

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 8

SEPTEMBER 2019

Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve

**Fielder
Museum**



September Meeting Urban Forestry in Arlington

Jeremy Priest
Forester, City of Arlington
Wednesday, September 4, 7 pm
Fielder House Museum

**Fielder
Museum**



1616 W. Abram Street (corner of Fielder and Abram)

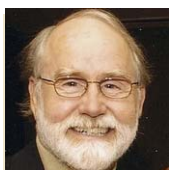


Come learn about the state of our city's trees and expect a bit of everything, including having the right tree in the right place, advocating for urban trees, and even a little on preliminary results from Jeremy's park tree inventory.

Jeremy Priest is originally from Whitehouse, Texas, which is just outside of Tyler. He received his bachelor's degree in Forest Range Management and a master's degree in Forestry, both from Stephen F. Austin State University. For his master's degree, Jeremy researched pine plantations growing on reclaimed mine lands in East Texas and has published three peer-reviewed journal articles. After he graduated in 2015, he worked for the federal government in Nevada for the Bureau of Land Management as a research associate and worked on a number of different projects over the 13 million acre region they manage. In 2016 he moved back to Texas and began working for the city in August of 2016.

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From the President

Dick Schoech

Dollars, Measures, and Numbers vs Intangibles

The advice in politics is often to “follow the money” to understand why people do what they do. I was reminded of this advice after our June panel presentations by Friends of the Parks on the issues parks face. One comment was that the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department (APRD) has to generate most of its budget. Parks with sports fields, aquatics, rental space, etc. are able to generate APRD revenue while natural areas just cost APRD money. So, natural areas and linear parks with walking paths tend to be neglected.*

Since land development generates money, the city tends to approve as much development in flood-prone areas as possible while leaving the remaining floodplain for parks and natural areas. Parks in floodplain areas along creeks provide great biking and walking trails for humans and corridors for animals. However, parks in floodplains are continually faced with flooding, erosion, and the accumulation of trash after heavy rains like many that occurred this spring. Flooding, erosion, and picking up trash are expensive problems that no one wants to take on. Arlington often looks to bond issues or the Army Corps of Engineers for flood and erosion control due to the high costs involved. Luckily, the Corps is coming to the realization (it's not completely there yet) that flooding solutions are best tackled by working with nature rather than by harnessing nature with cement, wire caged rocks (gabions), and tree removals. In addition, it takes time for the engineering studies and permits required to repair creeks that continually erode their banks. As climate change causes weather extremes, natural areas and linear parks will require a larger percent of the APRD budget.

Invasive species removal was another constant problem mentioned by the Friends of the Parks panel. Once an invasive species takes hold, it spreads exponentially and eradication is difficult and expensive. It is ironic that Arlington plant stores sell privet to unsuspecting homeowners while privet is currently taking over our parks.

This discussion points out that making money from our use of nature is not typically a win/win and is often “short term stupid.” It often contradicts the classic expression that “a penny of prevention is worth a pound (or dollar) of cure.” It also helps explain why APRD often accommodates people's taste by keeping parks mowed short like a house lawn rather than allowing parks to have areas that are more natural where wildflowers and other native plants can help control erosion and reseed rather than be constantly mowed to death. Contract mowers are used in the parks because

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ACC POST OAK

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15th of every preceding month.
Please send them to
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Bits & Pieces

The Terse Tree Hugger



Went by the streets getting new sidewalks and saw the post oak remains.

Collateral damage.

Shouldn't have looked.

Gratuitous butterfly

Maybe a Hayhurst's scallopwing that was taking advantage of a cowpen daisy that appeared as a volunteer in a pot that contains a tiny redbud that was rescued from some terrible spot and should have been planted quite a long time ago. But not yet — that daisy has more to offer, and it looks great right where it is.



Was That a Cougar?



Matthew L. Miller has prepared a short but very readable [Field Guide to Commonly Misidentified Mammals](#) that deserves your attention even though most of the species don't live here. Be sure to look at his rules for avoiding misidentification; they're sure to resonate with anyone who might have seen something very unlikely.

Visit us on the Web

www.acctexas.org

LIVING GARDEN

Mine is a living garden —
A garden made of life —
Not just flowers and leaves,
Twigs, branches, roots,
But countless beings,

Butterflies, bees and beetles,
Lizards, squirrels, birds, me —
How the world has been
Endless generations
Since time's first dawn.

There is no finite line
Between the parts;
We blend in one eternal whole,
One sacred entity,
Connected each to each.

When one dies, however small,
We all die momentarily;
When one is born
Joy fills our hearts
That life goes on and on.

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Join us and act locally.
Use the application form
on the back page.



Question Corner John Darling

Q: Here's a real naturalist topic: There are lots of statements about the fact that yuccas require specialized moths for pollination, but the online literature goes from vague to extremely technical. That leaves me in the middle with a few simple-sounding questions. The big one is, does each yucca species have its own moth species? And what about our Glen Rose yucca?

A: Let me be clear about this: I don't know. But the topic is both fascinating and hard for a nonscientist to penetrate. [On one site](#) a big guy in this field lists several yucca moth species, each one a pollinator of one yucca species. Except for "cheater" moths, several non-pollinating species whose young eat yucca seeds. I haven't found a reference for the moth seen on our Glen Rose yuccas, or, for that matter, any information on a moth that might pollinate the soft-leaved yucca, native to the southeastern US and planted everywhere.



*Glen Rosa yucca with two yucca moths at SW Nature Preserve.
Photo by Grace Darling.*

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www.wbu.com/arlintonx
Hours 10 - 6 Mon - Fri,
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Thanks A.C.C. for working to conserve Arlington's natural resources.

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817.265.4441

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Natural Foods Market & Herb Shoppe

3759 E. Lancaster St. Ft. Worth, TX 76103
Karen Foley 817-533-1152

From the President continued from page 3

they are economical, but contract workers are low-paid and tend to use big equipment to mow everything in sight very short. A penny of preventive education might help park visitors understand the value of working with nature to prevent and control flooding and erosion before it starts. Parks with active friends groups, like O.S. Gray and Southwest Nature Preserve, are good examples where signage and events educate visitors about the value of natural areas and how to maintain them.

Arlington has 90+ parks but only has 4 or 5 active “Friends of the Parks” groups. Why not more? These groups are mostly in natural areas. We need to have a way to collect numbers easily that translate into dollars to document the value of natural areas in order to compete with the short-term revenue generated by aquatics, sports grounds, and pavilions. Could it be that people who love natural areas are not typically interested in obtaining the numbers needed to get city leaders to value natural areas and linear trails more? The research is fairly solid that involvement with nature and critters improves physical and mental well-being.** However, translating improved health and well-being into dollars saved by a city is more complicated and difficult to understand than collecting fees to increase park budgets. Maybe a coalition of parks groups could team up with researchers at UT Arlington or Eagle Scouts who can begin developing the data to document the value of natural areas.

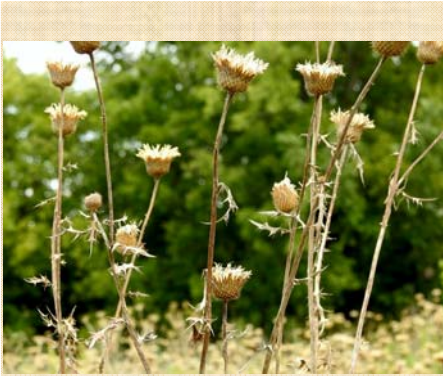
Nationally and internationally, we are struggling with these same issues when governments propose to add economic concerns to endangered species analyses, refuse to acknowledge and address climate change, open national parks and natural areas to oil and gas extraction, and burn the Amazon rain forest for ranching and farming. While it is difficult for citizens to influence these national and international efforts, we can make a difference at the local level and help our parks and natural areas. North Texas Giving Day is September 19th, so give money if you can to your favorite natural area or park. Volunteer some time with your local natural area or park to become part of the solution while at the same time improving your physical and mental health. Give politicians testimonials and stories about the value of parks and natural areas in your life because a good story can be more powerful than numbers. ACC is convening Friends of the Parks groups to find more ways to help. ACC is also inviting newly elected city council members to speak at future ACC meetings. Attend with stories that illustrate the value that all our natural areas and parks have for you.

* Grace Darling, ACC board member who is also on the Parks board, kindly provided the following on the APRD budget: APRD's annual budget comes from both the city's general fund and its own performance fund. APRD's money-making activities, e.g., aquatics, golf, rentals, and so on, seldom meet the target pay-for-itself goal of 80%, so the general fund subsidizes the shortfall in addition to its annual allocation.

**

1. <https://www.childrenandnature.org/2019/08/02/eye-specialists-concerned-by-kids-excessive-screen-use/>
2. <https://www.childrenandnature.org/2019/08/23/children-who-spend-more-time-outdoors-have-less-nearsightedness/>
3. https://www.peoplespharmacy.com/articles/show-1176-the-health-benefits-of-our-relationships-with-animals/?utm_source=The+People%27s+Pharmacy+Newsletter&utm_campaign=c8a930e652-MC+D+2019-08-19%26subscriber%3D1&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_7300006d3c-c8a930e652-220976009&goal=0_7300006d3c-c8a930e652-220976009&mc_cid=c8a930e652&mc_eid=659823c8d2
4. https://www.motherjones.com/environment/2019/08/the-shift-toward-renewable-energy-is-coming-western-states-arent-ready/?utm_source=mj-newsletters&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=eco-nundrums-2019-08-19

Blackland Prairie Nature Preserve photos by John Darling



More Bits



*Snow on the prairie in bloom at Cedar Hill State Park.
Photo by Carol Marcotte.*

ANOTHER EGRET POEM

Although I've run this theme
Into the muddy ground,
How can you ask me to be tired
Of fundamental beauty?

On such a dreary morning,
Distracted, cold and wired,
Driving the countless thousandth iteration
Down my hopeless, hapless freeway,

As ever I was scanning
Roadside marshes, borrow ditches, fired
With the need for signs of life, of worth,
When, in a rain-filled puddle

Where a gravel truck was mired,
A brilliant white, a flash, a flame,
Ecstatic, dancing, snowy egrets
Anticipating mating time.

Leaping, weaving narrow necks
One upon the other, they transformed
That sordid venue into paradise regained,
With serpent unexpired.

©2004 John I. Blair

City survey assesses Southwest Nature Preserve trees Jim Frisinger, Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve

Mexican plum is the eighth most common tree species at the Southwest Nature Preserve. This is according to a tree survey led July 24 by City of Arlington arborist/forester Jeremy Priest. Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve volunteers accepted an invitation to assist.

From the 12 randomly selected sample circular plots (64 feet in diameter) Priest estimates there are about 4,690 significant trees (greater than 4 inches in diameter at breast height) at the Southwest Nature Preserve. Nearly half are over 8 inches in diameter. This represents "a mature forest and a pretty good balance of younger and older trees," Priest says.

The top 10 most common species, in order from greatest to least, were post oak, blackjack oak, eastern red-cedar, cedar elm, gum bumelia, sugarberry, Hercules club, Mexican plum, black willow and red mulberry.

The city uses Cartegraph One software for the sampling, which Priest showed volunteers Annabelle Corboy and me how to use. This survey is being done at all Arlington parks.



Mexican plum at Southwest Nature Preserve

Question Corner continued from page 5

Since your question arrived (or was made up by the editor), I've tried unsuccessfully to find moths hiding in soft-leaved yucca flowers during the day and searching a little at night. I finally realized that I don't see any seed pods. It's as if there's no fertilization in this bed where six or eight yuccas have been blooming. But why not? The plants are expending energy to produce dozens of flowers. Some yucca moths have expanded their ranges as their host species are used in landscaping. Shouldn't that have happened here?



Yucca moth laying an egg

The whole business produces more questions than answers: For example, how and why did this wonderful bit of coevolution get started over 40 million years ago? How and when did yuccas know to stop making nectar? How did some cheater yucca moth species become seed parasites in what is called a reversal of mutualism? How does a plant know when to abort a developing seed capsule that contains too many moth eggs? And does each yucca plant species have its own pollinating moth species? Looks like that last one could be true, but it's not really clear.



Soft-leaved yucca in bloom

Next month Dr Q. Corner must remember to pretend to receive an easy question.

The Arlington Environmental Hall of Shame

Another semester starts and excited students move into dorms, laughing and chattering as they stuff cardboard boxes into handy dumpsters. But they're just huge trash cans, no recycling here. Cardboard is about the most valuable kind of paper to recycle, so how can this waste happen year after year at a place that wins environmental awards? In a way, it's their future they're trashing and the grownups in charge aren't helping. (A little note: It takes 3 tons of wood to make 1 ton of virgin cardboard.)



Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason

"Slithering Through the Leaf Litter: Snakes and other Herps Found Around Gardens and Woodlands"

What gardener could resist a talk with that topic?

Hester Schwarzer, who finds the speakers for the first Saturday mini classes, found a good one in Michael Smith. Michael is the author of two books, a blogger in every spare minute, a herpetologist by passion, and a Master's degreed psychologist by training and profession. He invited us to "set aside our apprehensions and find out what critters in the garden do for us."

The class met at Pantego Cafe for lunch and education. With hostess intervention at a low, Michael reached into his backpack and brought out the stars of the show — a rough green snake and a Mediterranean gecko. To the disappointment of some, they were not released from their plastic cages but passed around for viewing before again being secreted away in the backpack.

With deep knowledge of his subject, Michael advocated for understanding the roles of these creatures and other snakes, lizards and frogs in our environment. They might startle you, but remember that almost all snakes in this part of the state are harmless.

If there was a best moment, it was when Michael confirmed that owls will take plains thread snakes into their nests, not to eat but to keep the nest parasite free while the young mature. This snake carries natural DEET in pores on its body and spreads the oil all over itself when entering an ant colony. The ants will not attack, and the snake eats its fill unmolested.

Some wise old owls observed that trick and take full advantage of it while raising their young. No one was able to confirm that grateful owls carry the snake back to the ground, when the owlets have fledged, but snakes can climb.

Visit <http://childrenandnature.ning.com/profile/MichaelSmith> for more information.



Why do people volunteer? Camaraderie! Wildscape volunteers have that in spades. Recently, Teresa Day-Fickle brought a delicious yellow watermelon from

her home garden to share at snack time. Decorum prevailed until Joe Martinez strode a few paces from the benches, drew a line in the dirt with his shoe and glanced back at his audience. The challenge was obvious. Game on!



Joe Martinez, Marylee Thomason, Bev Crawford and Teresa Day-Fickle prepare spits at the impromptu watermelon seed spitting contest during a break.

Marylee Thomason was the first to step up with a mouthful of seeds. Then Teresa, Bev Crawford and Jane Oosterhuis took some spits. Bev and Teresa both earned honorable mention with seeds landing well past the line. Jane put one right at the line before retiring.

Joe took the prize with a seed landing at least 11 feet away. Marylee failed to make the line even with numerous attempts and coaching from Joe: "You have to get some height on it." Her tries were just spitful.

continued on page 11

Wildscape Update continued from page 10

Two beautiful new kiosks are up, each a lovely image behind heavy Plexiglas for durability. The frames are made of cedar logs, which should withstand weathering for 20 years. The final kiosk will be installed when the budget allows, along with roofs for all.



Jane Oosterhuis (left) and Josephine Keeney at the three-sided kiosk on the edge of the butterfly garden just off the parking lot.

The updated designs were a collaboration between city of Arlington web designer Sara Peacock and wildscape volunteers Jane Oosterhuis, Ann Knudsen and Teresa Day-Fickle. Tom Olsen, Arlington facilities maintenance supervisor, has been very helpful overseeing the physical work at the park. Wildscape volunteers speak highly of his contributions to the project.

On an unusually rainy Wednesday, the wildscape had a visit from the symphony. Chris Adkins, a cellist, and his wife, Alexandra, a violinist — both with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra — drove from Duncanville with their two teenaged daughters, leaving their tech devices behind to do a little volunteering in nature. All four were enthusiastic, productive workers.

Chris, who's looking for ideas to landscape with native plants, found the opportunity on the Molly Hollar Wildscape website. He promised to come back for the plant sale.

Speaking of which, the 20th annual plant sale at the city greenhouse is in the works. Josephine Keeney, who manages the greenhouse for the wildscape, has had her crew growing plants, composting and mixing their special (sauce) soil amendments to produce the best-looking native plants around.

Maybe best of all, volunteers who have experience with the natives will be stationed throughout the venue eager to make suggestions or just talk about garden challenges and solutions. Find details elsewhere in this issue.

Wildscape bonus

Observations by Carol Marcotte from Wednesday, August 21.



nine-banded armadillo



widow skimmer



Marylee Thomason and Joe Martinez attempt to water while modeling the new wildscape volunteer shirt.

Wildscape Fall Native Plant Sale

When: **Saturday, September 21, 2019**

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

Map: **See back side.**

Time: **9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

Visit: **Website for more details, pictures
and prices.**

www.thewildscape.org

Plant Sale features

20th Plant Sale Celebration • All customers will receive Gifts

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 **organically** from local stock
- Better adapted to our climate
- Low requirement for water
- No need for pesticides or fertilizers



Wild Petunia



Flame Acanthus

List of Plants for the 2019 Fall Sale

PERENNIALS:

Blue mistflower
Brazos penstemon
Butterflyweed
Carolina phlox
Carolina wild petunia
Cedar sage
Columbine-mixed
Drummond's aster
Drummond's petunia
Fall aster
Fall obedient plant
False dragonhead
False nettle
Frostweed
Giant Spiderwort
Goldenrod
Gregg's mistflower
Heartleaf skullcap
Heath aster
Ironweed-western
Maximilian sunflower
Mealy blue sage
Mexican milkweed
Pigeonberry
Purple coneflower
Rock penstemon
Scarlet sage
Smooth blue aster
Spiderwort
Zexmenia

SHRUBS:

Autumn sage - Red
Beautyberry
Buttonbush
Chile pequin
Coralberry
Elderberry
Esperanza, Yellow Bells
False indigo
Flame acanthus
Illinois bundleflower
Kidneywood
Rock rose
Roughleaf dogwood
Rusty blackhaw
Smooth sumac
Texas lantana
Texas sage - green cloud
Texas sage - Lynne
Lowreys's dwarf
everblooming
Turk's cap
Velvetleaf senna
Virginia sweetspire
White mistflower
Yaupon holly

AQUATIC:

Lizard's Tail

GROUNDCOVERS:

Frogfruit
Golden groundsel
Hairy tube-tongue
Horseherb
Low wild petunia
Lyreleaf sage - Green
Prairie phlox
Snake herb
White avens
White yarrow
Wild -Wood violet
Wild petunia
Winecup

VINES:

Balsam gourd
Coral honeysuckle
Crossvine
Honeyvine
Milkweed vine
Passionflower
Maypop
Passionflower
Scarlet fruit
Pipevine
White honeysuckle
Yellow Passionvine

FERNS:

Wood Fern

TREES:

Black willow
Box elder
Burr oak
Carolina buckthorn
Carolina Cherry Laurel
Cedar elm
Chinquapin oak
Eastern red cedar
Eastern redbud
Eve's necklace
Mexican buckeye
Mexican plum
Red buckeye
Red oak
Sycamore
Toothache tree

GRASSES:

Cedar sedge
Cherokee sedge
Inland seaoats
Lindheimer's muhly
Texas bluegrass

CACTI & SUCCULENT:

Century plant
Coastal Sedum
Red yucca
Spanish bayonet
Spineless prickly pear

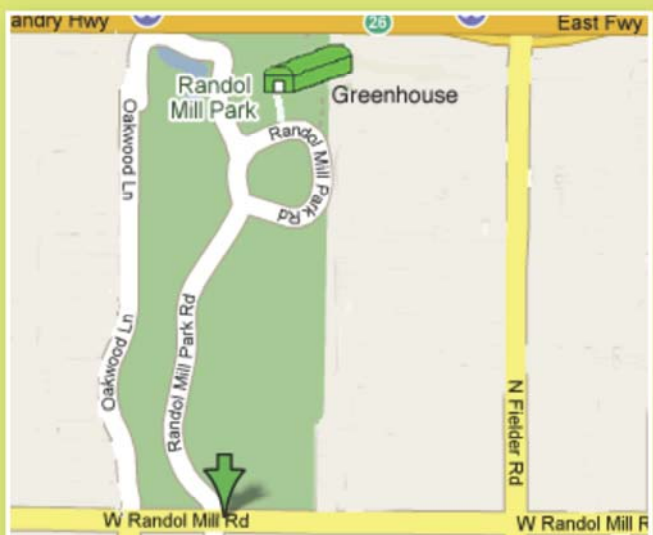
www.thewildscape.org

The Greenhouse at Randol Mill Park

1901 W Randol Mill Road, Arlington, TX 76012

Directions: Exit Interstate 30 South on Fielder Road. 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.

Proceeds from the plant sale are used to maintain the **Molly Hollar Wildscape** at Veterans Park in Arlington.





The Senior Education program at Tarrant County College is a partnership between the College and citizen volunteers. The program is open to citizens 55 and older. Other than the age requirement, there are no other requirements to enroll.

Registration is available at the Registrar's office at any of the TCC Campuses. For the Northeast campus, you can register in the Administration Building (NADM).

There is a \$20 registration fee, paid at the time of sign-up.

For more information...

www.tccd.edu/academics/cie/lifelong-learning/senior-education/



Using Smart Phone Apps to Explore Nature

**Senior Education Class at TCC
Northeast Campus**

Fall 2019

October 28, 30, Nov 1

1 – 5 pm

The class is a hands-on workshop where the student will download and learn to use free smartphone apps that can help them explore and document the natural world. With the current interest in citizen science, we will focus on iNaturalist, which is used internationally to record the living organisms around us. We will use iNaturalist to post our observations and utilize its features to help us identify them. And we will spend time understanding the role these tools serve in our communities. Some of the most powerful aspects of iNaturalist are only available through the website, so we will take a look at those features as well.

We will also look at Merlin Bird ID and AllTrails, two more apps that enhance our experience with nature, appealing especially to birders and hikers. If time and weather permit, the last class will include a field trip to a nearby park.

Students should bring their smartphone to class and have basic familiarity with its operation. Both Androids and iPhones will be supported. This class will be valuable to all who want to use their smartphone to better understand and appreciate the natural world.

Sign up for SEPX-4003-21019 ASC: Nature Apps



Instructors:

Annabelle Corboy

Martha Siegel

If you have questions, you may contact

Annabelle at 817-683-1739

Friends seek historic status for 200-year-old oak

Jim Frisinger, Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve

Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve has applied for historic status for a very large post oak on the northeast corner of the property. The Friends group has sought recognition of the tree from the Texas Historic Tree Coalition. A formal decision is imminent.

Arlington arborist/forester Jeremy Priest estimates the diameter of the Southwest Nature Preserve post oak at 54 inches. A Texas Historic Tree Coalition team has

also visited the post oak, which stands astride the Meadow Loop Trail near old foundations of agricultural structures on that corner of the preserve.

Priest measured the tree height at 45 feet — slightly lower than other mature post oaks he's seen in Arlington, but typical of a tree that didn't have much competition for sunlight. He measured the crown at 65 feet — which is the largest he's measured for post oaks in the city.

Priest has had to cut a number of post oaks down at the Fielder

House Museum in Arlington. He remembers one was 22 inches in diameter and when he counted the rings the tree was about 120 years old. That's another indication the tree at the Southwest Nature Preserve may be 200 years old or older.

Estimating the tree's age is tricky because it quickly splits into two trunks. Priest puts the likely age range of the tree at 190-215 years old. That means it was in its youth when the Caddo tribe had settled in the area, along with other Native American groups along nearby Village Creek.



At last, a privet pest? Anne Alderfer

At River Legacy Park, Ellen Ravkind noticed sickly privet and that made me remember [a report by Michelle Villafranca](#) in the Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge newsletter in 2016 about defoliated privet there.

At River Legacy Park, the majority of the Big Loop trail is affected to varying degrees and the leaf loss is quite noticeable. Unfortunately, Michelle says that the privet does bounce back. I have not seen the insect she suspects but apparently it's hard to find. And tent caterpillars do show some affinity for piling on.

We can only hope this is the first sign of insects and/or pathogens finally getting a toehold on that terrible shrub.



TREETOP

Have you ever climbed a tree
To see what life's like at the top?

The first few feet are very hard,
Shinnying up the trunk,
Flinging a leg around a limb.

Sometimes, as in a well-shaped pine,
Magnolia, cedar, spruce or willow,
From the bottom rung the rest is easy:
One hand, one toe beyond another.

But many trees are more resistant:
Oaks, elms, pecans concede little,
Grow their branches far apart,
Gird their crowns with snags and gaps.

In either case, it's worth the effort;
Only those who reach the crest
Know how dazzling the light,
Dizzying the wind,
Delirious the prospect,
Sad the thought
You can progress no farther.

©2004 John I. Blair



Defoliated privet at River Legacy Park. Upper left Anne Alderfer. Left and above Dick Schoech.

ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Membership Information

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	_____	Family	\$25.00	
Phone	_____	Supporting	\$40.00	Renewing member ☐
E-mail	_____	Sponsor	\$100.00	
		Lifetime Individual	\$250.00	
		Other	\$ _____	

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POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
PO Box 216
Arlington, TX 76004-0216

September Meeting**Wednesday, September 4, 7 pm****Fielder House Museum
1616 W. Abram Street****Urban Forestry in Arlington****Jeremy Priest
City of Arlington Forester**