

# Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

## NEWSLETTER

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<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

July 2020

### President Report

During National Pollinator Week (June 22-28) Laura Clepper, Leslie Fernandez, Laura Gillis, Debra Halter, Cindy Huckabee, Joy Parsons, Linda Price, Lynn Seman, Lisa Taylor, Sandy Underwood and I participated in the Miles 4 Monarchs virtual event hosted by Monarch Joint Venture. The idea was to commit to walking, running, biking, or paddling at least 25 miles - the average daily distance a monarch travels to complete a 2,000 mile journey when migrating. They encouraged taking pictures during your journey of pollinators and pollinator habitat. Lynn Seman created a delightful video that you may view on *You Tube: Monarch Miles Day 1 by Lynn Seman*. On Saturday, June 27th, we shared some of our favorite pollinator books and our experiences for this project. Lynn made a video of the highlights: <https://youtu.be/cFj4N-HfmTl>



I shared with our group a project I have been working on for four years to create a wildscape for pollinator habitat. A gardening friend of mine suggested that we take over a roundabout on our street at Clarinda and Speedway Ave. Then, she moved away leaving me with the project! The city had planted three Japanese black pines and then came periodically to butcher them! It was quite a pathetic sight to see!

Paul Garrison, a neighbor who owns Garrison's on Kemp, said to count him in for financial support and water from his house. So, my husband and I contacted a longtime friend of ours, Paul Dowlearn of Wichita Valley Landscape, to help with the initial planting of native plants. Over the years, another neighbor planted an agave, a burr oak, and a Mississippi Iris along with a memorial brick dedicated to her sister. Birds and winds have planted other plants also! Recently, I planted a red yucca and a Mexican Bird of Paradise



### E LOCALS

**JULY 7:** Rolling Plains Chapter Meeting - 7:00pm on Zoom - log in a little early so we can start the program at 7:00pm. The link will be sent the day before the meeting. Please do not share the link to others not in group.

**The program:** Daniel Nix, Utilities Operations Manager for the City of Wichita Falls will be our speaker.

### Congratulations!

2020 Recertifications have been earned by Marilyn Meador, Paula Savage and L. Clepper.

Sharon Hyde has earned her 250 volunteer hour pin.

If we're ever able to meet again "in person" we'll get all these awards to our members!

### Texas Native Plants Finder

I know many (most?) of you know about this website for finding native plants for your area, but in case you didn't I'm going to share it again. You simply plug in your zip code and you get the native flowers, grasses, trees for the area you live. Pretty neat. <https://www.nwf.org/nativeplantfinder>

before the rains two weeks ago. I have watered some with rainwater I collect at my home just to make sure they settle in for the long haul. It has taken four years and many hours of pruning and weeding to “curate” this wildscape. It is visited by birds and pollinators daily no matter what time of year. It so delightful to see families walk by it and sometimes stop to take pictures of their children, especially when the bluebonnets are in bloom. I’ve had high school kids come to take samples of the plants and catch insects for their biology projects for school.

In addition to the plants listed above, there is frogfruit, phlox, ruellia, evening primrose, sunflower, mistflower, catmint, Russian sage, native lantana, rock rose, autumn sage, mealy blue sage, Jimsonweed, and wormwood. I love that every year the wildscape is a little different and spring brings many surprises.

### **FYI:**

#### **Wave 2 – Has been extended to August 1, 2020**

- Group meetings of 10 or fewer people only if social distancing can be practiced.
- 25% capacity for indoor events
- Additional volunteer may return to work with the office capacity not exceeding 50% but should practice social distancing. Wearing masks is encouraged when in public spaces
- Contact tracing with the use of sign in sheets or online registration recommended

#### **TMN Annual Meeting 2020 (October 21-24) Virtual!**

- Registration the first week of August
- \$40-80 (Details to come soon)
- Details will be posted on website mid-July

## **Bear Conservation Efforts Prove Successful as Sightings Increase in Northeast Texas**

AUSTIN— Since April, there has been an uptick in black bear sightings in Bowie, Grayson and Titus counties in northeast Texas.

The bears are thought to originate from the neighboring states of Oklahoma and Arkansas, or possibly Louisiana, where resident bear populations are well established and expanding. As the numbers of this iconic species grows, dispersing black bears find their way across state lines into Texas, signaling the possibility of its eventual permanent return to our landscape.

“It is inspiring as a biologist to watch these animals make their return to Northeast Texas after being absent for a century or more,” said Texas Parks and Wildlife Depart-



ment (TPWD) biologist, Penny Wilkerson.

The recovery of black bears in the three-state region has been ongoing for 30-50 years.

Thanks to conservation efforts, the Louisiana black bear is no longer listed as a federally threatened species. Similarly, efforts in Oklahoma and Arkansas have increased and expanded bear populations by focusing on habitat conservation and species management.

Bears are secretive but curious and have an excellent sense of smell, with much of their behavior driven by their appetite. These natural characteristics can, however, become a problem when bears find an easy meal from a human-related

## **Ten Things You Can Do In Your Yard To Encourage Pollinators**

1. Plant a pollinator garden—provide nectar and feeding plants (flowers and herbs).
2. Provide a water source—place shallow dishes of water in sunny areas or create a muddy spot.
3. Provide shelter and overwintering habitat (bee boxes, undisturbed soil areas, and piles of woody debris).
4. Stop using insecticides and reduce other pesticides.
5. Provide sunny areas out of the wind.
6. Use native plant species whenever possible—mimic local natural areas.
7. Grow flowers throughout season. Provide a variety of colors and shapes.
8. Plant in clumps and layers. Use trees, shrub layers, with some low-growing perennials and vines—intermix with flowering annuals.
9. Use compost instead of commercial fertilizers.
10. Look but do not touch.

source. Most sighting reports come from game camera photos around game feeders dispensing corn or pelleted feed.

“Bears do not generally pose a threat to pets or livestock. These critters are omnivores and are more interested in berries, grubs and acorns than anything else,” Wilkerson said.

Texas hunters should make sure that they know their targets as hogs and bears can look very similar from a distance. Black bears are currently a protected species in Texas

TPWD is interested in documenting all sightings of bears and encourages reporting any sightings to a local biologist. Biologists can provide technical help on how to detour bears, and other unique animal visitors, from areas near your home. Residents can find a local biologist and more information about bears and bear safety on the TPWD website. Residents are also encouraged to call the east Texas Region Office at 903-566-1626 extension 209.



**B**y eating herbivores with seeds in their stomachs and then leaving scat across a large range, cougars are able to plant around 94,000 plants every year.

**T**he Viceroy caterpillar is designed to look like bird poop in order to avoid predators.



**I**nstead of capturing insects, like most pitcher plants, *Nepenthes lowii* evolved to capture the excrement of tree-dwelling mammals and birds. *Nepenthes lowii*, or Low's pitcher-plant, is a tropical pitcher plant endemic to Borneo.

## San Antonio River Draining Targets Invasive Snail

In January, the San Antonio River Authority drained the San Antonio River along a 3-mile stretch in San Antonio to remove the invasive South American apple snail (*Pomacea maculata*). Fifty of the snails were removed on one day. The snails were first found in the river stretch the previous October.

In addition, non-native fish such as blue tilapia (*Oreochromis aureus*) and suckermouth catfish (*Hypostomus plecostomus*, aka pleco) were also removed.

Apple snails are voracious feeders on aquatic vegetation that is impor-

tant habitat for native aquatic species. They can also carry a parasitic worm that can cause meningitis in humans.



If you find apple snails or their pink egg cases, please report them

here. You can also report the snails or their eggs, plecocs, or blue tilapia to [aquaticinvasives@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:aquaticinvasives@tpwd.texas.gov).

For more information on apple snails, see the apple snail's profile at [Texasinvasives.org](http://Texasinvasives.org). For more information on plecocs, see the suckermouth catfish's profile at [Texasinvasives.org](http://Texasinvasives.org).

## RESOURCE CORNER

***Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife, Texas A&M Nature Guides Edition***  
 by Kelly Conrad Bender  
 Flexibound: 154 pages  
 ISBN-13: 978-1603440851  
 Price: \$22.26 on Amazon



Whether you have an apartment balcony or a multi-acre ranch, the Texas Wildscapes™ program provides the tools

you need to make a home for all the animals that will thrive in the native habitat you create.

In *Texas Wildscapes*, Kelly Conrad Bender identifies the kinds of animals you can expect when you give them their three basic needs: food, water, and shelter. She then provides guidelines for designing and planting your yard or garden to best provide these requirements for the many birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates the environment will attract.

For those thousands of people already familiar with the old edition of *Texas Wildscapes*, the new book with its accompanying, easily navigable DVD will be a welcome supplement, providing a wealth of plant and animal lists, tables, pictures, and other detailed information in a fully searchable format.

This book can also help you earn official recognition for your conservation efforts from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Successful applicants will receive a personalized certificate and have the opportunity to receive a weatherproof sign for their landscaping accomplishments, as detailed in the book.

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