

ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES
VOLUME 12, NUMBER 9

OCTOBER 2011

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

October Meeting

City of Arlington's Urban Forest Effects Model

Matt Churches,
Arlington Urban Forester

Wednesday, October 12, 7 pm



Matt Churches managed the UFORE project in Arlington. This model produces information about the value, structure, and effects of urban forests, including species composition, tree size, health, diversity, air pollution, global warming, and building energy use.

Bring something for the raffle.

Bits & Pieces

Farewell for Now, Cigar with Wings

Sure, fall in Arlington beats the heck out of the summer inferno, but it's not all gravy. Before the end of the month, our chimney swifts will be gone, headed to South America, and we'll miss their chittering racket overhead and those mad dashes and crazy turns. Just have to wait until March.



Today's Inspirational Moment



Summer makes me drowsy.
Autumn makes me sing.
Winter's pretty lousy, but I
hate Spring.

Dorothy Parker

Hard Times for Trees

Fielder Museum has lost a fine old post oak. On September 14 it was a shock to see the wreckage — and to realize that all those seemingly healthy branches and leaves were supported by so little wood.



Water News from Dustan Compton



Water supply reservoirs are now at 70% capacity. Stage 2 watering restrictions will be implemented if the reservoirs drop to 60%, and we have dropped 5% since Stage 1 started on August 29. For drought information, watering tips, videos, etc., go to http://www.arlingtontx.gov/water/waterconservation_drought.html

City Hall Wildscape Tour

One highlight of EcoFest on September 17 was the tour of the native plant beds surrounding city hall. It was led by Gailon Hardin, past president of the Native Plant Society of Texas. The landscape, designed by Rosa Finsley, is about a year old, and most of the drip-irrigated plants looked great despite the drought.



THE POST OAK

Published 10 times a year by the
Arlington Conservation Council
P.O. Box 216, Arlington TX 76004-0216.
www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

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conserve Arlington's
natural resources.

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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park Photos by Wesley Miller



(photo at right) On September 1, Master Naturalist Jim Varnum (*left*) shared his expertise on a wildflower walk at our blackland prairie remnant. Arlington's own native grass expert and Wildscape benefactor, John Snowden (*center*), helped out with good information on grasses, even in their crisp condition. We're also indebted to Jan Miller (*right*), our biggest prairie advocate, who has announced a workday on Saturday, October 15 from 9:00 until noon. For information, contact prairie@arlingtonconservationcouncil.org.



Prairie Stewards Restoration Workday
Saturday, October 15, 2011
9 am – noon



Don't miss the workday!

Bring gloves and clippers if you have them. Wear sturdy shoes or boots and long pants, and don't forget the sunscreen and water (refills provided). Bug spray too; it's chigger season and ticks are also possible. An RSVP is appreciated (in case of inclement weather, etc.) but not required:

prairie@arlingtonconservationcouncil.org.

For map and directions: Search Mapquest or Google maps for 4907 New York Avenue, Arlington, TX 76018.

Wildscape Update John Dycus



Recent rains notwithstanding, some forecasters see the crushing drought lasting another two years. Thus the wildscape volunteers are planting only

drought-resistant Texas natives, and they're watering with soaker hoses, which use only half as much water as sprinklers and can be used any time of any day.

Most plants need to be watered to 6 inches and once a week during summer heat. Trees should be watered to about 12 inches, using soaker hoses out to the drip line. Almost all plants require watering until their roots have grown

deep enough to be drought resistant, which can usually take a couple of years.

Eventually, when the reservoirs get too low, residential watering likely will be outlawed. It would be prudent to begin now to convert to drought-tolerant native plants while sufficient water is available to get them established. Many area homeowners have let their lawns die, so in the sunny places, converting to low-water buffalo grass lawns is ideal.

After 10 days of watering to get established, buffalo grass will stay green with deep watering only about every three weeks, and it will survive with no additional water. It requires no mowing but can be mowed about once a month for a manicured look. In the shade, horseherb/

violets mixed will require minimal water to stay green and little to survive.

Or just reduce the size of the lawn by replacing part of it with native groundcovers or shrubs like coralberry, frogfruit or lantana underplanted with evening primrose, winecups or other cool-weather natives. Turk's cap is another hardy and long-lasting native that can be underplanted with white avens for year 'round green.

Most of these alternatives dot the wildscape, so visitors can see how it demonstrates its mission statement: To educate the community to use native plants to conserve resources, attract wildlife and reconnect with nature.



Above, A recently planted wildscape tree, stressed by the drought, needs watering to increase its chances for survival.

Below, Cowpen daisy is a showy native annual that often continues blooming through November, providing a late fall show.



Above, Blackfoot daisies. Even though they had turned brown, when the weather finally cooled they turned green and started blooming again. During normal years these heat- and drought-resistant plants bloom from early spring through fall.

Below, a soaker hose at work.



Above, A drought-resistant Eve's necklace tree enclosed in a treetrainer, which holds 20 gal. of water to release over 6-10 hrs. Volunteers fill the gator bags, then water around the base until the parched soil becomes saturated.

Below, Violet ruellia is another great drought-resistant native blooming groundcover that defied the heat and even bloomed some during the extreme heat.



continued on page 5

Wildscape Update continued from page 4



Horseherb is a wonderful native ground-cover for the shade. Rusty blackhaw viburnum has been called the “treasure of the post oak woodlands.”



Lantana is one of the best native blooming shrubs during our hottest summer months. It attracts butterflies and hummingbirds.



Agarita (*right*) is a tough evergreen shrub, and skeletonleaf goldeneye is almost evergreen, blooming all summer with lots of yellow daisies during a normal year.

EcoFest 2011

Another success for the city's environmental celebration on September 17: For details see Notes from Dustan on page 7.



A distinguished trio: the Lawn Whisperer, Molly Hollar, and Dustan Compton.



One of our favorite sights: bins for recycling and compostables were everywhere.



A long line formed when the tree giveaway began.



Our next speaker, Matt Churches, distributes trees as fast as he can to an eager crowd.



Luminaries abounded: Recyclers Tim Yatko and Lorrie Anderle, and Parks people Heather Dowell and De'Onna Garner.



Assistant Parks Director Bill Gilmore and the Lawn Whisperer at the ACC booth.

Caring for Trees in a Drought

(From Effects of Drought on Trees by Gareth Harrier, in Tree Notes, August 2011. Annotated by Grace Darling)



Moisture deficiency is one of the most common sources of stress in the landscape. While native trees are tolerant of periodic drought conditions, long-term, persistent drought may significantly affect plant health and survival of even these hardy species.

Defoliation and dieback of the root system and crown may occur during severe drought. The effects can persist for years, well after the drought has subsided, with many trees failing to recover fully before the next drought. Drought-stressed trees are more susceptible to attack by insects, mites and fungal pathogens, which induce additional stress that may force the tree into further decline. Chronic stress from prolonged dry periods can overwhelm a tree's ability to survive.

Proper care of established trees can relieve much of the stress caused by severe drought. The keys to coping with drought conditions in your landscape are irrigation, mulching, and maintenance.

During a drought, watering your trees takes precedence over watering your lawn. Turf can be replaced in a few months, while a 20-year-old tree will take 20 years to replace. Irrigation, where

possible, is the best defense against drought stress. Apply water slowly so that it sinks deeply into the soil. Soaker hoses, drip emitters, bubblers, and hand-held hoses are preferable to sprinklers. Young and newly planted trees will benefit from Treegators attached to their trunks. Follow the links below for instructions on how to water your trees effectively even with water restrictions in place.

Mulching is the best way to conserve moisture and improve the structure and condition of the soil. Mulching trees with a 3- to 4-inch layer of hardwood mulch conserves water and decreases the amount of water that evaporates from the soil, aids in water and air penetration, and cools the soil. Keep mulch 6 inches away from the trunk, because mulch mounded around the trunk can lead to excessive moisture trapping that will rot the trunk. Free mulch is available at the Arlington landfill; just bring your pickup truck.

Routine maintenance should not be neglected during periods of drought. Pruning dead, dying or diseased branches and foliage can remove insects and cankers and reduce decay. A tree canopy that is

well-developed through proper pruning will retain interior foliage that remains productive in the shade. Lastly, organic pest control helps protect the tree during this particularly vulnerable time while minimizing harm to beneficial organisms.

Fertilization with high-salt commercial fertilizers is not recommended during a drought. When the rains return, a good practice is to incorporate compost, a high-quality organic fertilizer, or other amendments into the soil to reduce nutrient deficiencies and aid in drought recovery. Free 2-hour classes on how to build a backyard compost pile are taught by Master Composters at Veterans Park and River Legacy Park, respectively. Classes begin at 9:00 am on the first and second Saturdays. You don't have to register, just show up.

For more information about tree care in times of drought, we recommend the following links:

www.isatexas.com/images/pdf_files/Consumers/Watering_Yard_Trees_In_Severe_Drought_Tips.pdf
www.cityofaustin.org/trees
www.coopext.colostate.edu/4dmg/Trees/
www.ctufc.org

Rain!

Finally, rain made a comeback on October 8 and 9, and it made quite a show at the Center-Mesquite bridges over Johnson Creek.



Recycling Defeat

At the last city council meeting, Republic Waste Services, our landfill operator, withdrew its proposal to institute the use of rolling recycling carts at the last minute, so a vote on the program was postponed indefinitely. Apparently, company officials became aware of some residents' concerns about inconvenience and were convinced that a vote would fail. They say that the proposal will be reworked and submitted at some future date.

Before this happened, your ACC board voted to support the proposal, largely because it would have increased recycling rates and prolonged the life of the landfill.

Once again it appears that a vocal minority has won an anti-environmental victory, this time before the issue even made its way to a vote. It's a shame.

Notes from Dustan

Ecofest Arlington occurred on Saturday, September 17, and it was a huge success. Approximately 10,000 people attended the all-day event and some of the highlights included:

- 250 rain barrels made
- 1,000 free trees given away
- 100 kids attended bike safety training
- 65 classes and demonstrations with 1,500 participants
- And 6,000 free cups of Arlington award-winning tap water provided

Please mark your calendar to attend Ecofest Arlington next September.
www.ecofestarlington.com

Landscape Design Class Series this November. Whether you have a new landscape or plan to update an existing area, it is critical to begin with a good design as a foundation for success. It is also important to learn when, where and how to plant recommended plants for our area. To help, Arlington Water Utilities, in cooperation with the Arlington

Library, has coordinated a three-class series that will teach you the principles of landscape design, 7 steps of xeriscape, and recommended plants for Arlington. With this class series you will learn how to design your own beautiful landscape that will save water, time, money, and be able to withstand current and future drought conditions.

What: Landscape Design in Arlington – Plan to Succeed in Drought Conditions

When: 6-8 pm. Tuesdays, November 2011. 11/8, 11/15, and 11/22

Where: Lake Arlington Branch Library
4000 W. Green Oaks Blvd.

Instructor: Dave Wilson, Master Gardener and Arlington Resident

Cost: Free!

Registration: Register today to reserve your spot by contacting Dustan Compton at 817-459-6628 or dustan.compton@arlingtontx.gov.

The Go With the Flow Residential Toilet Program is accepting applications for Fall 2011. Go to www.SaveArlingtonWater.com and scroll down to the article to apply. Some recent changes have occurred with the program and they include:

- A new high-efficiency toilet model is being provided. It is a single 1.28 gallons-per-flush model that has received good reviews as a very reliable water-saving toilet.
- Option for up to 2 toilets per property. If you have participated in a past toilet distribution event, you may apply for one additional toilet.
- Pickup of the fixtures will occur at a local plumbing supply store rather than at a specific Saturday distribution event.

Dustan Compton
Conservation Program Coordinator
Arlington Water Utilities

Thanks to Our Last Speaker

Last month, Trudy Lewis, city project coordinator, gave us an enthusiastic presentation on the PowerUp Arlington program and answered all our questions with humor and professionalism. Thanks, Trudy.



MEMORY TREE

A tree wears its heart
On its sleeve
Far more than any human lover
For all its vital juices
Pass just beneath the surface
From the taproot to the crown.
So when I walk across my garden
To greet the sturdy pin oak
I planted more than twenty years ago
After giving salutation
(Using words a tree might know)
I touch its trunk, its bark.
Though I've never felt a pulse,
The thought is there
That an entity dimensional
I can only sense by feeling
Exists, and it is
Feeling me as well.
If trees have memories
It may recall the day I bought it,
Young and supple, in a plastic pot;
It may recall the hour I labored
To dig an ample hole,
Fertilize the base, fill round it,
Tamp it down and give a drink;
But likely it's forgot.
I think trees remember storms,
Wind, rain and blazing heat;
Remember nesting birds,
Cheeky squirrels, snow.
But still I visit often, touch,
Talk, stand there in a wishful hope
That someday years away
It will remember me.

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Arlington Conservation Council Membership Application

Memberships are good for one year, renewable each January. Your dues go directly to our public education efforts.

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Lifetime individual \$250.00

Other \$ _____

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Note: If you cannot pay, please let any board member know.

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THE POST OAK

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Don't Forget!

Wednesday, October 12
7 pm

Matt Churches
*City of Arlington's
Urban Forest Effects
Model*



Printed on recycled paper