvestmooncelebration.com

Great Horned Owl
One of many owls on the Owl
Discovery Trail.
Opens after dark.

Riverside Nature Center Native Plant Sale and Festival



The Fall Native Plant Sale & Festival at Riverside Nature Center in Kerrville was a great success. Blessed by beautiful weather, the event was co-sponsored by RNC and HCMN and included booths by NPSOT, UGRA, Master Gardeners, Community Glory Garden, and the always popular Monarch Watch butterfly tent.

This year, instead of a speaker presentation, there were informal “ask-me mini-forums” where visitors could inquire and learn about composting, water catchment, pruning and planting trees, winter and spring gardening, wildflowers, and plant identification. Also featured were activities for kids, a nature book sale, and informative exhibits.

All net proceeds benefit RNC and HCMN education efforts. Perhaps even more important is the community outreach opportunity. The plant sale is a great way to get more native plants into residents’ gardens and to educate the public about the importance of planting natives.

The general festival atmosphere brings more people to Riverside Nature Center where they learn about its year-round educational opportunities and are able to see native plants growing in the extensive gardens.

Many thanks to the multitude of knowledgeable hard-working volunteers for generously sharing their time and expertise to help make this event a success and for helping to educate the public about our native plants.



photos by Jack Millikan



NPSOT Boerne Chapter Monthly Meeting

Speaker: David Willingham, owner of the Natives of Texas plant nursery in Kerrville, on educating for gardening in the Hill Country
Tuesday, November 1; socializing at 6:30pm, program at 7pm
Cibolo Nature Center, 140 City Park Road, Boerne

NPSOT Fredericksburg Chapter Monthly Meeting

Speaker: David Will, on growing and maintaining native grasses
Tuesday, October 25; social at 6:30 pm, program at 7pm
Fellowship Hall of Memorial Presbyterian Church,
601 North Milam Street, Fredericksburg.

NPSOT Kerrville Chapter Monthly Meeting

Speaker: Ben Hutchins, on guidelines for native plant management
Tuesday, November 8, 1:30pm
Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos Street, Kerrville

All of these programs are free and open to the public.

From Martha Miesch

Learning About Butterflies at the Kroc Center Nature Program



Cathy Downs and Gracie Waggener joined Chris Lienhard, Pam Lienhard, John Sloan, and Martha Miesch, who are regular Kroc Center Nature Study Master Naturalist volunteers, at our September 15 session. Cathy and Gracie brought materials and equipment to aid in understanding butterflies' life cycle and explained the importance of protecting them. They used a unique hand puppet that converted from the caterpillar stage to a chrysalis, and finally to a butterfly; that was a demonstration that held the students' attention. Pam then used a poster to point out some distinguishing features of the life cycle. She used the hand puppet to trace the migration route on a map. Also, she showed how to catch butterflies in nets safely and then release them into cages for observation.

We divided the students into four groups, each with a Master Naturalist leader, and they ran outside to see what they could find. They each had a net and ran around the grounds outside the classroom chasing and catching butterflies (mainly snouts) and other flying insects. We then put the insects into cages that we brought into the classroom. Pam pointed out some of the differences in the insects, which included a bee and a moth. After a brief discussion, we took the cages outside and all of the insects were safely released. The students learned some important facts and had fun doing it.





2016 Rainwater Revival

Water is scarce in the Texas Hill Country. With our drought-and-flood climate and stressed water supply, alternatives to traditional water project development can help increase reliability, conserve resources and protect the environment. An effective, desirable and responsible alternative is rainwater harvesting.

Now in its 7th year, the Rainwater Revival brings together homeowners, builders, vendors, and conservation experts to connect, share, and celebrate the ancient tradition of harvesting rainwater.

Join us November 5, 2016 at the Dripping Springs Ranch Park from 10 am to 4 pm for a full day of fun, education and celebration! This event is open to the public and free, thanks to our wonderful sponsors.

Education: The festive day will be filled with informative and entertaining presentations by professionals and users of rainwater, water conservation-related business vendor booths, rainwater system displays, and plenty of experts to provide guidance and services.

Prizes: Help Hill Country schools and enter to win great Hill Country prizes! The Rainwater Revival School Grant Raffle helps raise funds for Hill Country schools for use toward the installation of rainwater collection and water collection education.

Fun: Enjoy shopping, delicious local food, live music, the Raindrop Stop for kids, and much more!

Who should attend the Rainwater Revival?

- Hill Country Residents and Urban Dwellers who care about water availability for the future and want to be responsible stewards of a finite resource;
- People looking for alternatives to groundwater and high water bills;
- Residential builders and home buyers;
- Developers looking for a most cost-efficient and environmentally responsible way to provide housing in the Hill Country;
- Eco-aware families;
- Anybody curious about the benefits of rainwater harvesting.

Learn more and get your tickets!

Seventh Annual Rainwater Revival November 5, 2016 10am to 4pm

Dripping Springs Ranch Park 1043 Event Center Drive Dripping Springs, TX 78620

The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to raise public awareness and build community support around the need to preserve the natural resources and heritage of the Central Texas Hill Country.

WELCOME

Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend and contribute to Board of Directors meetings. The board meets at the Riverside Nature Center on the Monday of the monthly meeting at 1:30.

From Koy Coffey



Fun in the Garden & Campus Tour

Date: November 5, 2016

Time: 9am – 12noon (garden)

12 – 1pm (lunch will be provided)

Call or email (koy.coffey@ttu.edu) to reserve lunch.

1pm – 2pm (campus tour)

Bring: Gloves & refillable drink container

Project Code: KM-01-B



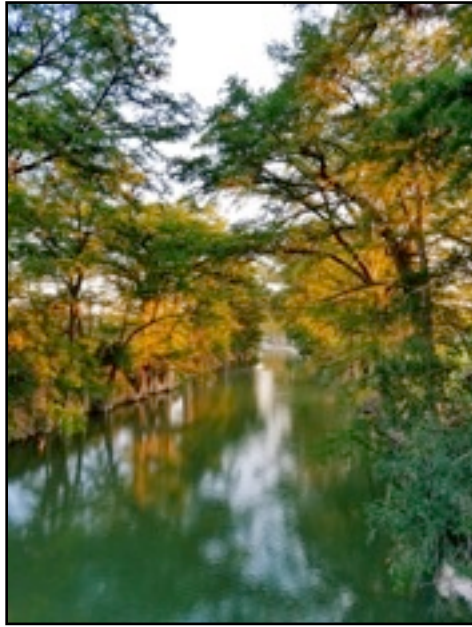
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY OUTDOOR SCHOOL

Llano River Field Station

254 Red Raider Lane, Junction, Texas 76849

806-834-5625 (o) / 512-496-1678 (c)

The View From Rusty Bend



Morning light, first day of fall

Dusk Duet

*A pair of screech owls,
their simple silhouettes,
traced against a dusky sky.
Modest as a child's drawing.*

*We hear no screech,
but the whimsy of a gentle whinny.
We answer back, human echoes
of their quavery calls.*

*We play catch with the plaintive sounds:
soft launch and capture.
Call and response.
Nickering together, to bring in the night.*

At Rusty Bend, September sings a “So long, Summer” song. Perhaps this year it is a song of the unexpected. The sun has lost its sharp punch, though some days the heat is bruising. Then, rare cool nights dust these hills with a sprinkling of turmeric. Surprising shades of mustard, orange and gold presage an early fall. Then again, the rains have gifted us with traces of spring, pocket parks of blooms: Blackfoot daisies, Antelope Horn Milkweed, Wild Petunia.

There’s the unexpected fly-by of a Zone-Tail Hawk, or the odd Orchard Oriole at the feeder. The headline though, is the eruption of Snout-nosed butterflies, wave after wave, day after day, carpeting our windshields and grills. Eastern Phoebes have a field day, gorging on these easy pickings. After a week, these fly-catchers look almost fat and we want to name a new sub-species: the Pot-bellied Phoebe.

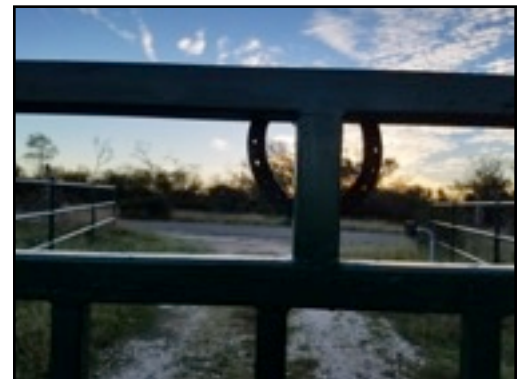
Once the Snout-nose invasion dies down, in come Darner Dragonflies, burnt orange aerobats, so huge, they need tail numbers. Out in the pasture, we expect grasshoppers this time of year, but not such variety. It calls to mind the family story of daughter Julia at age eight, coming in from the pasture with all her pockets full and roiling, bugs tumbling onto the floor, bounding into corners. What have you got there? “I had to, Daddy. Gwasshoppas! One of every color. Look, look.” That Julia got an early start on her stewardship skills.

We celebrate the cool mornings with our first cups of coffee on the side porch. A couple of young armadillos, still pinkish, grub in the yard. Toddler-like, they bounce from the bottoms of bushes to new spots of bugs. Dig, dig, hop, scurry, dig again. They leave tracks in the dewy grass. A riff on an old country tune. Armadillo by morning.

At night, the Harvest Moon is showy, and not just one night but several. After each gawdy moonrise, a second offering: morning moonsets start the day like a hymn. Hanging like a golden pendant, the moon, majestic, slips away.

So we are grateful this month for September surprises: spring flowers, fall color, moon songs and an unforgettable whinny contest with owls.

Lucy Griffith, PhD co-manages the Rusty Bend Ranch with her husband, Andy Robinson. When she is not on a tractor named Ruby, she practices Clinical Psychology. Both Lucy and Andy are certified Master Naturalists from the Class of 2013. Comments welcome at doctorluz@hctc.net.



Sunrise in a horseshoe

Poem, essay, and images by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2016

Advanced Training

MONDAY, OCT. 24 7-8PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY AUDITORIUM, KERRVILLE
AT16-192 BALD CYPRESS, TEXAS STAR FUNGUS, AND AIR QUALITY IN CENTRAL TEXAS
Forrest M. Mims III will be the speaker at the Hill Country Chapter monthly meeting.

TUESDAY, OCT. 25 7-8PM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL, FREDERICKSBURG
AT16-182 GROWING AND MAINTAINING NATIVE GRASSES
David Will, Texas Certified Landscape Contractor, will be the speaker at the NPSOT-Fredericksburg Chapter monthly meeting

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 26 6:30-8:30PM OVERLOOK AT MENDER SPRINGS, BOERNE
AT16-182 HOMETOWN HABITAT: THE MISUSE OF NON-NATIVE PLANTS IN THE LANDSCAPE
NPSOT of Boerne and Morningside Ministries will show this documentary film that focuses on showing how and why native plants are critical to the survival and vitality of local ecosystems. NPSOT members will follow up with discussion on the importance of using native plants. No cost, but seating is limited, so advance registration is required. Contact Rheda Boardman (npsotboerne@gmail.com).

FRIDAY, OCT. 28 10AM-12PM ENCHANTED ROCK STATE NATURAL AREA, FREDERICKSBURG
AT16-205 FALL PLANT WALK AT ENCHANTED ROCK
Identify and enjoy fall plants along Sandy Creek and lower park trails. Meet at the park pavilion, approximately .5 mile northeast of the main entrance on 965. There is access and some parking available at the pavilion. This program is free for Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and NPSOT members. Wear good shoes and bring water; can also bring lunch for later. For questions, contact Scott Whitener (Scott.Whitener@tpwd.texas.gov) or Beth McMahon (elizabeth.mcmahon@agnet.tamu.edu).

TUESDAY, NOV. 1 7-8PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER AUDITORIUM (CNC), BOERNE
AT16-196 EXPERIENCES IN THE NATIVE PLANT BUSINESS
David Willingham, the owner of a native plant nursery in Kerrville, will speak on educating people about gardening in the Hill Country at the NPSOT-Boerne Chapter monthly meeting.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 2 - SATURDAY, NOV. 5 BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS, FORT WORTH
AT16-154 TEXAS PLANT CONSERVATION CONFERENCE
Topics include, but are not limited to, conservation of rare and endemic plants, plant biogeography, genetics, demographics, reproduction, population biology, and public and agency involvement in plant conservation. Contact Karen Clary at 2016_TPCC@wildflower.org for more information.

TUESDAY, NOV. 8, 1:30PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER (RNC), KERRVILLE
AT16-TBA NATIVE POLLINATOR MANAGEMENT
Ben Hutchins will speak on new pollinator guidelines at the monthly meeting of the NPSOT-Kerrville Chapter monthly meeting.

MONDAY, NOV. 21 8:30-10:40AM HILL COUNTRY STATE NATURAL AREA, BANDERA
AT16-229 BIRDS OF A FEATHER
Ranger Leanne Beauxbeannes and Texas Master Naturalist Scott Magee lead this guided birding walk for both beginners and experienced birders. Bring binoculars, comfy/sturdy shoes, layered clothing, and water. If you wish, bring a picnic lunch and stay after the walk to enjoy our 5000-acre natural area. Come early to register; regular day-use fees apply: Texas State Park Pass, no charge for everyone in the vehicle; Seniors (65+), \$3 with Bluebonnet Pass; kids 12 and younger, always free.

**The newsletter's publication schedule does not allow listing all AT events in each issue.
Check the chapter calendar on our website for additional AT.**



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months at 7:00 PM in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehmann Drive in Kerrville.

Join us at 6:30 for our social half-hour.

Everyone is welcome.

Texas Master Naturalist 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.

Board of Directors 2016

Brenda Fest -- President

Floyd Trefny -- Vice President

Rheda Boardman -- Secretary

Diane McMahon -- Treasurer

Liz Ross -- Advanced Training Director

Bridget Langdale -- Communications Director

Lisa Flanagan -- Membership Director

Claire Mitchell -- Volunteer Service Projects Director

Diana Armbrust -- 2016 Class Director

Larry Eskridge-- 2015 Class Representative

Kathy Ward -- Immediate Past President

LEARN
MORE ON
OUR WEBSITE

TXMN.ORG/HILLCOUNTRY/

Keeping the Hill
Country Native

The Texas Star is a monthly publication of the Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. News, essays, comments, and ideas are welcome.

Please email them to:

Lenore Langsdorf, Editor
LenoreLangsdorf@gmail.com

The Hill Country Chapter does not recommend or endorse organizations or commercial sources mentioned in our newsletter. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and editor.

Questions about our chapter?

Email Lisa Flanagan,

Membership Director

hillcountrymembership@gmail.com

