

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 11, No. 1

<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

January 2019

Presidents Report

First off, here is hoping everyone had a great holiday and is ready for the new year.

Many thanks to Paul Dowlearn and Nila Dowlearn at Wichita Valley Landscaping for providing the centerpiece for the entry table and to Kay for lights on the plants at the Christmas party. And to all that brought desserts for the dinner, thank you.

We will meet January 8 at Bolin Science Hall room 213. Our guest speaker will be Tom Lang, Inland Fisheries Biologist, who will be speaking on the American Wildlife Recovery Act.

How Invasive Earthworm Feces Is Altering US Soils

The earthworms you encounter in your garden or in natural areas are typically not native to North America, especially if you live in the northern United States. In those areas, earthworms were apparently pushed out by the last glaciation. Most U.S. earthworms are non-natives; that night crawler, *Lumbricus terrestris*, that you buy for your fishing line is from Europe. The non-native species compete with natives but especially they change the nutrient cycling in northern North American forests by processing detritus on the forest floor more quickly than would normally occur.

Recent research has begun to discover how Asian jumping earthworms (*Amyntas agrestis*, among others) are directly impacting soil. Geoscientist Jenelle Wempner of the University of Wisconsin in Madison has found that the earthworm's fecal material, which looks like "coffee grounds", "lock up nutrients and chemically alter the soil composition", making it more difficult for plants to access the nutrients.



Asian jumping worm. Note the prominent whitish clitellum (ring near the head) that is flush with the body. They do not burrow very far into the soil, but instead are typically in the leaf and detritus layer of the soil.
Credit: University of Wisconsin Arboretum

LOCALS

JANUARY 8: Rolling Plains Chapter monthly meeting is *in Bolin Science Hall room 209 at Midwestern State University* Time: 7:00 PM. The program: Tom Lang, Inland Fisheries Biologist, who will be speaking on the American Wildlife Recovery Act.

JANUARY 12: Bird Walk with Penny at Lake Arrowhead State Park. Meet at the dump station at 8am.

JANUARY 19: Wild, Wonderful Wildlife, 3:00pm to 4:30pm at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Have you ever wondered about the creatures who call Palo Duro Canyon home? Here is your chance to learn about some of the interesting wildlife that crawl, creep, slither, and fly in this amazing canyon. At the park Visitor Center, located 3/4 of a mile inside the park gates.

FEBRUARY 2: Cross Timbers Bird Walk, 10:00am to 12:00pm at Lake Mineral Wells State Park & Trailway. Join our Park Ranger on a birding walk in the park. We will locate and identify birds of the Cross Timbers area. We will have binoculars on hand to loan to those without.

Reservations are required. Call 940-328-1171 ext 222.

Golden-cheeked Warbler

Texas Master Naturalist 2019 Recertification Pin

Golden-cheeked warblers, also known as the gold finch of Texas, is an endangered species of bird that breeds in Central Texas, from Palo Pinto County southwestward along the eastern and southern edge of the Edwards Plateau to Kinney County. Golden-cheeked warblers nest only in central Texas mixed Ashe-juniper and oak woodlands in ravines and canyons.



Adult Golden-cheeked warblers reach a length of 4.5 inches. They eat insects and spiders found on the leaves and bark of oaks and other trees. They use long strips of cedar bark and spider webs to build their nests. They come to Texas in March to nest and raise their young, and leave in July to spend the winter in Mexico and Central America. Females lay 3-4 eggs during nesting season. Of the nearly 360 bird species that breed

in Texas, the Golden-cheeked Warbler is the only one that nests exclusively in Texas.

Golden-cheeked warblers are endangered because many tall juniper and oak woodlands have been cleared to build houses, roads, and stores. Some habitat was cleared to grow crops or grass for livestock. Other habitat areas were flooded when large lakes were built.

A Nonprofit is Trying to Clean up the Pacific Garbage Patch

Over 5 Trillion Pieces of Plastic Currently Litter the Ocean



Trash accumulates in 5 ocean garbage patches, the largest one being the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, located between Hawaii and California. If left to circulate, the plastic will impact our ecosystems, health and economies. Solving it requires a combination of closing the source, and cleaning up what has already accumulated in the ocean.

A Dutch organization called *The Ocean Cleanup* launched a large trap to collect trash from the swirling mess of plastic in the middle of the Pacific Ocean where currents meet. Although the system is still in its testing phase, the goal is to float the U-shaped boom through the garbage, and then collect the large plastic pieces for disposal on land before they're broken down by the sunlight and waves into micro plastics—harmful to sea life, according to National Geographic.



Reminders

If you have hours to enter from 2018, please get this accomplished sooner rather than later.

Dues are payable, so if you have yet to pay them, please don't make Larry beg. And if you no longer wish to remain a member please let Larry know so he won't bug you about it.

We have lots of **Home and Garden Show tickets** yet to sell. Please don't forget to get those from us. The sale of Home and Garden tickets is the Chapters only fund raiser for the 2019.

2018 Rolling Plains Chapter

- We had 52 dues paying members in 2018
- 28 of the 52 members recertified
- We had 12 trainees take the classes in 2018. Of the 12, four completed the course, one achieved double certification for a total of 29 members certifying or recertifying
- Four of the 12 trainees have stayed active in the chapter
- Members completed 3,815 hours of Volunteer Time as of 12-3-18
- Members completed 538 hours of Advance Training as of 12-3-18
- We currently have:
 - Eight members with 250 + hours
 - Five members with 500 + hours
 - Four members with 1,000 + hours
 - Two members with 2,000 + hours
 - One member with 3,700 + hours
 - One member with 4,000 + hours
- Since the chapter organized:
 - 35,918 Volunteer hours
 - 5,198 Advanced Training hours



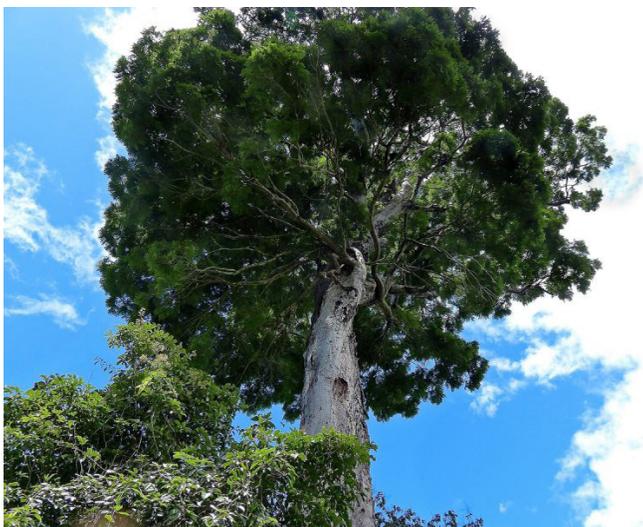
Where invasive fire ants are present, lizards twitch and flee to remove the ants, reversing existing geographical trends in behavioral and physical traits used to avoid predators.

The rare oriental blue clearwing finds security in being a generalized mimic of a number of bee species, with its strikingly shiny blue colors similar to many species of bee found in Malaysia.



Over their long lives, whales accumulate earwax plugs that can get as long as ten inches in large species. The plugs show bands that correspond with their age—every year, they have heavy feeding times and migration times that change the color of the wax.

Atlantic Forest Tree: One of the Top 10 New Species

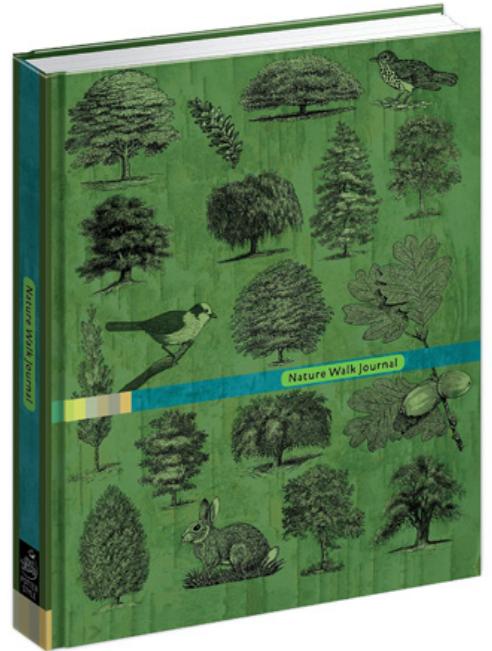


Dinizia jueirana-facao, up to 130 feet (40 m) in height, emerges above the canopy of the semi-deciduous, riparian, pristine Atlantic forest in Brazil where it is found. This massive tree, weighs an estimated 62 tons (56,000 kg). While large in dimension,

the tree is limited in numbers – it is known from only 25 individuals, about half of which are in the protected area, making it critically endangered. *Image via IISE.*

RESOURCE CORNER

Nature Walk Journal Diary
by Potter Gift
Hardback: 160 pages
ISBN- 978-0307590916
Price: \$16.15 on Amazon



Invoke your inner Thoreau with the Nature Walk Journal--the ideal companion for bringing with you as you wander through the woods, take a hike, or appreciate the great outdoors.

Filled with illustrations of leaves, cloud formations, and animal tracks for easy reference, as well as lists of national parks, scenic trails, and botanical gardens, this journal provides an ideal place to jot down what you see, hear, smell, and notice on your walk.

Use the pages for pressing wildflowers, pasting in photos, or making sketches of the scenery, flowers, or animals.

Quotes about the woods, wilderness, and nature from writers and artists appear throughout.

Chapter Contacts:

Terry McKee, President 766-4097, dgm59@aol.com; Kay Murphy, Vice President 704-0406, kay_vince@sb-cglobal.net; Lynn Seman, Secretary, 867-3006, rlynnseman@gmail.com; Larry Snyder, Treasurer 569-4534, lastime64@gmail.com

Committees Chairperson:

Paula Savage, Newsletter Editor and Designer 691-0231, pasavage@sbcglobal.net; Tami Davis, Website Manager 224-013, tamieducator@gmail.com; Dian Hoehne, Communication Chair 704-3461

Advisor: Robert Mauk, TPWD Advisor 766-2383, Robert.Mauk@tpwd.Texas.gov