



January 2024

Chapter News

The January 10 General Meeting will be a hybrid: attend in person at the Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service, 21017 County Road 171, Angleton, TX, or virtually via e-mail invite. Visitors and guests are welcome.

5:30 – 6:00 p.m.	Social Time and Refreshments (in person)
6:00 – 6:15 p.m.	Welcome, Awards and Outreach
6:15 – 7:15 p.m.	Advanced Training Speaker: Buddy Ortego, Wetlands Consultant with the Corps of Engineers <i>[Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>
7:30 – 8:00 p.m.	General Membership Meeting <i>[Hours for Volunteer Time (VT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>

2024 Officers

President	Kathy Pittman
Vice President	Jimmy Salinas
Secretary	Kathy Purvis
Treasurer	Don Sabathier

REMINDERS

Beach Sweep, Quintana Jetties – Monday, January 8, 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.; contact Jimmy or Luanne Salinas

2024 SPRING AT DAY – It's time to start planning!

- Tentative theme – insects
- Will be scheduled for the last week-end of February

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED – If you would like to be involved, please contact AT Director Kristine Rivers at kristine@birdingforfun.com



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Website <https://txmn.org/tmncot/>

Chapter News is published by Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Contact us at:

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The Texas Master Naturalist program is coordinated by Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

TMN programs serve all people without regard to socio-economic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Masthead image by Charles Jesse Miller Jr., in Oyster Creek.



President's Message...

"The most beautiful gift of nature is that it gives one pleasure to look around and try to comprehend what we see."

- Albert Einstein

And just like that, here we are at the end of one year and the beginning of another. A time to look back and wonder how quickly a year has passed, how quickly our children and grandchildren have grown, how we ourselves have aged, and of family and friends that have passed. For me, it all hits home this time of year.

There is an emphasis on "thankfulness" during the holidays. We're urged to donate to charities, to volunteer at the foodbank and to gather clothing for the homeless. I believe we should remember this year-round, not just during the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's!

For our group of volunteers, I am thankful for each one of you because you CARE about what is around you in nature. You care about making nature accessible, relevant and better understood by the public. What is understood is hopefully cared for and nurtured by those who follow us. Those we can connect with must become the stewards that follow us. This will be the only way to ensure the places we care about so much will be here for future generations.

I'm thankful for the opportunities that come our way, from the ideas and efforts of our members as well as from requests of the public who want to know more. As a group, we may not be able to attend to every request, but we do what we can, and that is thanks to the efforts of every member of our organization.

I'm so very thankful to our Board and committee members who keep the heart of our group beating strongly. From feeding us, to finding and organizing opportunities for volunteering and for learning, to teaching and training, to advising, to keeping the records and everything and anything in between. Things don't "just happen" - there are people behind the scenes for every activity and action, and there are not enough words to express my gratitude.

Enough of the mushy stuff, now on to the newsy items. While you might use the end of the year to rest and recover, we still have tons of opportunities that need your help!!!! Please remember we need 8-10 volunteers at the Brazoria NWR during the week of December 26th through New Year's Day. The **Open House** is a great activity for families and visitors to come out and learn about the area. The Refuge gets visitors from AROUND THE WORLD, and YOU can be an ambassador for our Wild Places! There is still time – the more volunteers, the more activities we can host. Times will be 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.. **Please email Ruby Lewis at rubylewis77515@ymail.com if you can help.**

Things have been hopping, creeping and crawling at the Discovery Environmental Education Program (DEEP), sponsored by USFWS and the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (FOBWR). **Ed Barrios** and **Hannah Beckett** have done wonders with coordinating the sessions this year. The next dates are January 16th, 18th and 25th. There were still several open slots as of December 11th, so please help if you can. **Contact Ed at ed77566@comcast.net to sign up.** There are also sessions in March, April and May, so be watching your email for more information.

The next **Intern Class** begins with orientation on Saturday, January 20th at 9 a.m. at AgriLife. Please let your friends and family know and share our Facebook posts regarding Intern training. The link to learn more and to register can be found on our website homepage.

We are beginning to plan our next **AT Day**, tentatively for Saturday February 25th. WE NEED HELP with planning and organizing the day. **If you would like to be involved, please contact AT Director Kristine Rivers at kristine@birdingforfun.com.** This event will not be successful without the help of additional volunteers!

Please plan to attend our next Chapter meeting on Wednesday, January 10th, at 6 p.m. I hope you will join us in person and BRING A FRIEND!!! Reminder - if you need a ride or can give a ride, send a note to the Chapter members at tmn-cot@googlegroups.com. (*President's Message Cont., Page 3*)

(President's Message, Continued from Page 2)

Thank you for all you do for our area, and see you soon, OUTSIDE!!!!

Kathy Pittman

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach.

- Clarissa Pinkola Estes

TMN Heritage Book Study

by Debbie Nance



Galveston Bay Area
TMN Heritage Book Study AT First
Monday of the Month 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

February 5, 2024

*Prairie Up: An Introduction to Natural
Garden Design*

By Benjamin Vogt

March 4 & April 1, 2024

For Love of Insects

By Thomas Eisner

May 6, 2024

*What It's Like to be a Bird: From Flying to
Nesting, Eating to Singing - What Birds
Are Doing and Why*

By Benjamin Vogt

June 8, July 8, & August 5, 2024

How the Mountains Grew

By John Dvorak

September 9 & October 7, 2024

*A Land So Strange: The Epic Journey of
Cabeza de Vaca* By Andres Resendez

November 4 & December 2, 2024

The Nature of Nature

By Enric Sala

Debbie talked with a fellow naturalist at our General Meeting last month and learned she didn't know about the **Heritage Book Study**. The Texas Master Naturalists, Galveston/Bay Area Chapter, sponsors the program.

Participants meet via Zoom on the first Monday of the month from 1 - 3 p.m. Contact the group leader, Cheryl Barajas, at cherylbarajas9@gmail.com, for more information or to join.

The following information is presented by Cheryl Barajas about the book we are currently reading:

"Our December 2023 and January 2024 book discussions will be on Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest by Suzanne Simard. This intense book will change how you view trees and their connections to one another and to other living things in the forest. Trees are not simply the source of timber or pulp, but are a complex, interdependent circle of life. Forests are social, cooperative creatures connected through underground networks. Trees communicate their vitality and vulnerabilities with communal lives not that different from our own.

Simard is a passionate writer and conveys her love of the forests through her writing. She grew up in the forests of British Columbia and writes about her struggles with the logging industry. As a child, she was cataloging trees and studying them. Her lifelong journey led her to the Mother Tree. In this book, she combines her research with personal experiences and tells of her life's journey leading to her discovery of the Wood Wide Web, the underground mycelium network that connects all trees and plants in a forest.

After reading this book over the summer, I realized I didn't have nearly enough trees, so I planted 5 more this fall. This book is not about how we can save trees, it is about how trees can actually save us.

Please join us on January 8th at 1pm for a glimpse into the world of trees and what they can do for us!"

VOLUNTEER HOURS, CERTIFICATIONS & MILESTONES – John Boettiger

Recertifications:

Bill Adriance Kyle Purvis
Susan Conaty Brenda Stitt
Mike Humpy Cindy Vincent

Milestones:

Kathy Purvis Angela Griffin
500 Hours Lisa Martinez
 1,000 Hours!

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL !!!

**IMPACT DATA REPORT by Dave Brandes,
Data Manager**

Impact Data – November*

	Month	YTD
Hours:		
VT	575	13,334
AT	<u>45</u>	<u>1,943</u>
Total	806	14,220

Impact Data		
Adults	61	4,966
Youth	<u>104</u>	<u>17,489</u>
Total	165	22,455

* data not considered final until mid-January



Pictured, L to R: Kathy Pittman, Kyle Purvis, Mike Humpy, Angela Griffin, Kathy Purvis & John Boettiger
Photo by Dick Schaffhausen

Kudos to Angela Griffin, Barbara Whaley & Patty Brinkmeyer on their certification in Advanced Entomology!

INTERN TRAINING BEGINS – Orientation will be held Saturday, January 20, 2024 in the AgriLife Conference Room!!!

Help is needed with the following:

- Volunteer who can create a poster for the 2023 TMN intern graduate class
- Class Coordinator for training set-up, etc.
- Field Trip Coordinator(s)
- Class Coordinator for set-up, slide projection, record keeping
- Photographer to capture candid photos
- Projects Coordinator
- Volunteer Fair Coordinator
- Intern Mentor (contact Kate Harris, Coordinator)

Please contact Melanie Hollenshead, Intern Training Director, for more information at theladyspath@hotmail.com.



Introducing Buddy Ortego ...

Buddy Ortego will speak to us about the importance of wetlands and the issues and challenges facing the management and stewardship of these vital resources.

A wetlands ecologist, Buddy owns and operates a consulting firm, Coastal Resources Biologists, located in Brazoria, TX. He has been involved in many wetland delineation, mitigation and restoration projects.

He is a wealth of information in the propagation of wetland plants and coastal restorations. A graduate of the University of Louisiana in Lafayette, LA ("Rajun Cajuns"), Buddy has done presentations for Master Gardeners and Science Institute workshops at Louisiana State University.



Fun at the Hog Wild Party 2023!

Photos from the Hog Wild Party,
thanks to Dick Schaffhausen



Entomology Corner

by Barbara Whaley

Hi all, I am a summer intern graduate. The best thing I ever did for myself was to become a Texas Master Naturalist and especially a Cradle of Texas member! My life has changed in so many ways, all for the better. I enjoy the many volunteer activities and have met great people with the same enthusiasm I have for our natural resources and for sharing it with others. I look forward to many years of learning, caring and sharing. Thank you to Melanie Hollenshead, for all you have done in helping me reach my goal of completing the classes.

I have just completed my advanced training in Advanced Entomology and have learned so much I would like to share with you. Most of you already know all of this, so for you it may be a recap; for others, it will be new information; and for me, a way to help me assimilate all that I have learned. I will be contributing to our monthly newsletter with an Entomology Corner. Please feel free to contact me with questions or ideas for this subject. I am far from being an expert, but I will do my best to research and answer your questions. You may email me at babswhaley@gmail.com.

Introduction to IPM (Integrated Pest Management) for Garden Insect Pests

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is used to solve pest problems while minimizing risks to people and the environment. It can manage all kinds of pests in urban, agricultural and wildland or natural areas. An ecosystem-based strategy, it focuses on long-term prevention of pests and their damage using a combination of techniques, such as cultural, mechanical/physical, biological and chemical control – only after careful monitoring of insect populations. I will be focusing on insect pests.

IPM requires knowledge of insects, plants and control strategies. A good common insect field guide will be helpful. It does not mean zero pests but aims to prevent pest problems. It may take longer for the control to be noticed, but it can help to reduce the use of pesticides applied to the environment and maintain beneficial insect populations.

Monitoring

Monitoring needs to be thorough and performed regularly, as many insects are small and live in hidden locations. Think about what type of insect it is, where it is located and what it is doing. It may not be causing a problem due to the type, location or activity. Once you have determined it to be a pest, consider the location and size of the pest problem. What is drawing in the insects? They require food, water and shelter to survive. Some recommended monitoring tools are hand lens or magnifier, knife, sticky traps, collection containers and, as mentioned earlier, a field guide for identification.

Control Methods

Cultural Controls are practices that reduce pest establishment, reproduction dispersal and survival. You may have to modify your plant care to help keep your plants healthy so they can withstand pest pressure. Soil preparation is important to provide the requirements plants need to grow. Proper feeding and watering to control drainage and provide nutrients, turning the soil to help reduce overwintering pests, and crop rotation by plant family to help cut down the pest populations, especially in vegetable gardens. Choose plants that are native and adapted to your local area. Use hardiness zones and planting guides to make sure you are planting during the proper time of year. Plant in areas with the correct lighting requirements and group plants with similar needs. Inspect plants before bringing them home to ensure they are healthy. Perform your garden clean up and sanitation: weed areas to reduce unwanted plants, turn over mulch to expose insects and dry out overly wet areas. Clean pruning tools with a 10 percent bleach solution to avoid spreading diseases.

Mechanical/Physical Control kill pests directly, block pests out or make the environment unsuitable, using labor, materials and machinery to reduce the pest population. Physical removal of insects is a direct way to reduce populations quickly without the use of chemicals. Mulch helps to reduce weed growth, maintain soil temperatures and reduce water loss. It improves the soil structure and water movement through the soil. Pruning can physically

(Entomology Corner continued, Page 7)

(Entomology Corner, continued from Page 6)

remove pests from plants and reduce fungal disease, hand picking requires removing pests from infested plants by hand and either “squishing” them or putting them into a bucket of soapy water to kill them. Squishing a bug is a form of mechanical control. You may want to use the “sheet pan method” to remove larger pest populations or to remove them from larger plants. It requires placing a sheet pan filled with isopropyl alcohol on the ground below the plant, grasping a main stem of the plant and shaking it quickly to dislodge the pests. Using a handheld vacuum specifically made for the use in the garden is another method. Plant collars and row covers can be made from a variety of materials and help block ground dwelling pests that chew on plants. Trapping can be used as a monitoring tool and to remove pests. It is important to choose the correct trap for the pest and place it in the correct location.

Biological Control - Biological control is the use of other organisms to control pests and their damage. Conservation biological control requires utilization of IPM to help maintain populations of beneficial organisms that already occur in the environment. Augmentation biological control is releasing beneficial organisms into an environment to increase their populations. Importation biological control is carried out by government agencies and universities to help combat invasive species. Control organisms are broken down into three categories: predators, parasitoids and pathogens. Predators attack, kill and feed on multiple prey items throughout their lifetime. Well known predators include ladybird beetles, assassin bugs, praying mantids and spiders. Parasitoids are insects that lay their eggs on or in another insect and use the host to complete their lifecycle. Most parasitoids are very small wasps that are solitary and do not sting humans, and some flies. Pathogens are things that cause disease. Examples are fungi, bacteria, nematodes and viruses. Although gardeners typically try to avoid pathogens, these particular pathogens attack insects and related arthropods instead of plants. Many are labeled and packaged very similarly to chemical pesticides.

Chemical Control - Chemical control is the use of pesticides. In IPM, pesticides are used only when needed and in combination with other approaches for more effective, long-term control. When choosing a pesticide, try a low-impact or target approach first. Target the treatment area to conserve beneficial organisms. Follow all instructions carefully and use only as directed. Apply pesticides in the evening after most pollinators are no longer foraging. Pesticides are meant to kill, so they should be used with caution. Naturally derived pesticides come from natural sources such as plants, pathogens or by products of soil-borne organisms. They have a short residual and break down quickly in the environment. Synthetic pesticides are made in a laboratory, either by modifying the chemical structure of naturally derived pesticide to make it last longer in the environment or by creating new products.

Information on the above has been provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Molly Keck and Wizzy Brown. Thank you for your knowledge and expertise and for taking the time in passing this information on to others.

Next month, I will discuss IPM of Veggies, as some of you may have already started your fall vegetable garden. I will also do a “Bug of the Month”.

Outreach Opportunities

- DEEP – January 16, 18, 25, 30, February 1, March 26 & 28, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; contact Ed Barrios or Hannah Beckett

PUBLIC OUTREACH—Ruby Lewis rubylewis77515@gmail.com

Volunteer Opportunities – Oron Atkins

- Exploration Green Work Day – every Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; contact Christie Taylor
- Trash Collection/Disposal Analysis Project – self-directed
- Nurdles Beach Patrol – self-directed; contact Jace Turnell
- Brazoria Comprehensive Spider Survey – self-directed; contact Melanie Hollenshead
- Adopt a Loop for TMN – self-directed; contact Debbie Nance



Nash Prairie Seed Collection with Susan Conaty – *Photos by Dick Schaffhausen*



Have something you want to share with fellow Master Naturalists? Submit your photos and news items for our newsletter to Kathy Purvis at news@tmn-cot.org. Submission deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the 20th of each month. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.

Cradle of Texas Chapter Board

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Outreach Director	Ruby Lewis, Angleton
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Class of 2023 Representative	Open

Non-voting positions:

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Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Coordinator	Kristine Rivers, Manvel
Data Manager	Dave Brandes, Lake Jackson
Social Committee Coordinator	Mickey Dufilho, Brazoria

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Newsletter Contributors	Kathy Pittman, Dave Brandes, John Boettiger, Oron Atkins, Dick Schaffhausen, Jimmy Salinas, Barbara Whaley & Debbie Nance

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Master Naturalist Email Lists

TMN-COT Chapter list

- Instructions <https://txmn.org/tmncot/organization/email-lists/>
- Send messages to TMN-COT@googlegroups.com
- Message Archive <http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail>
- All messages are sent immediately.

State Master Naturalist list

- Instructions <http://txmn.org/staying-connected/sign-up-for-tmn-listserv/>
- Subscribe listserv@listserv.tamu.edu
- All messages are held for moderation by the TMN State Coordinator.

Chapter News is published monthly on or before the first day of the month by the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome; submission deadline is the 20th day of the month preceding issue. Send submissions by email to *Chapter News* Editor at news@tmn-cot.org. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.