



The Rolling Plains Chapter partners with River Bend Nature Center and Wild Bird Rescue, Inc. in Wichita Falls; Lake Arrowhead State Park in Clay County; Copper Breaks State Park in Hardeman Count;; Whiteside Museum of Natural History in Seymour; and Comanche Springs Astronomy Campus in Crowell. Our Chapter covers Archer, Baylor, Clay, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young Counties.

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<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

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NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 4: Rolling Plains Chapter Meeting - 7:00pm at MSU's Bolin Science Hall, room 209. If you would prefer to attend via Zoom, watch for the link to the meeting in your email. Either way, I hope you will join us.

The program: Blair Ramon - Bee Biologist, Conservation Photographer. "North Central Texas Wild Bees is a citizen science project that is a science-based strategy for protecting and promoting wild and managed bees through education, pollinator-friendly practices, and research. This is a focused effort in Texas counties: Archer, Baylor, Clay, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young Counties."



Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had a good Christmas and you are ready for a New Year of projects, fun and "nerding out" with nature!

Thank you to everyone who made the Christmas Party so festive and fun! Thanks to Larry Snyder for securing the Letter Carrier's Hall again for us. It's a great place to gather and they are most generous in letting us meet there for no charge. Terry and Debra did a great job again with the food and thanks also to everyone who helped clean up before and after. I appreciate all your hard work.

Congratulations to our contest winners too. Larry Snyder won the photo contest and Tiffany Herring won the art contest. I hope everyone will be on the lookout for a great photo or sketch for next year's contests!

Thanks to the generosity of our members, the Chapter was able to present Wild Bird Rescue with a check for \$450! We hope this will help feather their nest and get 2022 off to a good start. If you would like to help out at WBR, they have a new volunteer email: volunteer@wildbirdrescuewf.org. They would be more than happy to put you to work!

We are excited to welcome two new officers in 2022. Alex Nelson will be serving as Vice President and DeAnna Bullock will be the new Secretary. We are very grateful to Debra Halter and Sandy Underwood for their service in these offices and thankful that they will still be helping us out in other ways.

Speaking of nerding out with nature, I recently learned about three natural history museum digital collections that I would like to share with you. Eventually it's going to get cold outside and you may want to stay inside and browse these collections with a cup of cocoa and your nature journal!

- iDigBio (a more scientifically oriented site): <https://www.idigbio.org/>
- Smithsonian Open Access (more user friendly): <https://www.si.edu/openaccess>

- Ohio State University Herbarium: <https://mbd-db.osu.edu/>

I'm sure there are many more resources like this out there but I was especially excited to find the Smithsonian one and I think it will be a great resource.

While I am here, I have a couple of reminders for you. First, please be sure to log in your hours for 2021. We will need those hours for State reports very soon. Also, your dues are due in January. Dues are \$15 for individuals or \$25 for couples.

Blair Ramon will be doing a program on Bees of North Texas at our January meeting and I hope you will all BEE there! —Laura

Did You Know?



Caffeine—which is found in tea leaves, guarana berries, kola nuts, and, of course, coffee beans—acts as a natural pesticide. It overloads the nervous systems of insects that try to eat the plants containing caffeine, paralyzing and even killing them before they can do too much damage. It affects humans' central nervous systems, too, but for us, it merely acts as a stimulant.



Also known as the “*Rose of Jericho*” or “*dinosaur plant*,” *Selaginella lepidophylla* can survive extreme dehydration. It's found in deserts in North and South America, and in the total absence of water, it curls up into a dead-looking ball. It can stay that way for months, but when it comes into contact with moisture, it will revive itself over a matter of hours and start regaining its green color. It synthesizes a special sugar called trehalose that protects its cells from damage as a result of dehydration.

Nature View Serenity Pod



The Nature View Serenity Pod is an inventive biophilia-inspired interpretation of a pod study carrel for Early Learners that enables unlimited configurations in physical space design and supports flexible learning environments.

Scientific studies show that biophilic design can reduce stress, enhance creativity, focus clarity of thought, and improve well-being, benefits that can foster a child's deep

connection to their learning environment and set the trajectory of their future learning outcomes. In early 2020, Whitney Brothers launched the first biophilia-inspired furniture collection designed for Early Learning environments, the Nature View Collection. In that same year, the Nature View Collection received the 2020 Spaces4Learning New Product Award and the product line now encompasses over 32 separate furniture pieces, three of which have earned individual product design awards.

The open, elegant design of the Nature View Serenity Pod accommodates social distancing and activity workspace in Early Learning environments, a nod to the impact of covid-19 on student desk design. The stunning woodland scene printed on the curved acrylic panel brings the calm of nature indoors and creates a comforting personalized activity space for young children that also provides important visibility for adult supervision. Multiple pods joined together can form an S-shape, semi-circle, horseshoe or myriad other configurations to create an aesthetically pleasing and flexible learning space that coordinates seamlessly with all other pieces in the company's Nature View Collection. ✨

For more information, please visit: www.whitneybros.com/nature-view-serenity-pod

Butterfly Weed

Butterfly weeds (*Asclepias tuberosa*) are medium-sized plants that get bushier as they grow older. They form clumps of upright stalks with narrow pointed leaves topped by 2 - 4 inch-diameter clusters of orange or yellow flowers. It blooms from April to September. This common urban plant grows to a height of 1 1/2 to 2 feet.

As a long lived perennial, butterfly weed may take as long as 4 years before it reaches full size. It reproduces by seeds or root division.

Butterfly weed stores food and water in a large taproot. This allows it to survive during the long dry Texas summers. Because it is adapted to dry conditions butterfly weed is more likely to die from too much water than not enough. Butterfly weed is occasionally used by Monarch butterflies as a caterpillar food plant but is not preferred because its sap is not poisonous enough to prevent other animals from eating them.



Butterfly weed really lives up to its name. It attracts a wide range of butterflies to the abundant nectar that it produces. Butterfly weed belongs to the milkweed family. Unlike other members of its group it doesn't ooze a sticky white sap if damaged.

Butterfly weed grows in sunny locations on well-drained sand, loam, clay or limestone soils.

Butterfly weed is found throughout the state of Texas but is more common in the eastern two-thirds. This species is widespread in the eastern half of the U.S.

Pioneers and native Americans used boiled butterfly weed roots to treat diarrhea, asthma and other respiratory illnesses. The down from milkweed seeds was spun to make candlewicks. The young seed pods were boiled with several changes of water and eaten like okra. ✨

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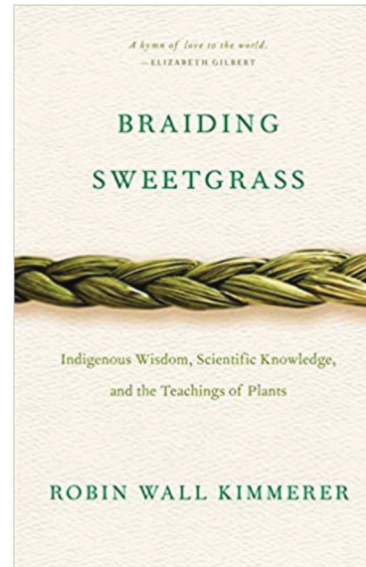
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Good Reads

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants

by Robin Wall Kimmerer



Paperback – 408 pages
ISBN-13: 978-1571313560
Price: \$14.49 on Amazon

As a botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer has been trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer brings these two lenses of knowledge together to take us on “a journey

that is every bit as mythic as it is scientific, as sacred as it is historical, as clever as it is wise” (Elizabeth Gilbert).

Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, and as a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. In reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings will we be capable of understanding the generosity of the earth, and learn to give our own gifts in return. ✨