

The Texas Star

Newsletter of the
Texas Master Naturalist
Hill Country Chapter
August 2019 Volume 17 Number 8



photo by Vern Crawford



AUGUST MEETING: NEW CLASS RECEPTION

Each of the members of the Class of 2019 will be introduced at this reception at the Kerr Arts and Cultural Center in Kerrville. Classes begin on Wednesday, August 21 at the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall.

Our regular monthly meetings will resume on September 23 at the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall, 125 North Lehman Drive in Kerrville. Socializing begins at 6:15 and awards (including awards earned in August) will be presented at 6:45. The program will begin at 7:00: Craig Hensley will present an introduction to the Texas Nature Trackers.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Lisa Flanagan

Happy August to everyone!

My #1 objective these days is to STAY COOL. I miss our rains and green, green, green. Oh, well, we knew it couldn't last forever.

Good news...our 2019 class is set. It will start on August 21 at the UGRA lecture hall, and we have a great group of trainees.

Please remember that we have NO chapter meeting in August.

You will have received word that registration is open for our Annual Meeting, which will be held in Rockwall, near Dallas, this year. I know it's a long way to go, but this is a great time to mingle with members from chapters all over the state. The Advanced Training opportunities cover a wide spectrum of topics. You can see some of the special projects done by other chapters, see creative talents in the photo and art competitions, and more. Mary Pearl Meuth and Michelle Haggerty do a wonderful job of putting all this together for a special weekend. Please join us.

Before you know it, our Volunteer Recognition Party (aka Christmas Party) will be here in December. Please plan to attend. More details will come out later as our plans come together.

See you in September!





Congratulations to members who received awards at the July meeting:

From left to right: Gary Fest, Lucy Griffith, Andy Robinson, Myrna Langford,
Susan Clark, Sherry Wilson

SAVE THE DATE!
Fall Native Plant Sale
Riverside Nature Center, Kerrville

Saturday, October 5, 2019, 9am - 2pm
Co-sponsored by
Texas Master Naturalists Hill Country Chapter
and Riverside Nature Center



Native wildflowers, shrubs, grasses, and trees will be available.
Plants are sourced from local nurseries.

A special pre-sale will be held for RNC and HCMN members only.
4:30pm to 6pm on Friday, October 4.

Earn TMN volunteer hours by helping with this event.

If you would like to volunteer, email Sharon Hixson at sharonhixson859@gmail.com.

Watch for more information in future issues of this newsletter.

Recent Hill Country Naturalist Columns by Jim Stanley

- 7/6/19 Bacteria and Fungi: Essential Organisms for Life as We Know It.
- 7/13/19 Non-Native Plants and Animals: A Real Problem
- 7/20/19 It Would be Easy to Become a Pessimist,
but Human Nature Compels Us Not to Be.
- 7/27/19 Native Hill Country Plants That Need Our Help

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

Beginning of the End of Summer

by Ruth McArthur

These September highs are lower
than the lows of August.

She'll be back, Summer,
before the weather finally cools,
but the object lesson that the heat
can abate fills me with hope.

Filled by the first rains of fall,
the creek sings after summer silence,

The bank's lanky thighs,
bared by heat and drought,
robbed of all modesty,
are now demurely covered
by the rising water.

Mighty clumps of bushy bluestem wave
heavy strawberry blond heads.

Pink love grass, gently caressed by the wind,
kisses the cheeks of the prairie,

Copper canyon daisies, Mexican mint marigold
burst open their blazing yellow blooms,
joyful explosions on autumn's apron.

I desperately need to cut my fingernails.

Originally published in Underwood, Spring 2019

From Greg Walton

Happy Birthday, Lost Maples!
September 1, 2019

The Friends of Lost Maples is happy to announce an event celebrating the 40th anniversary of the opening of Lost Maples State Natural Area in Vanderpool. Lost Maples was the first State Natural Area in the Texas Parks and Wildlife system, and has been a model for how to balance recreational needs with conservation values on state lands. This event, eligible for Advanced Training hours, runs from 1-3 pm at the Murphy House at Lost Maples. The program will feature speakers from the park, from the Friends group, and from TPWD in Austin. There will be interpretive and informational displays about the park and surrounding ecosystems, discussions of the natural and human history of the Sabinal Canyon and the Natural Area itself, and hour-long interpretive hikes conducted by Master Naturalists from the Hill Country chapter. For more information, contact Greg Walton at gregwalton12345@gmail.com.



Photo courtesy of pawderosaranch.com

Free refreshments provided!

Cosponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Friends of Lost Maples

The Fredericksburg Native Plant Society Presents

“How to Use I-Naturalist”: Become a Citizen Scientist

Kelly Bender Simon, Texas Parks and Wildlife

Tuesday, August 27, 2019

6:30 p.m. - Light refreshments and social; 7:00 p.m.- meeting

I-Naturalist is a robust, on-line tool to assist in the identification of all things nature. Don't know what that wildflower is? What is that animal track? What kind of snake is that? Is that plant poisonous?

Using a smart phone (I-phone or Android), snap a photo of anything nature-related and upload it to the I-Naturalist app. The photo will be immediately disseminated to a world of I-Naturalist users. Someone in that group will be able to identify your photo.

Not only is I-Naturalist useful for individual queries; the information is also used by scientists for data collection.

Bring your cell phone. Become a citizen scientist.

Memorial Presbyterian Church
601 North Milam, Fredericksburg

THE HILL COUNTRY ALLIANCE
INVITES YOU TO CELEBRATE,
CONTEMPLATE, AND
ACCELERATE

CONSERVATION IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

At the 2019 Hill Country
Leadership Summit

SEPTEMBER 26
DRIPPING SPRINGS
CAMP LUCY

This annual summit provides an opportunity for Hill Country Leaders to share, learn, network, and generate ideas for conservation strategies in the Texas Hill Country.

For more information, see
hillcountryalliance.org/LeadershipSummit



Land Stewardship Tips:

Focus of Women's Conference Sept. 30-Oct. 1 in Fredericksburg

Women landowners and operators will find answers to questions and hear about conservation management practices essential to their property at the 2019 Bennett Trust Land Stewardship Women's Conference. "Tips for the Trade" will be the theme of the conference set for Sept. 30-Oct. 1 at The Inn on Barons Creek, 308 S. Washington St., Fredericksburg. Cost is \$100 and includes the opening breakfast as well as all other meals, break refreshments and tour transportation. Funded in part by the Ruth and Eskel Bennett Trust, the conference is an effort to reach women landowners who want to learn more about stewardship of the land, said Dr. Larry Redmon, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service program leader and associate head, Texas A&M University soil and crop sciences department, College Station. "We believe women from throughout Texas and the surrounding states will find a lot of value in this event," Redmon said. "Our excellent slate of speakers and topics to be covered extend far beyond the Edwards Plateau region, so we welcome everyone to come and learn with us."

This year's keynote speaker is Dr. Susan Ballabina, Texas A&M AgriLife deputy vice chancellor, College Station. She will address conservation of natural resources. For more information, go to <https://agrilife.org/bennetttrust/>, or contact Dr. Larry Redmon at l-redmon@tamu.edu or Linda Francis, l-francis@tamu.edu.

Learn to Landscape with Native Hill Country Plants



What: Native Landscaping Certification Program- Level 3

Topic: The Native Landscape Certification Program (NLCP) has been developed by the Native Plant Society of Texas to teach the value of including and preserving native plants in landscapes.

Level 3: Installation and Maintenance of Native Landscapes

- Recognize the differences between native and non-native landscapes.
- Become familiar with how to install the different types of native plants into a landscape, including: plant choice, purchase, placement, spacing; soil choice; bed and soil preparation; planting seeds and plants; mulching.
- Understand maintenance requirements and techniques. Create maintenance schedules for different types of native plants.

The course includes a classroom session and a 1.5-2 hour outdoor plant walk.

The Native Plant Society (NPSOT) offers two levels of certificates:

Completion - attend the full day.

Competency - attend the full day and pass a test at the end of the class.

Cost: Members of the Native Plant Society of Texas: \$50; non-members \$65

Become a Member: <https://npsot.org/wp/join-renew/>

To Register: <https://npsot3.123signup.com/event/registration/rgfns>

More Info: <https://npsot3.123signup.com/event/details/rgfns>

Questions: Registration questions: Meg Inglis, NLCP Coordinator,
meg.inglis@npsot.org or 512-589-1316

Location and class specific questions: Chris Anderson, NLCP Fredericksburg
Chapter Program Manager, sligo.canine@gmail.com or 830-998-8559.

Instructors: Chris Anderson and Lonnie Childs; both past Presidents of the
NPSOT Fredericksburg Chapter

Date: Saturday, September 28, 2019

Time: 8:30-4:30 p.m. (30-45 minutes for lunch. Bring your own sack lunch.)

Where: Central Texas Electric Cooperative
386 Friendship Lane

The Buzz About Bumble Bees

I try to attract all kinds of pollinators, but one of my favorites is the Bumble Bee (*Bombus sp.*). I especially enjoy their larger size and fuzzy-looking black and yellow stripes, along with their lovely buzzing. I'm not an expert on identifying the nine different species of Bumble Bees that call Texas home, but Texas Parks and Wildlife is trying to fix that. See their page Bumble Bee Identification: [https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/nongame/native-pollinators/Bumble Bee-id.phtml](https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/nongame/native-pollinators/Bumble%20Bee-id.phtml) . Since late winter, I've been trying to observe and remember their favorite treats, so that I can make sure that I plant plenty of them.

Two closely related early spring Bumble Bee magnets are the Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) and the Texas Redbud (*Cercis canadensis var. texensis*). They do attract many other pollinators as well, but I observed large numbers of Bumble Bees on the pair that I have flanking the garden arch that opens onto my front sidewalk.

Mid-spring is no effort, of course, since there are so many nectar plants in bloom. I noticed the Bumble Bees especially among the Indian Blanket (*Gaillardia pulchella* and *Gaillardia amblyodon* – I am blest to have both!), Cowpen Daisies (*Verbesina encelioides*) and Autumn Sage (*Salvia gregii*, which also blooms nicely in the spring).

Early summer found them visiting my patch of the beautiful, but often maligned, Unicorn plant (aka Devil's Claw or *Proboscidea louisianica ssp. louisianica*). Ranchers hate it because the large dried seed pods get caught in the hair of all sorts of livestock. However, the large blooms are orchid-like, white to pink with purple speckles in the throat and lots of beautiful yellow pollen that the Bumble Bees just can't resist.

If you are fortunate enough to have a moist boggy spot in the sunshine, the bushy cardinal flower plants (*Lobelia cardinalis*) draw the Bumble Bees in with bright scarlet blooms in mid to late summer. Individually the flowers are small but occur in racemes that never seem to quit growing, opening more and more flowers. Hummingbirds are also attracted to it, but I seldom fail to find Bumble Bees puttering about from clump to clump. The picture shows what I believe to be a *Bombus sonorous*, or Sonoran Bumble Bee. Although not documented to occur in San Saba County, per Michael D. Warriner of Texas Parks and Wildlife, they are documented in many counties to the south and west. ("Bumble Bees, (*Hymenoptera: Apidae*) of Texas," The Southwestern Naturalist 57(4): 442-445, December 2012). I will be submitting this picture to TP&W for verification.

I'm not yet sure what their fall favorites will be, but I am sure that the attention-getting yellow of the Cowpen Daisies, so widespread in my northwestern part of the Hill Country, will rank high among them. You can bet that I will be paying attention and planning to plant more of their favorites!



Bombus sonorous



Proboscidea louisianica ssp. louisianica

The View From Rusty Bend



Passion vine, Gulf Fritillary caterpillar

Suffer Gladly

Maypop passion vine, gaudy flowers
symbol-swollen, corona of glory crimped and striped.
Charismatic edible, soother of ruminators.
A climber, rambunctious.

What better host to the bittersweet longwing,
with its vast appetite?
Gulf Fritillary, delivering
yellow eggs, elongated, ribbed

to hide among wild winding vines.
Each hatches a dragon-like, spiny caterpillar,
ready to gnaw, strip to sad sticks,
then crawl to hide—

chrysalis into the tan twin of a dead leaf.
Emerge a burnt orange celebration, each wing
a children's drawing of three white dots, circled in black,
closing to showcase silvered panes beneath.

Three inches of flying flower.
Passion vine, a lavish host—
devoured and destroyed
to birth an elegance of auburn.

July at Rusty Bend and life is all about the juveniles. The news cycle runs dawn to dusk as we start the day with Canyon Wrens learning their songs, missing notes, pausing midway as they tune their descending trills. They groom the porch like mom and pop but a pebble between the boards holds as much interest as a fat bug. Ash-throated Flycatcher youngsters sound just like five-year-olds learning to whistle, blow but no vibrato. Titmice juveniles seem to learn to fly early and well. Landing, though, not so much. They tumble to the grass and saunter off as if to say, "I meant to do that," like a cat who falls off the back of a couch. Batches of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers dash from oak to oak, miniature mockingbirds, but again, accurate landing skills elude them.

We are dismayed to see that despite our cowbird capture program, mama cardinal is feeding two cowbird babies. Also concerning is the prevalence this year of eye disease in groups of House Finches. They are pitiful trying to land on the feeder with one eye red and swollen. We've had some success taking down the feeders, sanitizing them and waiting a week before putting them back up.

At the large end of the juvenile scale, we watch young Turkey Vultures cartwheel their landings, somersaulting on top of each other as they try to perch near their parents. Then we see ravens, flying purposefully across the neighbor's field in large groups. Grasshopper Patrol. Teaching the young ones the joys of protein-packed crunchy snacks. They flare and pounce and jump, then nail them one by one.

One day on my way into town, I see a Caracara on a fence post above some roadkill. He's all fancy with his orange beak, head crest and cowled plumage. "Nice hair, dude!" Beside him, on the next fence post, is a Common Grackle, one-fourth his size, but an opportunistic feeder.

One huge falcon and his mini-me, in apparent harmony. There is a lesson there about interspecies cooperation; perhaps we should take note.

continued on next page

The wrens are still nesting. There are four tiny Carolina Wrens in an old grain scoop on our front porch; they're so fresh, they can't hold up their heads. A Canyon Wren wrestles some mohair from the cage of nesting materials. As he flies away, it trails behind him like a banner from a Piper Cub. What might the banner say? "PAY ATTENTION."

Priscilla's Corner (In Memory of Priscilla Stanley)



Eustoma grandiflorum

Texas Bluebell

Poem, images and essay by Lucy Griffith Copyright 2019

Lucy Griffith, PhD co-manages the Rusty Bend Ranch with her husband, Andy Robinson. She also writes poetry; her muse, a tractor named Mabel. The story of the Burro Lady of West Texas, told in poems, [We Make a Tiny Herd](#), has just been published by Main Street Rag. (Next reading, October 4, 6:30pm at Branch on High in Comfort.) Both Lucy and Andy are certified Master Naturalists. Comments welcome at doctorluz@hctc.net.

WELCOME

Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend and contribute to Board of Directors meetings. The board meets at the Riverside Nature Center at 2:30 on the Monday of the chapter's monthly meeting.

Advanced Training

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27 7-8PM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FREDERICKSBURG

AT19-166 HOW TO USE I-NATURALIST

Kelly Bender Simon will discuss how to use this on-line tool to assist in identifying all things nature. Bring your phone or other hand-held device.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27 1-2PM WEBINAR

AT19-179 URBAN MONARCH BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

Abigail Derby-Lewis and Patrick Fitzgerald will present success stories on getting involved in conserving monarchs in cities. Contact Information: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf8bDUnLuW6clw50udNgqQkqvAtXOifk54u2w2fDSGROmcCcw/viewform> .

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28 1-2PM UPPER GUADALUPE RIVER AUTHORITY LECTURE HALL, KERRVILLE

AT19-133 NEW CLASS ADVANCE TRAINING ON VMS

If you could use a bit more training or a refresher in the Volunteer Management System, bring your laptop, tablet, or other suitable device. Brenda Fest is the instructor.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 6:30-8PM CIBOLO NATURE CENTER AUDITORIUM, BOERNE

AT19-190 BATS AS POLLINATORS

Nyta Brown will highlight the two pollinating species of bats in Texas and discuss other pollinating species at this meeting of the NPSOT-Boerne chapter. Social, 6:30; Meeting, 6:45; Lecture, 7pm.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 10AM-1PM WIMBERLY COMMUNITY CENTER, WIMBERLY

AT19-185 RIPARIAN DESIGN WORKSHOP, CYPRESS CREEK WATERSHED

Anyone is welcome to attend and learn from Hays County Master Naturalists, local landowners, and Texas Stream Team on the importance of establishing riparian areas. Please register in advance so we are sure to have enough materials; contact cypresscreek@tx.state.edu .

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 10AM-2PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE

AT19-125 EDUSCAPE TALK AND TOUR RNC

Peter Van Dyck will explain the use of permaculture, contours, and swales in your landscape. Seating is limited; please RSVP to Riverside Nature Center, 257-4837 or rnc.kerrville@gmail.com .

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 12-1PM WEBINAR

AT19-189 A NEW PEST: THE SPOTTED LANTERNFLY

Lori Chamberlin will instruct homeowners on what they can do to help slow the spread of this invasive pest and how to report sightings of spotted lanternfly. Contact Information: <http://www.forestrywebinars.net/webinars/a-new-pest-the-spotted-lanternfly?sr=wp~mkt-whenPub> .

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 1-3PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE

AT19-134 NEW CLASS AT: TREE IDENTIFICATION

Jim Stanley will focus on native trees of the Hill Country. All Master Naturalists are welcome to attend,

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 10AM-2PM LADY BIRD JOHNSON MUNICIPAL PARK, FREDERICKSBURG

AT19-183 NATIVE BEES FOR YOUR LANDSCAPE

Carol Clark will provide tips on plants to attract bees and identification hints, and explain how to participate in nationwide citizen science tracking efforts. This workshop will be limited to 30 attendees. Suggested donation of \$10.00. Please RSVP to Nancy Person, nancykperson@gmail.com or 830-992-8411.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 9AM-4PM KERR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, HUNT

AT19-192 KERR WMA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH SEMINAR

The instructors are Deanna Pfeffer, Bob Dittmar, John Kinsey, and Evan McCoy. Please register in advance and bring your lunch. Contact Deanna Pfeffer, deanna.pfeffer@tpwd.texas.gov or 830-238-4483.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 6:30-8:30PM OLD TUNNEL STATE PARK, FREDERICKSBURG
 AT19-136 NEW CLASS AT: MEXICAN FREE-TAILED BATS
 Nyta Brown will be the instructor. This class is limited to members of the current new class.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 1-3PM RIVERSIDE NATURE CENTER, KERRVILLE
 AT 19-135 New Class AT: Grass Identification
 Jim Stanley will explain how to identify native grasses of the Hill Country. All Texas Master Naturalists are welcome to attend.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 7:30AM-6PM CAMP LUCY, DRIPPING SPRINGS
 AT19-182 HILL COUNTRY ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT: CONSERVATION IN THE HEART OF TEXAS
 This annual summit provides an opportunity for Hill Country Leaders to share, learn, network and generate ideas for conservation strategies in the Texas Hill Country. Cost: \$105. For more information, contact Amy Crowell, amy@hillcountryalliance.org .

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 1-2PM DIETERT CENTER, KERRVILLE
 AT19-186 FOSSILS AND MINERALS OF THE EDWARDS PLATEAU
 Mike McGinnis will discuss the geologic history of the fossils and minerals found in the Hill Country. Cost, \$15. For more information, go to www.clubed.net or call 830-792-4044.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 8:30AM-4:30PM CENTRAL TEXAS ELECTRIC CO-OP, FREDERICKSBURG
 AT19-177 NATIVE LANDSCAPE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM #3
 Chris Anderson and Lonnie Childs will be the presenters; preregistration is required. For location and class specific questions, contact Chris Anderson, NLCP Host Chapter Program Manager, sligo.canine@gmail.com or 830-998-8559.

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.



T E X A S



We meet on the fourth Monday of most months at 6:45 PM (but not in August) in the Upper Guadalupe River Authority Lecture Hall at 125 North Lehmann Drive in Kerrville.

Join us at 6:15 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 2019

- Lisa Flanagan -- President
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- Vern Crawford -- State Representative

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 Reggie Cox,

Membership Director

hillcountrymembership@gmail.com

