

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 12, No. 11

<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

November 2020

REMINDER: Please return your Monarch data sheets and unused tags to Laura Gillis, 6343 Johnson Road, Iowa Park, Texas 76367 by NOVEMBER 15.

President's Report

I attended this year's Texas Master Naturalist VIRTUAL Annual Meeting with many reservations. I just couldn't see how I could endure many hours gazing at the screen instead of participating in on site field activities or lectures. Mary Pearl Meuth, the Coastal Prairie Chapter team, and Addison Regennitter, a student intern, did an outstanding job pulling it all together and making it a worthwhile event. Texas Parks and Wildlife honored them with a surprise special award for going above and beyond designing a different Annual Meeting given the Covid restrictions. It was very emotional for this team and if you are interested, you can view recordings of the Annual Meeting Awards on the TMN website (Naturalist News) along with the results of the Photo, Art, & Media Contests and Chapter Fair Entries.

Several Chapter members will be sharing what we learned from the Annual Meeting workshops in the December 1st Chapter meeting. One of my favorite offerings was Friday's featured speaker, Doug Tallamy, who presented the ideas and slides from his latest book, *Nature's Best Hope*. He has several presentations on UTube. Treat yourself! He is a fabulous speaker. Better yet, treat yourself and buy his book. So much of what is happening to our environment seems out of our control. He gives us direction on what we can do in our little corner of the world to help sustain wildlife.

A Texas Master Naturalist License Plate is coming!



WHICH DO YOU WANT TO PUT ON YOUR CAR?



SURVEY CLOSES MARCH 1ST!

The Rolling Plains Chapter was one of 152 donors recognized for raising the \$9,000 required to create a TMN License plate. This project started in 2015. Drumroll!!!! In the winter of 2021 look for the announcement on the Listserv. The TMN Dragonfly License plate will be offered for sale. It will be \$30 with \$22 going to the Texas Master Naturalist organization.

Another surprise announcement came from an emotional Mary Pearl who could barely speak. She announced an additional pin called the Grit and

LOCALS

NOVEMBER 3: Rolling Plains Chapter Meeting - 7:00pm on Zoom - log in a little early so we can start the program at 7:00pm. A Zoom link will be sent out one hour before the meeting. Hope to see you all there!

The program: Penny Miller, will be presenting a lecture on worm composting.



LASP Bird Walks to Resume

Penny said that she talked to Keith at LASP. We can resume bird walks. If you do not have a park pass and are entering when the office is not open, you are supposed to get a pass in advance online. They will accept payment if the office is open (it will not be open at 8am). No more than 10 people in a group. Masks are not required outside if everyone stays socially distanced. No sharing of binoculars or field guides. Bird walks are the second Saturday of the month from 8am to 9am.



Distance Service Against All Odds pin for those who completed one hour of service and 8 hours of Advanced Training. They will be shipped in December.

The recertification pin for 2021 was announced by our friend, Ricky Linex. He gave an informative talk about the importance of grasses and why the Side Oats Grama should be the subject for our recertification pin. The Annual Meeting location for 2021 will be Irving, Texas and the host hotel is the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Marriott on October 21-24, 2021. Dis-



2021

Recertification Pin:

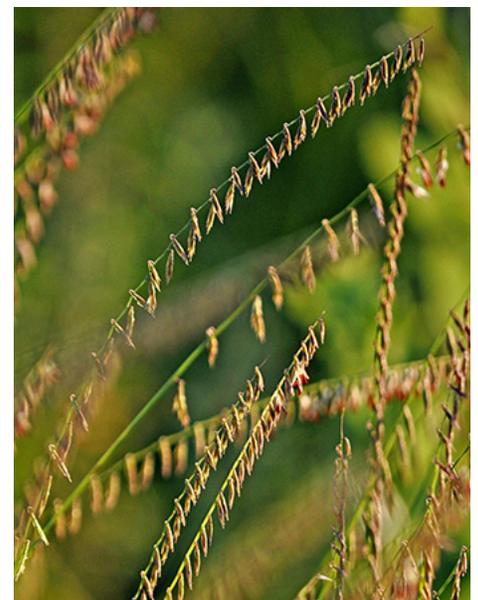
SIDEOATS

GRAMA

Bouteloua curtipendula

Side-oats grama is a bunchy or sod-forming grass with 2-3 ft. stems in erect, wiry clumps. Purplish, oat-like spikelets uniformly line one side of the stem, bleaching to a tan color in the fall. The basal foliage often turns shades of purple and red in fall. This is a perennial warm season grass; clump forming. Two varieties are recognized: variety *curtipendula* is shorter and more rhizomatous and ranges from southern Canada to Argentina. Variety *caespitosa* spreads more by seed than by rhizomes, is more of a bunchgrass, and is restricted mostly to southwestern North America.

Not only is Sideoats Grama the state grass of Texas, but this medium-tall grass mixes well in plantings with spring wildflowers, because it stays short in the spring. Birds love the ripe seeds. This plant increases rapidly in nature when its site is damaged by drought or grazing.



Save the Date for 2021!

October 21-24, 2021

Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Marriott



Discussion so far has been that it may be a hybrid of virtual and on site field experiences. See you at the chapter meeting Tuesday evening!—Kay

What do Frogs and Toads do in Winter?

Have you ever wondered what frogs and toads do during the winter?

Frogs and toads are cold-blooded, so their body temperatures take on the temperature of the environment around them. During the winter, they go into a state of hibernation, and some can be exposed to temperatures below freezing.

Aquatic frogs, usually spend the winter at the bottom of a pond or other body of water. But they don't burrow down into the mud. Frogs can be found hanging out on the bottom, sometimes even slowly swimming or moving around.



Frogs and toads that spend most of their time on land can usually burrow down below the frost line in burrows or cavities called hibernacula, or hibernating space. Some frogs, including various species of tree frogs, like spring peepers (*Hyla crucifer*), are not very good at burrowing. They go as

deep as they can or squeeze into cavities, crevices and logs. In this case, sometimes the frog will actually freeze solid!

The danger in freezing is the formation of ice crystals that puncture cells and organs. But these frogs have high concentrations of glucose, or sugar, which is a natural antifreeze. Amazingly enough, their hearts actually stop beating. They stop breathing and have all the appearances of being dead.

Once the weather gets warm and things start to thaw out, the frog also will thaw. Its heart and lungs miraculously start working again, and the frog comes back to life.

FACTS FUN

The 20 million bats of Bracken Cave fly as high as 10,000 feet in their pursuit of insects. They have learned to feast on invasive insect species, and the bats that live in Bracken and other large Texas caves can consume around 2 million pounds of insects in a single night.



Though spiders are not mammals, there is one species that nurses its offspring with milk. The southeast Asian jumping spider supplies its young with a fluid rich in sugars, fats and proteins containing

four times more protein than cow milk.

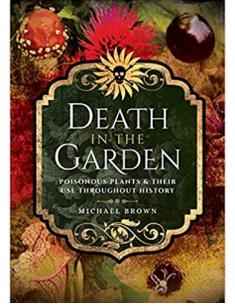
The aptly named Texas ironclad beetle is covered in an extremely thick exoskeleton. Its body is so tough that museum curators have to use a special drill when pinning it for their collections. When alarmed, Ironclad beetles play dead curling up their legs and tuck in their antennae to protect them.



RESOURCE CORNER

Death in the Garden

by Michael Brown
Paperback: 248 pages
ISBN-978-1526708380
Price: \$17.92 on Amazon
Kindle: \$17.99



Mankind has always had a morbid fascination with poisonous plants; how their poisonous properties were discovered and developed will most likely be left unknown. Over the centuries poisonous plants have been used to remove garden pests, unwanted rivals and deceitful partners. They have also been used for their medicinal qualities, as rather dangerous cosmetics, even to help seduce a lover when perceived as an aphrodisiac. Some of these and other uses originate in a medieval book that has not yet been translated into English.

Shamans and priests used these plants for their magical attributes, as a means to foretell the future or to commune with the gods.

Discover how a pot of Basil helped to conceal a savage murder.

Learn the truth about the mysterious mandrake, a real plant although many do not realise it.

Death In The Garden is based on Michael Brown's most popular talk, popular as this subject holds a strange interest, for many will enjoy learning about these treacherous and peculiar plants, their defensive and deadly traits, as well as the folklore that has grown around them. This title will appeal to gardeners, horticulturists, nature enthusiasts and anyone who holds an interest in this strange and enchanting corner of the garden. But be warned, many of these deathly plants may already be taking root in your very own garden...

How to Upcycle Your Jack-O-Lantern



Halloween is bound to feel a little different this year, so carve out a little time for a family-friendly project after all the ghouls and goblins have paid a visit.

It's all treats and no tricks for the birds in your neighborhood

with this simple and waste-free birdfeeder project. With only a few small sticks, some twine, and plenty of birdseed, your leftover pumpkin will be bewitching birds for weeks to come.

Happy Halloween!

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