

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 8

SEPTEMBER 2012

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

September Meeting

**Strategies to publicize the
works of organizations helping
to make our world more green**

**Julie Thibodeaux, Social Media Editor,
and Phillip Shinoda,
Project Manager, Green Source DFW**

**Wednesday, September 12, 7 pm
Fielder Museum, 1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)**



Green Source is part of the Memnosyne Foundation; its goal is to advance the environmental movement in the DFW area by promoting green living, sustainable practices, nonprofit environmental organizations, eco-friendly green businesses, environmental education, scientific information, public policy discussions, and socially responsible living.

Bring something for the raffle.

Bits & Pieces

Unlikely Lizard

It's cricket invasion time again, so naturally we're thinking about Slender glass lizards because they eat crickets as well as other small invertebrates. No legs?

That's okay because they have moveable eyelids, external ear openings, and inflexible jaws. It's a lizard, honest.



Today's Inspirational Moment



I have my own views about Nature's methods, though I feel that it is rather like a beetle giving his opinions upon the Milky Way.

Sherlock Holmes

Red, White, and Blue – and Green

In his latest issue of Prairie Notes, Tandy Hills advocate Don Young reminds us to become informed about that thing scheduled for November 6:

The League of Conservation Voters Web site is an excellent place to start. Educate yourself and vote for “the world you want to live in.” Find it at www.lcv.org/scorecard

Also, take a look at the Vote the Environment initiative from Patagonia, the outdoor apparel company: www.patagonai.com/us/vote-the-environment

Very, Very Sperry Again



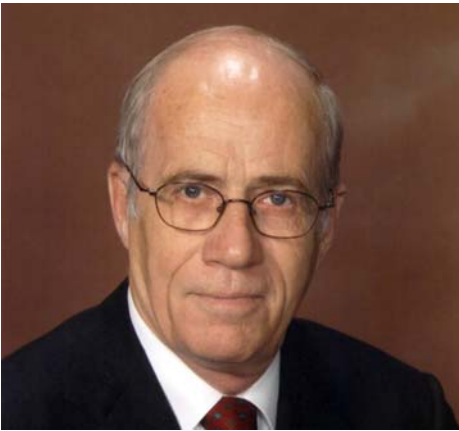
Texas sage won't do; it's from West Texas.

It was back on August 25 but it still rankles. In a discussion of flaws found among even the “best” plants, Mr Sperry includes natives from far East and West Texas and tells us why they just don't measure up. Make him stop, please.

From the President Grace Darling

Remembering a Friend

If I had to choose a word to describe Gene Patrick, the first thing that comes to mind is "class." I first met Gene some 10 years ago, when as a green working mother and commuting housewife I began paying attention to the affairs of



Arlington, going to meetings and asking questions, and he quickly noticed I had a lot to learn. By that time Gene had long been involved in the future of the city he loved so much, holding positions on several civic boards, agencies, and commissions where he honed the skills he displayed during his tenure on our city council. A respectful listener and astute negotiator, Gene would analyze problems and try to find creative solutions that left everyone feeling as if progress had been made. A champion of downtown redevelopment, Gene never wavered in his commitment to what he thought was best for Arlington, a vision he pursued with grace, intelligence, and determination. Always courteous, a statesman and policy-maker rather than a micromanager, Gene Patrick embodied all that is good about city government.

Rest in peace, friend.

Goodbye and Good Luck

This week we say Adios and Thank You to Tim Yatko, ACC member and Arlington's Commercial Recycling Coordinator for the past 4 years. Despite his excellent service on behalf of the city, the grant that funded Tim's job has run out and his superiors have decided against creating a budgeted position "in these tough economic times."

Aren't you all getting tired of hearing that phrase? Especially when it's used to justify bad, short-sighted decisions that have ominous long-term implications?

We will miss you, Tim, and hope you land a better job soon where your dedication and work ethic will be appreciated.

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conserve Arlington's
natural resources.

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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park

Photos by Wesley Miller



...the joy of prairie lies in its subtlety. It is so easy—too easy—to be swept away by mountain and ocean vistas. A prairie, on the other hand, requests the favor of your closer attention. It does not divulge itself to mere passersby.

Suzanne Winckler,
Prairie: A North American Guide



Wildscape Update John Dycus



NATIVE PLANTS BOUNCE BACK

Once again, the wildscape proves its resilience. While everything outdoors suffered through the summer heat and dry

conditions, the native plants went dormant. Then they put on a show of new growth and color after the August rains.

Partly as a result of this resurgence, volunteers report an increase in hummingbird sightings. These enchanting creatures entertain visitors of all ages. Build a wildscape and they will come! In the near future, wildscape namesake Molly Hollar plans to fill in the vegetation gaps in the visible areas. Volunteers will

plant lantana along the sidewalk and add more shade trees. The city has repaired the pond in the original wildscape area, so re-landscaping there is high on the to-do list.

After arborist Danny Wright's July program on tree care, the volunteers took his advice and used two gators around many of the trees. Not only does this double water capacity, but air circulation increases. Hester Schwarzer's mini-class on honeybees was informative and entertaining. Even veteran beekeepers learned a few things.

Molly is working with the city to add a bench at the pavilion entrance donated by supporters Dave and Nita Ferman. Another bench is being considered for the butterfly garden.

As newly planted areas mature, the wildscape will soon be able to display some lawn alternatives. One mowable area is planted with horseherb and violets, providing green ground cover year 'round. Another area under development utilizes all six of Sally Wasowski's shady lawn alternatives. Buffalo grass, a low-water plant, is being added in a sunny area.

Change is a constant. In a flood-prone stretch by the boardwalk, volunteers planted and replanted some shade-loving natives that just did not survive. Meanwhile, Mother Nature kept bringing in inland sea oats, so they were left to thrive. At the wildscape, learning to cooperate with nature is a big secret to success.



The City Tower Goes Native From City of Arlington Web site, August 2, 2012

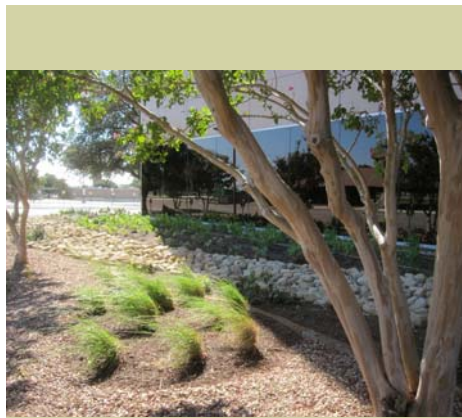
As part of the continued effort to Keep Arlington Beautiful, the City Office Tower, located in Downtown, is moving into the 21st century with its new energy efficient windows and newly designed Native Texas water conservation landscaping.

Heather Dowell, Urban Forestry Land Manager with Parks and Recreation and Dustan Compton, Conservation Program Coordinator with Water Utilities, were awarded a grant from the Arlington Tomorrow Foundation. In addition to the grant, matching funds were provided by the Water Utilities' conservation program and in-kind services from the Parks and Recreation Department to fully fund these environmentally friendly improvements.

"The 80's called and wanted their design, irrigation and plant material back" said Dowell jokingly. "We are working to change all current designs to the way of the future, but in actuality we are going back to our roots and applying native design standards of how native plants grew back in the day," added Dowell.

Heather collaborated with Xiwen Feng, an intern from the University of Texas Arlington, to create a contemporary design that gives the building a whole new look by providing a natural feel for all citizens and city employees to enjoy.

The city of Arlington and the Arlington Tomorrow Foundation are committed to reducing water usage by utilizing proper native plant selection, coupled with drip irrigation to create aesthetically pleasing and more sustainable landscapes. For information on water conservation go to www.SaveArlingtonWater.com.



Thanks to Last Month's Speaker

We're indebted to Terry Gratton for his remarkable talk to us at the August general meeting. Terry discussed "Disease vectors: Insects and the diseases they transmit to people." Terry, an emeritus professor at UNT Health Science Center and stellar environmental volunteer, kept us fascinated, from West Nile mosquitoes right through bedbugs. Thanks, Terry. (Now let's all stop scratching.)

Urban Beekeeping Update **Danny Kocurek**

(Danny spoke to us about his bees last May, and many of us have wondered how they manage during the drought. Answers below. – Editor)

It has been an interesting and educational summer in the world of urban beekeeping. Both hives have survived, to different extents. The full hive I started with has really thrived, producing about 40 lbs of honey and lots of bees. I have chosen not to harvest any honey so far because I wanted to have it around to strengthen the hives if needed to get them through the winter.

The second hive, which started with a nucleus, has struggled. About mid summer, I noticed a decline in the number of bees and very few larvae and decided the queen needed to be replaced. This is not an uncommon problem which



can result in the loss of the colony. It was quite a challenge getting a new queen in the hottest part of the summer without paying a lot of money, but luckily my beekeeping group was putting together a group order and we got a really good deal. The new queen appears to be doing great, so I hope I will have two strong hives going into winter.

I still have no idea where the bees go each day to forage. Despite having almost my entire property covered with native plants, I rarely see honey bees. Wherever they go, they seem to be finding lots of pollen and nectar. The mostly good rains we had this summer have been beneficial. During the drought last summer, beekeepers were spending lots of money feeding sugar water to their starving hives.

The only pests I have encountered so far are small hive beetles, which seem to be under control. Unfortunately, there are lots of other pests to keep an eye on. I am trying to avoid using any chemicals in my hives and have been successful so far.

They are still fascinating to watch and I am continually having to learn new things, but it has been an enjoyable experience.

O.S. Gray Volunteer Appreciation

On September 8, Kevin Donovan hosted the first volunteer appreciation event at O.S. Gray Natural Area. The enthusiastic crowd enjoyed refreshments, heard an impressive list of accomplishments, applauded as Kevin recognized outstanding volunteers, and finished off with a work session. *From top left, Wesley Miller, Parks Director Pete Jamieson, Molly Hollar, Roy Miliner, Julia Burgen, Josephine Keeney.*



Roll Cart Recycling Redux **Grace Darling**

It seems like old news, doesn't it, given that Arlington officials adopted automated collection of recyclables with wheeled carts on August 7. If you think I'm beating a dead horse, it's because you haven't been on the receiving end of numerous emails and comments questioning my objectivity and calling me everything from naive (the mildest ones) to a pawn of industry and worse. For what I promise will be the last time, here are my answers to FAQs and what I hope to be a clear rationale for ACC's support of roll carts for recycling.

Who tested the carts in the pilot program? The pilot study and subsequent survey weren't representative of the city as a whole.



A: The pilot study, however skewed you may think it was, was superfluous. Ten minutes' Internet research will show an increasing number of cities and counties switching from bins to wheeled carts in the last few years because carts are more efficient for residential curbside collection – that is, a best management practice. Many studies bear this out, including the 2010 NCTCOG-sponsored Recycling Rate Update, encompassing 52 cities in the 16-county region: http://www.nctcog.org/envir/SEELT/reduction/NCTCOG_Regional_Recycling_Update_FINAL_083111.pdf.



Roll carts have been used successfully to increase recycling rates in municipalities large (New York) and small (Plano), tightly packed (Chicago) or spread out (Houston), hilly (Seattle) or flat (Miami-Dade).

Will I be as likely to drop my water bottle into a tub in my laundry room or into a cart in my garage?

A: You will be able to keep your bin(s) for indoor use, then dump the contents into the recycling cart and roll it to the curb on collection day.

Our current system works fine. Why do we need to change at a higher rate?



A: Because there is strong evidence that roll carts help divert more waste from the landfill, which is the goal of the recycling program. Grants are available to subsidize programs that use best available technology in the waste disposal industry, not outdated methods. And as part of the agreement with Republic, the city will receive a compressed natural gas (CNG) filling station to serve our CNG fleet and facilitate wider use of these clean-burning vehicles. The additional cost to citizens comes out to \$11.28 per year – a minimal investment. Arlington's waste hauling and disposal rates are still the lowest in the Metroplex: http://arlingtontx.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=292&meta_id=28148

How are carts more efficient than the bins we are used to?



A: In several ways. Compared with bins, roll carts:

- have greater capacity
- are safer for hauling crews, reducing workman compensation claims
- are expected to increase the weekly amounts of recyclables
- the more tons recycled, the lower the landfill costs
- the more tons recycled, the higher the revenues from the sale of recyclables

continued on page 8

Roll Cart Recycling Redux continued from page 7



Why is waste reduction important?

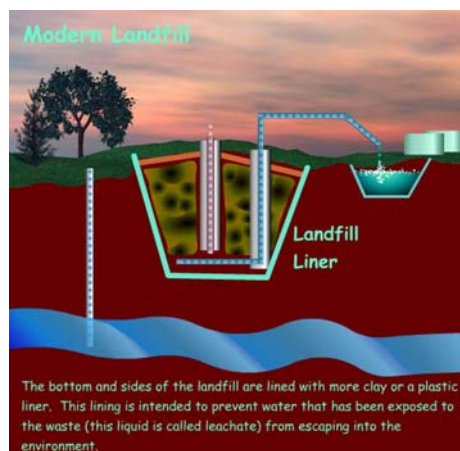
A: Research indicates that, in terms of climate benefits, waste prevention is generally the best management option. Recycling is the next best approach. Waste reduction is an emergency for the European Union as a whole. Household waste has doubled in weight in 40 years and has been growing steadily at a rate of 1 to 2% per year; in 2009, 512kg of municipal waste was generated on average per person in the EU Member States. (Source: Eurostat). This waste is the result of non-sustainable modes of production and consumption. Furthermore, the consumption of products (including their production, transport and distribution) represents nearly 50% of emissions contributing to climate change.



Why is it important to extend the life of our landfill?

A: In the late 1990s landfill operation became a very expensive business. After 1997, all landfills had to be lined and comply with stringent federal and state regulations designed to safeguard the public health, decrease air pollution, prevent groundwater contamination from leachate, and recover produced methane. As a result, many city and county landfills that did not generate enough solid waste to justify the cost of building a new lined one subsequently closed.

Faced with the reality of an increasingly complex technical and regulatory environment, in 2005 Arlington opted to lease its landfill operations to Republic Services, which enjoys the engineering and regulatory expertise, leverage, and economies of scale to successfully operate a modern landfill. Had the Arlington Sanitary Landfill closed instead, our trash would now be taken to a far-away location and our waste-disposal fees would be approximately 50% higher.



If we're concerned about extending the life of our landfill, why do we allow Republic to take in trash from anyone and everyone in the Metroplex? Who keeps the fees?

A: At the time of the landfill lease, city officials welcomed its conversion to a regional landfill that would accept trash from other municipalities because it would generate higher royalties for the city. After the lease contract was signed, the city's fortunes were linked to those of Republic: the more money the landfill makes, the better for Arlington.

Over the years the royalties received from the landfill have gone a long way to keep our property taxes low and our budgets stable, without the drastic cuts in city services or staff that other cities have experienced. Without landfill royalties, city revenues would decline sharply and the shortfall would have to be made up by higher taxes and fees on Arlington residents – not a desirable outcome.

Increased recycling by citizens does not earn Republic any fees because Arlington's recycling facility or MRF is owned by a rival company (Waste Management Inc). But Republic must be allowed to realize a profit from their hauling and landfill operations because they provide a highly specialized service vital to our way of life at a reasonable price, and that's the nature of business. In this case, their success is to our mutual benefit.



Wildscape Fall Native Plant Sale

Sale Features

The sale features a large variety of plant species grown organically at the Greenhouse by Wildscape volunteers, including: Ground Covers Perennials, Shrubs, Vines and Trees.

- Grown from local seeds
- Better adapted to our climate
- Low requirement for water
- No need for pesticides or fertilizers

When: Saturday, September 29, 2012

Where: Randol Mill Park Greenhouse
1901 W Randol Mill Road
Arlington, TX

Map: See back side.

Time: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Other: See our website for more details, pictures and prices.

www.thewildscape.org



Snake Herb



Military Hibiscus

Some of the many natives in the sale:

Autumn Sage, American Beautyberry, American Germander, Blackfoot Daisy, Carolina Phlox, Columbine, Drummond's Aster, Eastern Bluemist, False Indigo, Flame Acanthus, Frogfruit, Frostweed, Heartleaf Skullcap, Ironweed, Lyre-leaf Sage, Mealy Blue Sage, Mexican Buckeye, Mexican Milkweed, Mexican Plum, Military Hibiscus, Mountain Sage, Obedient Plant, Pigeon Berry, Pink Evening Primrose, Red Buckeye, Rock Rose, Scarlet Sage, Snake Herb, Texas Lantana, Turk's Cap, Velvet-leaf Senna, Western Bluemist, White Avens, White Honeysuckle, White Mistflower, Wild Petunia, Wild Violets, Willow-leaf Aster, Yarrow, Willowleaf Sunflower, Zexmenia.

(See back side for more)

List of Plants for the Fall Sale

PERENNIALS: Blackfoot Daisy, Brazos Penstemon, Carolina Phlox, Chile Pequin, Drummond's Aster, Eastern Bluemist, Fall Obedient Plant, False Dragonhead, Four-nerve daisy, Frostweed, Heartleaf skullcap, Heath Aster, Hibiscus militaris, Mealy Blue Sage, Mexican Milkweed, Mountain sage, Pigeonberry, Prairie Phlox, Purple Fall Aster, Scarlet Sage, Western Blue Mistflower, Western Ironweed, White mistflower, Wild Red Columbine, Willowleaf Aster, Willowleaf Sunflower, Zexmenia

VINES: Coral Honeysuckle, Crossvine, Passionflower, Virginia Creeper, White Honeysuckle

GROUNDCOVERS: American Germander, Frogfruit, Horseherb, Low Wild Petunia, Lyreleaf Sage Green, Pink Evening Primrose, Snake Herb, White Avens, Wild Petunia, Wild Violet, Yarrow

SHRUBS: American Beautyberry, Autumn Sage, Beebrush, Coral Berry, False Indigo, Flame Acanthus, Rock Rose, Texas Lantana, Turk's Cap, Velvetleaf Senna

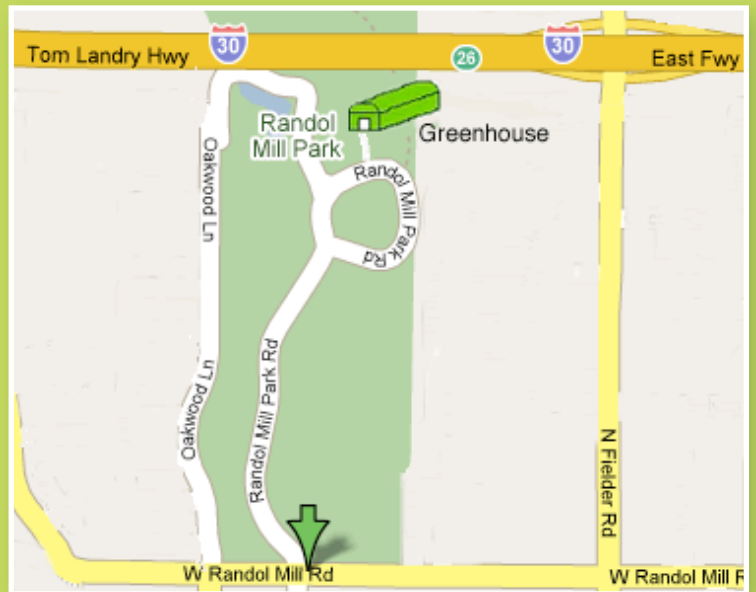
TREES: Carolina Cherry Laurel, Eastern Redbud, Mexican Buckeye, Mexican Plum, Red buckeye

GRASSES: Inland Seaoats, Lindheimer's Muhly

ANNUALS: Black-eyed Susan, Partridge Pea

The Greenhouse at Randol Mill Park

Drive two blocks West from Fielder Road on Randol Mill Road, then turn North into the park. The Plant Sale is held at the Randol Mill Park Greenhouse in the rear the park behind the swimming pool.



www.thewildscape.org

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

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Renewing member ☐

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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, September 12

7:00 pm

Julie Thibodeaux and Phillip Shinoda
*Strategies to publicize the works of organizations
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