



August 2024

# Chapter News – in Brief

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The August 14 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.

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.	<b>Social Time and Refreshments</b>
9:00 – 9:15 a.m.	<b>Welcome, Awards and Outreach</b>
9:15 – 10:15 a.m.	<b>Advanced Training:</b> Chris Kneupper, “Old Velasco: Recent Historical Interpretation”.  <i>[Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>
10:30 – 11:00 a.m.	<b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>[Hours for Volunteer Time (VT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>

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<https://facebook.com/TMN.COT>

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



Chris Kneupper is a retired engineer and avocational archaeologist, having lived in Brazoria County for over 45 years. He is a charter member of the Brazosport Archaeological Society (1980) and long-term member of the Texas Archeological Society (since 1981), having participated in many excavations in the county and around the state. He is also a member of the Sons of The Republic of Texas, the Old Fort Velasco Historical Association and a Texas Master Naturalist (class of 2013) and sits on the board of the Cradle of Texas Conservancy. This latter entity is a local land trust that has a long-term goal of financing and managing the building of a replica of the 1832 fort near its former site. In recent years, he has participated in

local historic reenactments as Capt. Eduard Harkort, appointed as chief engineer of the Texas Revolutionary Army in 1836 by Sam Houston, under whose orders he built the 2nd Fort Velasco and the original Fort Travis (at what would later become Galveston).

## REMINDE RS

**BCLS Summer Reading Club** – Please check the Volunteer Calendar for dates, times & locations you might be able to help or contact Ruby Lewis @ [rubylewis77515@ymail.com](mailto:rubylewis77515@ymail.com).

**Beach Sweep, Quintana Jetties** – Thursday, August 8 (weather permitting), 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.; contact Jimmy or Luanne Salinas.

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.*

## VOLUNTEER HOURS, CERTIFICATIONS & MILESTONES - John Boettiger

### Initial Certifications

Barbara Adelsperger  
Tina Crawford

### Recertifications

Conaty, Susan	Morris, Thomas
Cornell, Martin (Marty)	Mullins, Mike
Glover, Anneliese	Myers, Elizabeth (Jo)
Grandjean, Cynthia	Myers, Herbert
Harris, Kate	Peltier, Pam
Hicks, Jackie	Purvis, Kathleen
Johnson, Lorraine (Rainbo)	Rivers, Lisa (Kristine)
Kirby, Larry	Salinas, Luanne
Kirby, Vicki	Schaffhausen, Richard
Martin, Brenda	Tobola, Crystal
Monnerat, Georgia	Valadez, George

## Milestones

**250 Hours!**

**Cindy Vincent**

**500 Hours!!**

**Patty Brinkmeyer  
Crystal Tobola**

**AND Barbara Bruyere  
1,000 Hours!!!**

# Congratulations to All !



**TEXAS MASTER  
NATURALIST**  
2024 ANNUAL MEETING  
OCTOBER 24-27

Registration for this year's Annual Meeting will open  
next Thursday, August 1, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. !!

## Volunteer Opportunities – Oron Atkins

**Exploration Green Workday** – every Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; contact Christie Taylor.

**Trash Collection/Disposal Analysis Project** – self-directed.

**Beach Sweep, Quintana Jetties** – Thursday, August 8 (weather permitting), 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.; contact Jimmy or Luanne Salinas ([jimmy.salinas217@gmail.com](mailto:jimmy.salinas217@gmail.com); [mshuhu@gmail.com](mailto:mshuhu@gmail.com)).

**Nurdle Beach Patrol** – self-directed; contact Jace Turnell.

**Brazoria County Comprehensive Spider Survey** – self-directed; contact Melanie Hollenshead.

**Adopt-a-Loop for TMN** – self-directed; contact Debbie Nance.

**Bat Monitoring Project** - contact Mickey Dufilho ([dufilhos@hotmail.com](mailto:dufilhos@hotmail.com)).

# Outreach Opportunities – Ruby Lewis

Sea Center Shark Celebration – August 3, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Text, phone, or email Ruby at [rubylewis77515@ymail.com](mailto:rubylewis77515@ymail.com); phone 979.583.7903.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH — Ruby Lewis** [rubylewis77515@ymail.com](mailto:rubylewis77515@ymail.com)

## Wild Plants

by Carrie Lehman

Brazoria county is rich with wild useful plants. I've harvested and used many of our native and invasive species for more than 20 years. During the spring intern Colombia Bottomlands field trip, several of our interns including myself were excited to find a Soapberry tree (*Sapindus saponaria*). We collected berries with seeds and discussed ways to incorporate the trees into native landscapes as well as making use of the tree's saponins for soaps and cleaners.

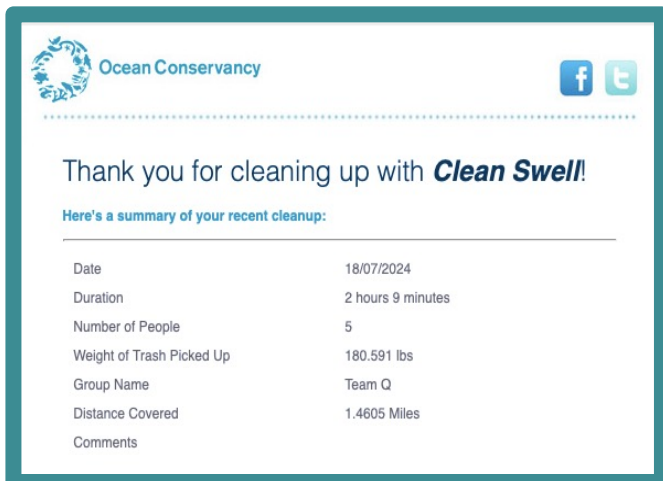
Many of these trees grow so close to my home that I've not had a need to sprout and grow them; however, people who do, say they soak the seeds for over 24 hours and then lightly hit them with a hammer before planting them in soil. The sprouts take between 1-3 months to emerge.

My personal experience with the berries from the trees has been as a household cleaner. Depending on the intended purpose for the cleaner, I sometimes add homemade vinegar, or a strong tea made from another local wild plant, either spotted horsemint (*Monarda punctata*) or lemon beebalm (*Monarda citriodora*) because they have thymol and carvacrol. Vinegar adds a degreasing component while the plants I mentioned help the concoction to fight E. coli, Staph, etc.

The berries, once soaked in hot liquid, release their soap-like qualities. Adding them to the strong tea while it is still hot and waiting several minutes for the berries to soften has always resulted in a good cleaner. After the berries are broken apart by squishing them with my fist while still submerged in the tea, I strain the liquid and add it to water for washing dishes, clothes, or hair, or I pour it into a spray bottle for cleaning my kitchen or bathrooms.

These plants have many uses, more than I can reasonably list. Brazoria County is blessed with plenty, and my family has enjoyed seeking out as many of them as possible and putting them to use as food, drinks, spices, tools and more.

## July Beach Sweep at Quintana Jetties (Post Beryl, July 18)



Ocean Conservancy

Thank you for cleaning up with **Clean Swell!**

Here's a summary of your recent cleanup:

Date	18/07/2024
Duration	2 hours 9 minutes
Number of People	5
Weight of Trash Picked Up	180.591 lbs
Group Name	Team Q
Distance Covered	1.4605 Miles
Comments	



Photos courtesy of Jimmy Salinas

## Entomology Corner: Native Bees of Texas

by Barbara Whaley

**Native Bees of Texas** - There are at least 1100 native bee species in Texas, possibly up to 1500. They are the primary pollinators of native plants. Most are solitary and do not defend their nests, therefore posing little risk of stings.

**Social Bees:** Bumble Bees, *Bombus spp.*, are one of the few social native bees. They are generalist pollinators that visit many different species of plants. They perform “buzz pollination” by vibrating their wings to extract pollen. Their colonies are much smaller than honeybee hives and different species build nests either in the ground or in grass or trees.

As you know, honeybees are **not** native to Texas, but are well established and can be found throughout the state. They were imported from Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and are now important pollinators of many U.S. crops, including fruits and nuts. They are also social bees, meaning that thousands of them can live together.

### Solitary Bees:

#### Dead Wood Nesters -

Leaf-Cutter Bees, *Megachile spp.*, cut circular portions of leaves to use to build nest cells. Some use plant resin instead of leaves.

Large Carpenter Bees, *Xylocopa spp.*, burrow into wood to create nest cells. They are commonly mistaken for bumblebees.

Mason Bees, *Osmia spp.*, nest in existing small cavities, they do not excavate their own. Their nesting material may be mud, grit, chewed plant tissue, etc.

#### Ground Nesters -

Digger Bees, *Anthophora spp.* Nearly all species nest in soil. Their wings appear disproportionately short compared to other bees.

Long-Horned Bees, *Melissodes spp.* Nearly all species nest in soil, most in flat ground but some in exposed banks. Male antennae are characteristically long. A few species congregate into communities, but each individual works only for their own brood.

Sunflower Bees, *Svastra spp.*, are another type of long-horned bee. Offspring require pollen from the sunflower family.

Sweat Bees, *Agapostemon spp.*, *Lasioglossum spp.*, *Halictus spp.*, are so named due to their attraction to human sweat as they use the salt for nutrition. Some genera are metallic, and some are fuzzy with stripes. Some species aggregate but work only for their own brood. Females are usually entirely metallic blue/green, but sometimes have stripes on the abdomen.

Polyester Bees, *Colletes spp.* These bees secrete a waterproof, cellophane-like substance to line their brood cells. They nest in the ground. A few species live in large aggregates.

You can support native bee populations in your garden by planting a variety of native wildflowers. Leave some areas free of mulch for ground nesting bees, and purchase or make a bee house for dead wood nesting bees.

Visit <https://www.pollinator.org> for a Texas Bee Identification Guide.

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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](mailto: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](mailto: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 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month preceding issue. Send submissions by e-mail to *Chapter News* Editor at [news@tmn-cot.org](mailto:news@tmn-cot.org). Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.