

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

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S&W GREENBRIAR AT SOUTHWEST NATURE PRESERVE • PHOTO BY BOB BRENNAN

The Watchdog Needs You

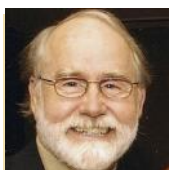
watchdog@acctexas.org

**We try hard, but we can't keep up with every environmental thing.
So if you see something we should know about, email a message to the watchdog.**



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From the President

Dick Schoech

A Summary before the Election

I am writing this the weekend before the 2020 election. By now, you know the election results and have been thinking about their impact on our environment and sustainability for years to come. Thus, I will not speculate on the election but summarize my previous messages about COVID-19 and my speculations of “the new normal.” In reading my messages, I was surprised what we have been through and what needs to change. Note that the messages were written around a week before the month they were published in the *Post Oak*.

- My April *Post Oak* message was the first to cover COVID-19. It concerned the panic caused by stay-at-home orders and hotspots like New York. It noted cleaner air and less trash and praised the friendliness and selflessness people exhibited, especially first responders.
- The May message concerned anger and depression stemming from our inability to continue environmental work but also noted the opportunities our lifestyle change provided to get out alone or in small socially distanced groups to rediscover nature and the local history of Arlington. I stressed the need to reconsider our obsession with unsustainable growth in the number of people, things, activities and almost everything else.
- The July message echoed the protests and anger due to society's failures laid bare by COVID-19. Mentioned were the inequality of suffering inflicted by COVID-19 (1) in poorly regulated homes for the aged, (2) in poor and minority populations with limited access to nutritious food and healthcare, (3) on “essential workers” forced to toil in virus-plagued industries like slaughterhouses, and (4) on first responders who risk their lives for those infected. Our anger was aggravated by government bailouts given to the greedy and by the richest people making billions in the stock market. The need for diversity, especially biodiversity, was stressed in future environmental and sustainable efforts.
- The September message lamented the government's confusing messages and inaction as COVID-19 infections spiked throughout the country. The speculation was that COVID-19 would continue causing volatility and uncertainty because it was a subset of the larger global crisis of climate change.

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ACC POST OAK

Our mission: ACC works to protect Arlington's natural environment through education, community service and advocacy for a sustainable future

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P.O. Box 216
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John Darling, editor
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Contributors

John Blair, Bob Brennan,
Annabelle Corboy, Grace Darling,
John Darling, Carrie Donovan,
John Dycus, Ann Knudsen,
Carol Marcotte, Jan Miller,
Guy Random, Dick Schoech,
Michael Smith, Carrie Spencer,
Marylee Thomason

Proofreaders

Marian Hiler, Grace Darling

Deadline for submissions is the
15th of every preceding month.
Please send them to
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Bits & Pieces

The terse treehugger

More good stuff from UTA: Let's fill the parking garages with electric cars.

The sooner, the better.



visit us on the web
www.acctexas.org

Who Wants More Kale?



On page 16 you'll see an article on vegetable gardening that came to us out of the blue. It's full of helpful links but doesn't mention winter gardening in our area. Avid gardeners already know winter can be a productive season, but just in case you need an introduction, [here's a good one](#). And you will find [details on specific winter vegetables here](#).

Best 1-gallon Raffle Prize

Once upon a time, people gathered, listened to talks and occasionally won prizes like this blue mist flower that has spilled down a little slope. Lately it has been looking great and feeding butterflies. It came with helpful information scrawled on its pot, a former yogurt container. A pretty good deal for \$1.



Short-winged meadow katydid

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



Question Corner John Darling

Q: Hey, I just went to a spotless Norman Rockwell neighborhood where lawns were perfect and leafless. It was nice somehow; made me want to get home and start raking and blowing. Are you sure I shouldn't?

A: It's a perfect time to talk about this again. Only landscape companies, [Neil Sperry](#) and the [Dirt Doctor](#) want you to rake/blow your leaves. They and so many others want them off the lawn despite their value as over-wintering habitat for insects and other invertebrates, citing turf health and disease problems. They, like the overwhelming majority — if they consider it at all — make a distinction between what happens in natural areas and what happens around your house. Many of us who have drunk the native plant Kool-Aid choose to blur that difference in hopes of resisting the insect apocalypse that threatens to collapse natural systems everywhere. But don't take it from me, try [this](#) from Green Source DFW, or [this](#) from Audubon. I know, one leaf-filled lawn in a perfect neighborhood is asking for trouble. Do you stay and fight or move someplace a little rough around the edges? I don't do lifestyle questions. Next!

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Wild Birds Unlimited
1660 W. Randol Mill Rd.
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817-460-3856
Fax 817-583-6266

Mailing Address
1813 W. Tucker
Arlington, TX 76013
E-mail: schwettmammarvin@sbcglobal.net



Portfolio_Studio@yahoo.com
817.265.4441



3759 E. Lancaster St. Ft. Worth, TX 76105
Karen Foley 817-535-1152



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john@cdycus.com



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Law Office of SHANE GOETZ

1304 West Abram Street
Arlington, Texas 76013

shane@goetzlawtx.com

Local: 817-274-2905

Metro: 817-265-2902

Fax: 817-861-8909

www.shanegoetzlaw.com

Thanks A.C.C. for
working to conserve
Arlington's natural
resources.



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From the President continued from page 3

- The October message emphasized that many of our systems are failing us. Consequently, system change principles are needed like better goal setting, coalition building, measurement, and feedback on goal achievement. Also, ACC efforts should be flexible enough to take advantage of quickly rising opportunities. Two recent such opportunities were suggestions for native plantings around city hall and suggestions to improve the newly proposed tree ordinance. The need for ACC to adopt new rapid communication technologies was stressed.

So, it has been a tumultuous year. Next year we will need to deal with the visions that Americans chose in the current election along with COVID-19 and global warming, which will continue to impact our environment and sustainability. ACC has every intention of being a force in the changes and volatility that are coming.

CRINOIDS

It was a hot and dusty day
In central Kansas in the 50s
And Lake Santa Fe
Appeared like an ambitious puddle
In which the sailboats drifting by
Looked like bathtub toys.
We boys were in Geology.
Mr. Kaufman, tyrant teacher
As he seemed to us,
Had tasked us to retrieve
As many fossils from the limey soil
As we could find and pry.
Kansas was a sea of grass
And now a sea of wheat;
But 250 million years ago
A veritable sea extended here
And we walked upon a floor
Where tropic waters glimmered once.
Many possibilities exist
For residues of life
Within a Permian deposit;
So our hopes were high
As we clambered down the gulleys
Eroded from the earth below the spillway.
I think I was the first to spot them,
Tiny rings of chalky white
Embedded in the clay between the rocks
That lined the channel,



Washed there no doubt in floods
Off towering mountain slopes
That had vanished into penepains
Long before the dinosaurs decamped.
We grubbed them out by handfuls;
Fodder for our term reports,
Oddities to fill some cardboard boxes
With little labels on the sides.
It was hard to spy in these
The gently waving arms,
The curving cups on snaky stems
That crowded colonies
Feeding on the rich debris
Of life in a primordial soup.
But our unique ability, and fate,
Is to do just that, to picture
The invisible, flesh out a form
That hasn't been since time
Was only half begun, see
Our own end before it comes.
And our blessing, our reward –
Perceiving beauty, meaning,
In cold stone;
Courage in crumbling bones;
Lasting love in weak flesh
And God in a morning star.

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Trees, City Government and Us, Part 1: The Letter

The latest chapter of this long, sad story is a classic: Politically savvy developers and their allies vastly outnumber and outmaneuver the handful of people who desperately want to preserve the last remnants of Arlington's wooded land. In the next few pages we omit the complicated background and get right to the current situation. Last week our city council approved poor amendments to the tree ordinance, and ACC urged you to support that vote. Why? Because we have reason to anticipate future improvements. Why didn't they make it better this time? We just don't know.

Below is the letter that ACC sent to the mayor and city council members on your behalf.

continued on page 8

November 9, 2020

Dear Mayor Williams and Council Members:

As president of the Arlington Conservation Council I write with some urgency to ask that you adopt the proposed amendments to the city's landscape ordinance (UDC Sec. 5.2.3) as presented to the Environmental Task Force meeting on May 19, 2020 and published on the city's website: https://www.arlingtontx.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_14481062/File/City%20Hall/Depts/PDS/Land%20Development/Zoning/UDC/ETF_05192020_Tree_Preservation_and_Mitigation.pdf

Subsequent modifications to the amended ordinance were suggested by the developers' group and were aimed at watering down its effect. They have not been publicly discussed in open hearings; rather, they were only shared with the Developers' Round Table, Park Board, Citizens Environmental Committee, and Planning and Zoning Commission — the first representing a narrow special-interests group and the city boards populated by political appointees. This flawed notification process fails to pass the test of transparency and public involvement in government to which we must adhere.

The proposed amended ordinance is far from perfect: The bonus and prohibited plant lists are obsolete, the tree survey requirements are insufficient, and the point system of mitigation leaves a giant loophole for unscrupulous operators who would rather pay a modest fine than alter their plans to preserve desirable tree species.

Nevertheless, at this time **it is URGENT that council approve the published amendments of 5/19/20 without delay, to be effective immediately**, because several projects soon to be or currently being considered by the Planning and Development Dept. seek to take advantage of the lax existing ordinance, which offers virtually no protection for our dwindling urban canopy.

Please make sure this does not happen. Vote YES on the 5/19/20, ETF-approved, recommended amendments to UDC 5.2.3.

Arlington Conservation Council's members look forward to discussing enhancements to the proposed amended ordinance in an open forum.

Sincerely,

Richard Schoech, Ph.D.

Trees, Part 2: A Greener Ordinance continued from page 7

Also last week, city officials invited Grace Darling to seek input from environmentalists on amendments to the tree ordinance they could support. The catch: She was given about 32 hours to solicit comments and write them, a process that normally requires months. Whatever she produced would constitute feedback from the environmental community to be included in council information packets. After receiving nothing, Grace wrote a version that shrank from about seven pages to two and is much kinder to trees.

*That document appears on the next pages, but below is something you should read and act on. If you can support what we're calling the Green Arlington Foundation (GAF)-revised tree ordinance, **please tell the mayor and council members by this Tuesday morning, Nov. 17, at the latest.** A second vote will be taken at the council meeting Tuesday evening. This vote will affect our trees for years to come.*

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We need your help to save our trees.

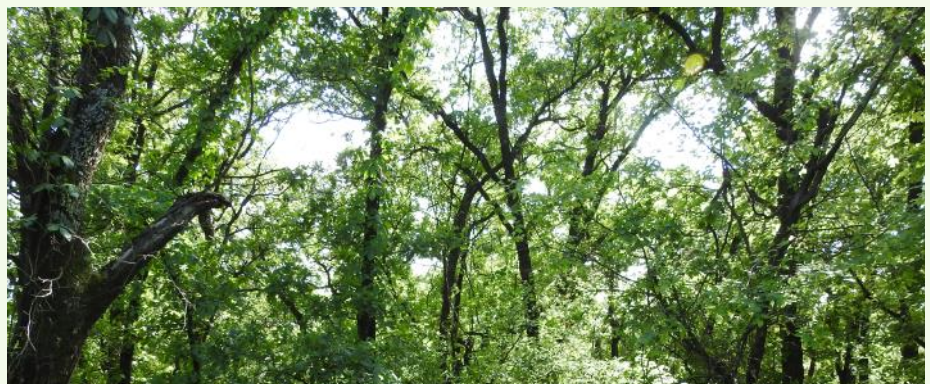
First, a bit of background: The version of the tree ordinance that council passed last week has been so watered down by developers that we felt it would certainly fail to protect our Cross-Timbers trees, the main reason for the re-do. After we protested the weak language and exclusion of the environmental community from the ordinance-drafting process, we were given the opportunity (and 32 hours) to submit our own version of a tree ordinance for Arlington — see next pages.

The document has been renamed "Tree Preservation and Mitigation" ordinance because it better reflects the fact that post oaks are irreplaceable. In addition, several other key species of our native ecosystem are not available commercially to fill the void of what we have lost and continue to lose daily.

We are told this greener version will be part of the council's packet, but to what end we do not know. At this point it stands as purely informational and a forlorn reminder of what might have been if only our city leaders were more focused on protecting our heritage trees than in appeasing developers.

Please let them know your frustration with the opaque process and disappointment with the outcome. And let's make sure that our voices are heard the next time an ordinance is drafted. Thank you.

Grace Darling
for Green Arlington Foundation
Making Arlington Greener



Trees, Part 3: GAF-revised Ordinance continued from page 8

Below are the amendments to the existing tree ordinance that Grace Darling wrote on behalf of Green Arlington Foundation. The language and technical details are required by the Unified Development Code.

5.2.3 TREE PRESERVATION AND MITIGATION

A Tree Preservation Requirements for Residential, Multi-family Residential, Non-residential, and Mixed-use Development

1. Purpose

The purpose of this clause is to protect heritage trees and significant trees within the city limits and to promote a sustainable urban tree canopy for our topography and climate, as recommended by American Forests.

2. Applicability

This section provides a methodology for tree removal and mitigation for all residential, multi-family residential, non-residential, and mixed-use development, including non-structural improvements such as parking lots, site layouts, landscape setbacks, and buffer yards.

3. Exceptions

The following are exempted from the tree point provisions of this section:

- a. Trees removed in a dedicated right-of-way, utility, and/or drainage easement by a public utility or contractor of a public utility, as recommended by the Citizens Environmental Committee and as authorized by the Planning and Development director;
- b. Property owned by the City of Arlington when performing maintenance and upkeep of the city's parks or when making improvements to the city's parks for nature trails, roads, or paths, as recommended by the Citizens Environmental Committee and as authorized by the Planning and Development director;
- c. A tree that impedes a public utility service or presents a hazard to the public after some natural event, such as a tornado; however, only that portion of a tree may be removed that is necessary to restore normal utility service or public safety; and only after notice to the Citizens Environmental Committee and authorization by the Planning and Development director;
- d. Diseased, dying, or dead trees as determined by the City Arborist and as recommended by the Citizens Environmental Committee and authorized by the Planning and Development director.

4. Compliance with Section

Compliance with this section shall be achieved when the number of tree points paid into the Tree Mitigation Fund equals or exceeds the number of points earned by injury or removal of any tree at any time during the project.

5. Tree Survey

- a. The applicant shall inventory the species and caliper inches of all trees on the site through an on-the-ground sampling or aerial canopy surveying technique, as recommended by the U.S. Forest Service. Clusters, significant stands, and tree nursery pockets of native vegetation should be clearly marked.

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Trees, Part 3 continued from page 9

- b. The tree survey is to be conducted by a certified arborist and the survey report will be verified by the City Arborist within 14 days.
- c. The goal shall be to preserve a minimum of 38 percent (38%) of the existing canopy for any given site.

6. **Tree Point Determination**

Tree points shall be awarded whenever trees six inches or greater ($\geq 6"$) DBH or oak species of any size are endangered or removed as part of the project.

One tree point shall equal one caliper inch. Fractions shall be rounded to the nearest one-half inch.

All oaks (*Quercus* spp.) are awarded three (3) points per caliper inch.

Other trees from the Texas Parks & Wildlife list of native Cross Timbers ecosystem species (Attachment A) shall earn one and one-half (1.5) points.

7. **Preservation**

The critical root zone (CRZ) of a tree is typically calculated as its diameter at 4-1/2 feet above ground times 12. For some oaks, the full root zone may extend 2 to 3X beyond the CRZ (UC Berkeley Forest Pathology and Mycology Lab). The CRZ must be protected from injury during site prep work, grading, and construction lest the tree(s) involved suffer irreparable damage. Any violation of the CRZ shall be deemed as destruction of the tree and fined accordingly.

8. **Mitigation**

Applicants will be assessed a fine for any tree that is injured or removed at any time during the project, including the planning stage, site preparation, during, and after construction. Fines will be commensurate with the trees' species and girth and shall be no less than \$200 per point earned. Payment shall be deposited into the Tree Mitigation Fund before commencement of any work on the project site. A stop order will be issued for non-payment of fine.

9. **Parking Reduction**

To promote the preservation of our native oaks, the Citizens Environmental Committee may recommend reduction of not more than ten percent (10%) of the number of required parking spaces for a site, to be approved by the Planning and Development director.

B. **Non-Developmental Tree Removal and Preservation**

1. **Tree Removal Permit**

Except as provided above under 5.2.3.-2., a permit shall be required for the removal of trees on property not otherwise subject to tree preservation and mitigation standards for residential or non-residential development.

Agricultural Tree Clearing

All open land converted to or developed for animal or crop production shall preserve a minimum of 38 percent (38%) of the existing total caliper inches as per 5.2.3.-3. and 5.2.3.-4. above.

Randol Mill Park Carol Marcotte



The annual National Night Out was Tuesday, Oct. 6. Neighbors of Randol Mill Park Estates celebrated this year by recognizing longtime ACC member Joanne Stewart. A park bench and plaque were installed by the city and Beverly Windsor to honor Joanne, who has been instrumental in community service to the park and to NORMP. A long drive-by parade including Fire Station #4 trucks and neighbors in decorated cars waved to Joanne as she sat on the bench that evening. The bench is made from some recycled materials. You can "Come Sit Awhile" on her bench, which is located along the sidewalk opposite the baseball fields parking lot.



SUNFLOWER

What joy transpires
Each time a sunflower
Drops its seeds!

A dry shell wrapped
Around an oily sliver
Hits the ground,

Then lies there, still,
Till something shields it,
Wets it, warms it.

Given those
Unguaranteed events
It comes alive.

A stem and leaves
Pop out one tip
And seek the sky;

A root creeps out
The other end
In quest of water.

Almost overnight
That seed
Becomes a plant,

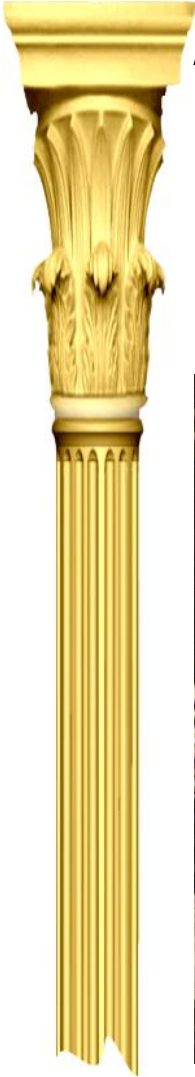
An inch at first, a foot,
Three, then towering six
Or even nine feet tall

And bursts with bloom,
All gold and brown
And radiant,

Sets new seed,
Repeats the miracle
Of life continued.

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Natural History



Arlington Environmental Hall of Fame

Worst monarch waystation that actually functions: Yes, we've all heard that even a small patch of the right plants can benefit migrating monarchs, but here's the ultimate, an old bucket containing bits of watermelon. This very casual waystation attracted a monarch devoid of esthetic sensibilities and helped the poor creature on its perilous journey. (Didn't I warn you this installment would be drenched in desperation? Maybe next time you'll listen and submit something better. You can do this; the bar is very low.)



Left. Best evidence so far that plant life arrived here on an angry wayward comet. Why? Just look; it's self-evident.

Right. Choose the best answer: a) Mother Nature has a nasty sense of humor. b) The word katydid comes from an obscure Swahili dialect that means "Don't eat me, I'm just another green leaf." c) Pink is actually **the dominant color** in this species. (The link is probably a clue.)

Photo by Ann Knudsen



How a Little Girl Made a City Park Carrie Donovan

This is part 2 of several articles about O.S. Gray Natural Area and the Friends of O.S. Gray Natural Area. October 2 was the 10th anniversary of both the park's dedication and the beginning of the Friends. I'm writing to tell how O.S. Gray Natural Area came to be.

In the last issue I explained how our daughter Annie's question, "Is this going to be a park?" inspired me to call Arlington Parks & Recreation Department for an answer. After Parks informed me of the 1997 park bond package coming up soon, we decided to pursue Annie's and our family's dream of saving the Norwood Lane property to become a park.

My husband and I knew that our next move was to start a grassroots effort to preserve one of the last wooded areas in central Arlington. We had to do something! Our family was passionate about spending time in nature and we didn't want our Greatest Adventure to disappear forever. My husband, three children and I went door to door with petitions to share our vision of a park in our neighborhood. Within a few days, with the help of our neighbors, we collected over 1,000 signatures supporting this dream. We'll never forget the neighbors who



showed up at our door to offer to make logos and signs, to pass out flyers and collect more petitions. Neighbors called offering to post signs in their front yards. It was a fun and exciting time for everyone. None of us knew each other before this effort. Neighboring businesses offered donations of supplies and refreshments in support of a future park. The Arlington Downs Townhouse community, which is located close by, opened their clubhouse for our neighborhood meetings. This enabled us to organize into a group called Neighbors for

Norwood. We wore green shirts, and we attended numerous meetings of the city council to give speeches to encourage members to include the former nursery in the 1997 Parks Bond package. Finally, after four months of attending meetings and visiting with council members and people from all over the city, we succeeded in getting our proposal into the bond package.

After that, our next big challenge was to help get the bond package passed. How in the world could we do that? After many hours of brainstorming, we came up with an idea — something fun and inclusive that would bring positive attention (and hopefully, votes) — and it wasn't the traditional way of promoting a bond package.

To be continued.



Blackland Prairie Site

Photos by Guy Random and Grace Darling



Feels just like early fall. A chaotic mix of thriving grasses, dried husks and a very few late-blooming forbs. Below left, a ladies'-tresses orchid.



Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason

It was a month of construction and destruction at the wildscape. Some plants were lovingly added, and others got ripped out by their roots. I trust that you will excuse these few meanderings that set the stage.

Twenty-three enthusiastic Master Naturalist interns came Oct. 10 for their tour. Guides Ann Knudsen, Carol Marcotte, Joe Martinez and Marylee Thomason showed off the rain gardens, the now replaced winter honey-suckle, photo opportunity area, bioswale, prairie, berm, upper and lower trails and donated hardscape features such as the pavilion and zig-zag bridge. The interns learned of volunteer days

and our educational programs for children like Walk on the Wildside.

But before all of this could happen, coordinator Ann welcomed everyone, extolling the virtues of hanging out in paradise. Making the event more memorable, ROTC students suddenly ran up the hill behind her, carrying a man on a stretcher and bags of what looked like cement. Molly Hollar almost deleted the picture we sent, thinking it a mistake. There couldn't be military in the wildscape! Ah, but the hills are just too inviting for cross country runners and ROTC recruits preparing for boot camp.

Intern MaryAnn brought a garbage bag and picked up trash and one treasure — a hand-printed note discovered under the No Horse Bridge. The message was intended for a searcher trying to rescue Spiderman's little brother: "Stamp your feet 3 times to awaken the evil troll." Don't you wish you were in on the game?

Nothing like hosting company to make you clean your house. Much scurrying about preceded the intern tour. Completion of the rain gardens made it to Almost on a Before and After scale. Everything was there except the plants. Still, you don't

continued on page 16



ROTC students run a "wounded" man on a stretcher up the hill.



Jane Oosterhuis, one of the hard-working rain garden planters. Others not pictured were Ann Knudsen, Joe Martinez, new volunteer Kevin and Marylee Thomason.



There goes another 30 feet of winter honeysuckle on the north rim.

Wildscape Update continued from page 15



Bev Crawford watering the desiccated plants along the sidewalk at the north end of the wildscape.



From left, Kevin with Eric Strickland holding the obstinate tree stump. "This is our story of roots."



Unofficial volunteers Jeff and James walking by with their disc golf buddies felt compelled to add a little heft. Their friends on the sidewalk laughed and called encouragement.

see rain gardens very often so these were informative. The newly cleared and replanted corner at the crossroads was almost complete, the winter honeysuckle totally replaced by elbow bush. More plants are coming.

It rarely pays to get a reputation for being good at something. Joe Martinez and Eric Strickland were so successful at digging out the first batch of winter honeysuckle that Ann asked them to tackle another large section. "Beasts," she called them, affectionately, for the speed and thoroughness of their work.

Welcome back, Bev Crawford! Bev had to quit her dream job at North Hi Mount Elementary as garden educator/STEM teacher/sustainability expert. Bev has two vulnerable people at home who can't afford for her to catch COVID-19.

Welcome back, Ramona Gratton, who had ear surgery to replace a bone that was not functioning. "I have lost plausible deniability," she said with a laugh. "I can't say to Terry, 'I didn't hear that' anymore."

And welcome, new volunteer Kevin. He showed up saying,

"I've had my morning constitutional, brought my gardening gloves, now put me to work." And we did! Kevin recently moved to Pantego, and his wife is planting a butterfly garden. We plied him with promises of seeds and plants and stuffed him with information.

Encouraging words (as always) from Molly Hollar: "Just saw Bev looking better than ever!! And Ann working hard as always. I really miss seeing all of my favorite people so the photos are the next best thing to being there with y'all!!" followed by multiple happy emojis.

Carpe COVID Grace Darling

Excerpted and annotated from The Economist, May 23-29, 2020, by Grace Darling

The COVID-19 disaster is not inherently climate-friendly, but the pandemic may well become a catalyst for a breakthrough on the environment. Neither the virus nor greenhouse gases care much for borders, making both scourges global. Both crises put the poor and vulnerable at greater risk than wealthy elites and demand government action on a scale hardly ever seen in peacetime. Sadly, neither calamity is getting the coordinated international response it deserves.

The two crises do not just resemble each other; they interact. Shutting down swathes of the economy has led to huge cuts in greenhouse-gas emissions [GGEs]. In the first week of April, daily emissions worldwide were 17% below what they were

last year. The International Energy Agency expects global industrial GGEs to be about 8% lower in 2020 than in 2019, the largest annual drop since World War II.

That drop reveals a crucial truth about the climate crisis. It is much too large to be solved by the abandonment of planes, trains and automobiles. Even if people endure huge changes in how they lead their lives, the world would still have more than 90% of the necessary decarbonization left to get on track with the Paris Agreement's goal of a climate only 1.5°C warmer than it was before the Industrial Revolution.

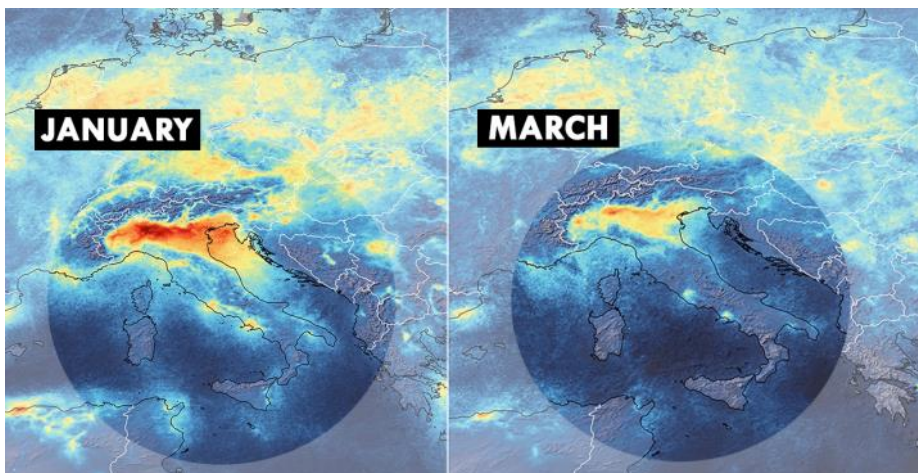
But the pandemic both reveals the size of the challenge ahead and also creates a unique chance to enact government policies that steer the economy away from carbon at a lower financial, social and political cost than it might otherwise. Rock-bottom energy



prices make it easier to cut subsidies for fossil fuels and to **introduce a tax on carbon.** The revenues from that tax over the next decade can help repair battered government finances.

Carbon-pricing schemes use the power of the market to incentivize consumers and businesses to cut their emissions, tipping the balance between two already-available technologies. In the past it was possible to argue that, although prices might promote an advantage for cleaner gas over dirtier coal, renewable technologies were too immature to benefit. But over the past decade the costs of wind and solar power have tumbled. A relatively small push from a carbon tax could give renewables a decisive advantage — one that would become permanent as wider deployment made them cheaper still.

A carbon tax is not as popular with politicians as it is with economists, which is why examples of its effectiveness are rare. But even before COVID-19 there were hints its time was



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Carpe COVID continued from page 17

coming — in Europe, China and America under a Biden administration. The proceeds from a carbon tax could raise over 1% of GDP early on, and this money could either be paid as a dividend to the public or to help lower government debt.

Yet carbon pricing by itself is unlikely to create a network of electric vehicle charging points, more nuclear power plants to underpin the cheap but intermittent electricity of renewables, programs to retrofit inefficient buildings, or technologies aimed at reducing emissions that simply cannot be electrified away. In these areas subsidies and direct government investment are needed to ensure that tomorrow's consumers and firms have the technologies a carbon tax will encourage.

The businesses at the heart of the fossil-fuel economy — oil and gas firms, steel producers, carmakers — are already going through the agony of shrinking their long-term capacity and employment. Getting economies back on their feet is a circumstance tailor-made for **investment in climate-friendly infrastructure** that boosts growth and creates new jobs.

Some governments have put their efforts into greening their COVID-19 bailouts, but it would be better to insist that governments NOT skew their bailouts toward fossil fuels, relax their environmental rules (the U.S.), or continue climate-damaging policies such as building coal-powered plants to support heavy industry (China).

COVID-19 has demonstrated that the foundations of prosperity are precarious. The harm from climate change will be slower than the pandemic's, but more massive and longer-lasting. If there was ever a moment for leaders to show bravery in heading off that disaster, this is it. Let's hope they are up to it.

It's Time to Pay Your Dues

Please make us bigger so we can be better.

ACC's size is important when voicing members' environmental interests and concerns to municipal policymakers on issues such as new gas wells.

Plus, it will just make you feel better to increase ACC's environmental voice in Arlington.

See the last page of this newsletter for information on submitting your 2021 dues.

Through with writing checks? You can now pay your dues via PayPal.

paypal.me/ACCtexas

The Trees Will Thank You

Grow a Garden that Will Keep You Happy & Harvesting Carrie Spencer

There's nothing quite like the feeling of plucking veggies right out of your backyard and using them in your favorite recipes. If you want to experience this feeling, you'll need a few insider tips and tricks to help your vegetable garden grow lush and strong. Instead of spending hours online looking for these top gardening hacks, have a look through the following resources.

Let's Get This Garden Party Started Right

Getting your garden off to a stellar start is your best chance at helping your plants thrive.

- [Choose a backyard location](#) that will provide your plants with the perfect amount of sun.
- Or [grow veggies in containers](#) if you live in an apartment and lack backyard space.
- Wherever you sow your seeds, also make sure that the soil is [healthy and nutrient-rich](#).
- You can [add earthworms to gardens](#) to nourish your plants without using chemicals.
- Consider putting a fence around your garden to keep pets out — it costs [around \\$2,800](#) on average to have one professionally built.

Now It's Time to Find the Perfect Plants

With a location scouted and your soil prepped, you're almost ready to start planting.

- Go for [low-maintenance vegetables](#), including carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes and bell peppers, if this is your first time growing a garden.
- Also, choose [quality companion plants](#) to ensure the best quality for your vegetables.
- [Certain herbs](#), like basil and tarragon, can also improve the flavor of your produce.
- You can also [plant companion flowers](#), including marigolds, to help repel pests.

It's Also Helpful to Pick Up a Few Tools

Be on the lookout for [tools and essentials](#) that will make tending to your garden easier.

- A [quality trowel](#) is a multipurpose tool you can use for planting, weeding and other tasks.
- Don't forget to buy a [pair of gloves](#) to protect your hands from cuts and blisters.
- There are [other essential tools](#) beginning gardeners can get to make the job easier.
- You can also treat yourself to some fun [gardening decor and gear](#) to spruce things up.

Finally, Let's Get to Work Growing a Garden

Once you've planted your vegetable garden, it's time for the tending.

- [Water your garden](#) at the right time of day and on the right schedule.
- Adding [some secret ingredients](#) to your garden could help your plants grow even bigger.
- You can ensure the best quality for your veggies and herbs with the [right harvest time](#).

So there you have it! Those are all of the tips, hacks and resources you need to grow a garden that will keep your cupboards and fridge stocked with fresh produce. Happy planting and harvesting!

Southwest Nature Preserve Annabelle Corboy, Jan Miller, Michael Smith

Friends of SWNP Events & Programs

Friends of SWNP events and programs are free and open to the public.

For more information about Southwest Nature Preserve and to sign up for email updates, see www.swnp.org or email info@swnp.org.

Friends meetings, programs and activities continue to be on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We miss you and hope we can see you in person soon. Take care!

7th Anniversary Celebration

To celebrate our 7th Anniversary on Saturday, Oct. 31, two Facebook Live events were presented, both nature walks presented by Jim Frisinger and his wife, Cathy.

#1 Microhabitats atop Kennedale Mountain

#2 Fall changes at the Caddo Oak and Yucca Meadow areas

If you missed the live presentations, the videos are still available on our [Facebook](#) page.

Photo by Bob Brennan



Fall is for Planting at the Pollinator Meadow

We're trying something different this Fall: on Oct. 24, volunteers loaded, transported and spread clean, native hardwood mulch to several "starter plots" around the Pollinator Meadow. Rains fell the following week, soaking the mulch in and now they're ready for seeding wildflowers. So, could you help sow seeds?

It's a natural for a socially distanced activity and we'll plan for a Saturday. Please watch for a date/time on Facebook and by email (sign up with a request to info@swnp.org).

iNaturalist Report

297 observations (research grade)

153 species

16 observers

NOTE: Our Friends of SWNP website is temporarily down. If you have any questions about SWNP or our activities, contact us by email. Thank you!

Photo by Bob Brennan



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Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 20

SW Snapshots



Mini-tour personnel from left, guide Jim Frisinger, videographer Cathy Frisinger, crew Sami and Paul.



Flameleaf sumac



Heart sepal wild buckwheat, Eriogonum multiflorum, with Glen Rose yucca, Y. necopina)



Socially distanced members of Arlington Garden Club on a recent tour.



Big bluestem or turkeyfoot, Andropogon gerardii



Hackberry emperor, Asterocampa celtis

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Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 21

Nature's Gifts

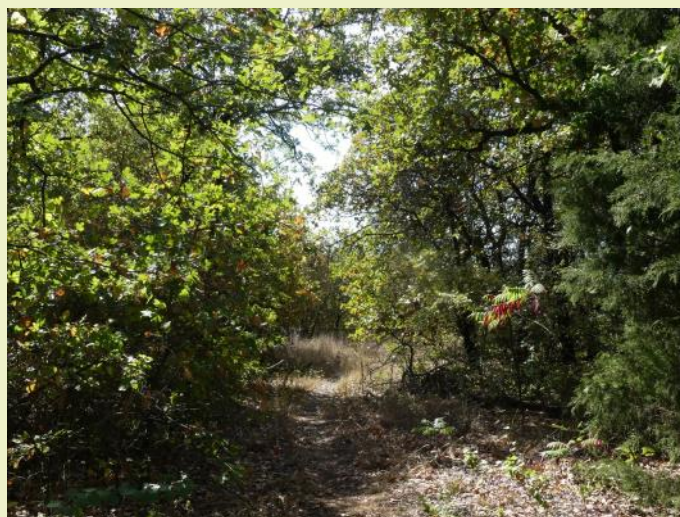
Michael Smith

No matter what happens, nature is there for us. No matter what uncertainties we face, the land, water, trees and wildlife remain steadfast. Sure, nature is a complex system that constantly shifts and accommodates, and so it would be silly to say that it never changes. However, as the life-giving network that supports us, that home to which a part of us is always drawn, in that way it is unchanging. There could hardly be a greater blessing than that, especially when we want an anchor of calm and safety.

Luckily there is a natural community near my house where remnants of the Eastern Cross Timbers still hang on in oak woodlands, little patches of native grass and ponds. There are times when I feel almost like I live at Southwest Nature Preserve, and those are happy times.

No matter what is going on in the wider world, I can lose myself just a little as I walk those simple trails that lead through blackjack oak and juniper, through stands of sumac that turn the brightest red in late autumn. There are places where you can claim a little solitude as the trail closes in and the sheltering woods hold you and comfort you.

The bigger picture of ponds, wooded hillsides and sky is beautiful, but by long experience and training, my eyes tend to seek out the little things, hidden treasures that make each walk a new experience. The north pond may have a great blue heron hunting along the shore, or a pair of mallards paddling around and dabbling in the shallows, but looking as if



A trail through the woodlands



with a close-up lens, there is more to see. Along the edge of the water, Blanchard's cricket frogs sit camouflaged in the sunshine, ambushing tiny invertebrates for lunch. My steps may scatter close to a dozen little frogs that disappear with long leaps into the water or under the vegetation.

Blanchard's cricket frog

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Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 22

All the ponds have their resident turtles, a few river cooters but mostly red-eared sliders. Any branch or stump that sticks up above the water is a popular place for sunning, for big females with yellow and green stripes and bright red patches at the back of their heads, as well as for the dark “old men,” male sliders that have become melanistic.

This year more than ever, I treasure each walk as a respite from the world. Perhaps most of us can relate to the words of the poet Wendell Berry in his poem, “The Peace of Wild Things” as he speaks of the “despair for the world” growing in him. At a nearby wetland he comes “into the peace of wild things, who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.” The difficulties of the world are hard enough without anticipating them, turning them over in our minds and rehearsing the ways that they could play out. We all need a few hours to walk along the pond, staying in the present moment with turtles and herons. With Wendell Berry, we can say that “for a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.”



Juvenile red-eared slider



Poison ivy, turning beautiful colors in autumn sunlight

Michael Smith is a writer and blogger living in Arlington. His second book, *The Wild Lives of Reptiles and Amphibians*, has just been published by Texas A&M University Press.

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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First-year member \$10

Address _____

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Phone _____

Supporting \$40

Renewing member ☐

Email _____

Sponsor \$100

Lifetime Individual \$250

Other \$ _____

How did you hear about us? _____

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P.O. Box 216
Arlington, TX 76004-0216

