

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 5

JUNE 2021



**JIM FRISINGER OBSERVES YUCCA MOTHS AT SOUTHWEST NATURE PRESERVE ON MAY 14
PHOTO BY JAN MILLER**

June Zoom Meeting Dallas Comprehensive Environmental & Climate Action Plan

Susan Alvarez,

Assistant Director of the Dallas Office of Environmental Quality & Sustainability

Wednesday, June 2, 6:30 p.m.



**The newsletter is too late for this excellent meeting,
but you can still watch the recording at**

<http://www.acctexas.org/meetings/>

Contents

- 3 From the President
- 4 Bits & Pieces
- 5 Question Corner
- 7 Randol Mill Park
- 8 Poetry +
- 9 Our Venomous Snakes, Part 1
- 13 Blackland Prairie Site
- 14 Milkweeds: Green vs Antelope Horns
- 19 Molly Hollar Wildscape Update
- 21 In Case You Missed It
- 23 Southwest Nature Preserve
- 27 From the Chronicles of Indiana Querido



From the President

Dick Schoech

Susan Alvarez, ACC's June speaker on Dallas's Climate Action Plan, illustrated an approach that is a win for citizens and for nature.¹ The three-year effort was built with the input of multiple citizen groups, resulting in actions that have strong community support. The process includes a guiding coalition of activists, concrete benchmarks and progress reports from subcommittees.

It's a win for nature because it will help Dallas make the tough decisions for soliciting funds that will be available as the climate heats up faster than most projected. The plan embodies a coordinated, self-correcting system of motivated people and actions. However, it might not be very efficient due to all the time and people involved.

Compare the plan's process and design to that of the Texas energy grid, which failed mid-February. While details about the grid collapse are difficult to verify (system-wide data are not available), estimates are that more than 4.5 million homes and businesses lost power and about 200 people died due to the failure.^{2,3} Texas's standalone grid is an uncoordinated group of agencies and producers designed to produce energy for profit rather than to function effectively, even during record cold or heat when electricity is needed most.

In February several key elements failed and brought the grid close to a complete collapse. With no one in control, everyone began blaming each other as rumors flew. Even the governor knowingly spread false information about what was happening.⁴ Fixing the Texas energy grid has proven very difficult, as the recently ended Texas legislative session illustrated.

Addressing climate change was the second priority voted on by ACC members at our January 2021 annual meeting. Arlington has not set in motion a process to address climate change. It has a choice: Continue to ignore the problem or begin the long-term effort needed for an effective plan. I suspect that Arlington citizens are more than ready for the process to begin and that they want a workable plan process rather than one that lacks the support and mobilization of residents.

continued on page 6



ACC POST OAK

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

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

John Darling, editor
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Contributors

John Blair, Carol Leonardi Clark,
Annabelle Corboy, John Darling,
Grace Darling, John Dycus,
Jim Frisinger, Ann Knudsen,
Carol Marcotte, Jan Miller,
Indiana Querido, Guy Random,
Dick Schoech, Michael Smith,
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

We talked about this already.
Now somebody's escalating.
Not just plastic leaves tossed in with
real ones.
This stuff is sitting in pretty good dirt.
Nature deficit meltdown.



visit us on the web
www.acctexas.org

Can of Worms



On one hand, kind-hearted people
helping feral cats through a hard life.
On the other, encouraging an
invasive predator. What to do? The
other day a cat raced directly from
feeding here to grab a fledgling
mockingbird. Okay, just an ancient
reflex, but the mockingbird didn't
survive.

And what about the hangers-on?
Starlings, house sparrows, and
grackles eat and bathe here. And rats
at night. Really, what to do?



Hairy sunflower

Mighty Mosses

Easy to overlook: This patch of moss
is thriving in a damp part of a black
gravel bed laid over weed block. No
true roots and no plumbing to move
water and food up and down. No
wonder they're, uh, not very tall. But
no matter, we see moss fossils from
320 million years ago; they were the
first plants to invade land; they
decompose their substrate and make
oxygen. That's plenty.



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



Question Corner John Darling

Q: Lately you have been coming up with more questions than answers. Here's a chance for you to settle down and just answer: Three days in a row I saw a brown thrasher at a puddle in a gravel road through a big mowed lot. When I approached, it dashed into a hedge of red-tipped photinias. There's only more grass and a few pecan trees on the far side. I know this thrasher from dense forests around the Pearl River, and it looks all wrong for this bird to be out in the open, especially in such a sterile area. What's going on?

A: (Note: Make up a better imaginary questioner next month.) As it happens, I also know this species from

continued on page 12



The *Post Oak* will not knowingly accept sponsors who are deceptive, misleading, or expressly incompatible with its mission. The *Post Oak* does not endorse, advocate, or guarantee any offer, viewpoint or representation made by its sponsors.



Wild Birds Unlimited
1660 W. Randol Mill Rd.
Arlington, TX 76012
(817) 275-1000
www.wbu.com/arlintonx
Hours 10 - 6 Mon - Fri,
9 - 6 Sat, 12 - 5 Sun



Common yarrow

GOOD WORK. ON TIME.

John DYCUS

3607 Shady Park Drive
Arlington, TX 76013
(817) 277-2138
john@jcdycus.com

Remodeling General Contracting

SCHWETTMANN CONSTRUCTION CO.

Marvin Schwettmann Cell 817-229-6688
Brian Schwettmann Cell 817-475-9201
Lynn Schwettmann Cell 817-988-7078

Shop 3646 Garner Mailing Address
Pantego, TX 76013 1813 W. Tucker
817-460-3856 Arlington, TX 76013
Fax 817-583-6266 E-mail: schwettmamravin@sbcglobal.net

Paul Krudsen's
ArlingtonNOW.com
Event Photography

Portfolio_Studio@yahoo.com
817.265.4441

Herb 'n Health
Natural Foods Market & Herb Shoppe

3759 E. Lancaster St. Ft. Worth, TX 76103
Karen Foley 817-535-1152

DAN HILER
817 460-TREE

ARBOR
TREE SERVICE INC

PRUNING REMOVAL FREE BIDS

Law Office of
SHANE GOETZ

3705 N Shadycreek Dr
Arlington, TX 76013
shane@goetzlawtx.com

817-265-2902
Fax: 817-549-4438

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

mima

civil engineering surveying landscape architecture planning
mimatexas.com
817-489-1671

From the President continued from page 3

While we wait for Arlington to act on climate change, residents can take many small actions to address this issue, including:

Weatherize your home.

- It's a win for humans because a little inexpensive weather stripping and caulk can keep unwanted weather and critters out and save you money.
- It's a win for nature because using less energy helps mitigate climate change.
- You can take two simple weatherization steps before the Texas summer heat arrives:
 - ♦ At night, shine a strong flashlight around doors, windows, fireplace, etc., and have someone on the opposite side look for light. This will reveal places where caulk, weather stripping, or other improvements can benefit you and the planet.
 - ♦ Schedule a heater/air conditioner blower door test, which costs around \$100 and is sometimes offered free. A specialist will seal your vents and then run your heater/AC fan to pressurize your system with smoky air to find leaks. This is especially important for older homes. The test on my house revealed major leaks that I was glad I fixed before the February deep freeze.
- Google "what individuals can do to reduce climate change" or go to <https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/weatherize> for many good suggestions.

Buy shade grown and fair-traded coffee.

- It's a win for humans because it allows coffee farmers to earn a livable wage in forested areas, thus lessening migration to cities and reducing our immigration problems.
- It's a win for the planet because forests sequester carbon and help cool the planet.

References

1. The link to a video of Susan's presentation is available at <http://www.acctexas.org/meetings/>
2. <https://www.jhunewsletter.com/article/2021/03/why-did-the-texas-power-grids-fail>
3. <https://www.texasstandard.org/stories/nearly-200-people-died-in-februarys-winter-storm-double-the-states-initial-estimate/>
4. <https://www.texastribune.org/2021/02/17/abbott-republicans-green-energy/>



Randol Mill Park Carol Marcotte

A HUGE shout out to Patsy Miller, Tarrant County Master Gardener, who graciously gave 23 pecans, 24 bald cypresses, 24 lacey oaks, and 18 lacebark elms to Arlington Conservation Council to plant in Randol Mill Park. These trees were in gallon pots and approximately 2 years old, increasing their chances of survival.

Carol Marcotte, Wayne Halliburton, and Dick Schoech planted most of those donated trees in Randol Mill Park. We decided not to plant the lacebark elms because they are not native, although they have been in the U.S. since 1794. However, Dick found good homes for them. Thank you, Patsy Miller and Tarrant County Master Gardeners!

Much to my surprise, the pond at Randol Mill Park has catfish! This fisherman caught one of the bottom feeders, and because it appeared to be pregnant, he was going to release it. So what kind of catfish is this? We know that Texas Parks & Wildlife stocked our pond with channel catfish in 2014, but the unforked tail means this is something different. Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge Director Rob Denkhaus thought it could be a yellow bullhead, but the photo doesn't show everything needed for a positive identification.

From Dick Schoech: An algal bloom in the pond. The green scum could have developed with warmer temperatures plus recent heavy rains bringing in lawn fertilizer. Blooms like this can reduce the pond's oxygen, produce toxic chemicals, and kill other aquatic creatures. That's a big argument for cutting way down on lawn fertilizer.



Poetry +

WHEN A GNAT DIES

When a gnat dies
The universe is moved
As much as it will be
For me.

Life is life;
Size does not matter
When we calculate
Its worth.

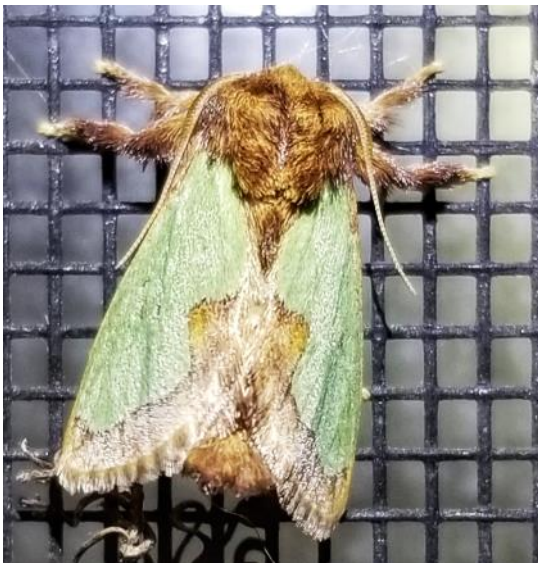
That life exists
And continues to exist
Eon after eon
Is the miracle

I've come to hold
As necessary
To the cosmos
As the cosmos is to life.

©2018 John I. Blair,
8/19/2018

Sad Tree Update

The Arlington Environmental Hall of Shame couldn't make it this month. It's washing its hair or something. But here's how last month's butchered live oak is faring. Not dead, but it doesn't look quite right. More as this story develops.



A couple of May
moths, just because
they are pretty much
adorable:

Left, Green oak slug
moth

Right, Forest tent
caterpillar moth



Our Venomous Snakes, Part 1 Michael Smith

Avoiding Encounters, and Enjoying Them When They Do Occur

It is spring, and now we've had rain, and so the abundance of life is particularly evident. People are reporting wildlife sightings everywhere, including plenty of snake encounters posted to social media. Some reflect delight and appreciation, or even boasting about lucky finds in exactly the way a birder would report a new "lifer." Others are nervous pleas to identify a photograph of a snake that is feared to be a threat to the lives of humans and pets.

Venomous snakebite is an uncommon event in the U.S., although it is a potentially very serious medical emergency when it does occur. Cases of venomous snakebite from ten states were reported to the North American Snakebite Registry for three years from 2013 through 2015.¹ Most of the 450 cases were from Arizona and Texas, and 19% of the bites resulted from intentional interactions (with captive snakes, showing off, attempting to kill the snake, etc.). Almost all the bites came from pit vipers – rattlesnakes, copperheads, and cottonmouths. Only three coralsnake bites were reported. There were no deaths among these 450 cases.



*Western diamond-backed rattlesnake
from near Austin*

The small field guide by Andy Price, *Venomous Snakes of Texas*,² includes a table showing annual deaths in Texas from 1997 to 2005. Most years there were no deaths from snakebite, and only five deaths were reported for those nine years. Deaths from venomous arthropods (spiders, wasps, etc.) far outnumbered those from snakebite. If you are interested in, or worried about, Texas's venomous snakes, get this guide. Price discusses how venom works, what to do in case of snakebite, and he provides information about where each one is found, what its habits are, and what it looks like.

Alternately, you can download my pdf guide to venomous snakes in North Texas.³



*A Texas coralsnake seen in the Piney
Woods*

Coralsnakes are often thought of as among our more deadly snakes, but a 2009 article in *Toxicon* reported the first U.S. death from coralsnake bite in over 40 years.⁴ It is also instructive to note that this death occurred when some men who had been drinking discovered the snake, captured it, and then tried to kill it. The person who died used a broken beer bottle to try to stab the snake, was bitten, and then did not pursue treatment. Unfortunately, carelessness, attempts to kill the snake, and failure to seek treatment were pivotal factors in this man's death.

The point of all this is to say that venomous snakebite — especially the risk of dying from one — is low among the risks we face in daily life. The majority of snakes in Texas are nonvenomous, and all of them (venomous or nonvenomous) want nothing to do with us. Great care must be taken when we encounter a venomous snake, and that is the subject of the rest of this article.

Someone whose position about snakes is generally "live and let live" may still believe that a snake near their house must be killed in order to prevent future encounters. It is hard to argue with someone who says "if I find a

continued on page 10

Our Venomous Snakes, Part 1 continued from page 9

rattlesnake in my yard, I'm killing it." Nevertheless, I'm going to attempt that argument, not because I value snakes over people, but because I think there's a better solution. Let's look at the points in my argument:

- A. If you live in an area where snakes show up from time to time, then killing *that* snake creates an opening for another snake to move in. If you live in an area that has recently been cleared for homes to be built, or if your house adjoins "wild" property, chances are that that will not be the last snake you see. What if you sprayed the snake with a garden hose from a safe distance, frightening it and running it off your property? Snakes learn about their surroundings, and that snake may learn that people and houses are scary and it's best to stay away.
- B. By the way, when threatened by a human, a snake experiences fear and agitation — it may look "mad" but it is really frightened; it will not hold a grudge and go on the offensive if it sees you again.
- C. Do you have loose items stacked outside your house, wood piles, or an old shed with a space underneath it? A wandering snake will think of

these as shelter and a place to hunt a mouse or lizard to eat, and it may settle in and stay a while. You can minimize encounters with snakes by clearing out these items.

- D. The most dangerous encounter with a venomous snake is the one that you stumble into, unprepared and unaware. That happens when people walk barefoot at night in places where a snake might show up. It also happens when people reach down with bare hands to pick things up without being able to see what's nearby. Better to use a stick or a tool to probe around the hidden nooks before putting your hand there. The same principle applies when you are hiking or camping — watch where you step or put your hands.
- E. Many snakebites occur when someone tries to kill the snake. You may be more careful and better organized than the guy who tried to kill the coralsnake with a beer bottle, but you are still going to have to get close to the snake. As you attack it, the snake will make frantic attempts to defend itself or get away, and this is a high-likelihood situation for you to be bitten.

You may or may not be convinced, but I think the best strategy is to prevent snake encounters around the house and to safely frighten away any unwanted snakes that you find. There's one additional thing: snake "repellents" are not going to help. Wishful thinking and good salesmanship sell a lot of bags of stuff based on ingredients similar to mothballs or some other chemical scent-based substance. One snake control company in Arizona posts photos of rattlesnakes it finds resting on top of the stuff or sheltering behind a bag of it.⁵ That speaks volumes about the effectiveness of the product.

What about the naturalists and wildlife-watchers among us? What if we find a snake and want to watch it or photograph it — can that safely be done? The answer is "yes," and it depends on our dispelling the myth that venomous snakes chase people. I don't mean to insult folks who came across a rattlesnake that crawled toward them in a way that looked like it was chasing them. That has happened to a friend, actually, but a lifetime of experience and study tells me that he was just in the way of a snake trying to escape to safety. I describe this encounter in *Herping Texas*⁶ and I will retell it here.

continued on page 11

Our Venomous Snakes, Part 1 continued from page 10



A western massasauga like the one Steve and I saw

My friend Steve and I found a massasauga rattlesnake one night years ago, and we crouched around the snake to admire it. The snake was still as a statue, probably confused by our lights and hoping we would pass on by. I wanted to see it in a different position and so I touched the snake with my snake hook. At that point, convinced that hiding had failed and it was now under attack, the little rattlesnake flew into action, coming straight at Steve. That caused Steve to fly into action as well, practically back-flipping out of the way. The snake kept on going, past us and into the roadside vegetation. That's all it was – no attack, just a blind attempt to get away. However, when something like that happens, the natural assumption people make is that the snake was attacking or chasing.

With that in mind, let's think about how you can safely observe a snake. When you first spot it, think about how close you are and what it is doing. If the snake is very close, check your footing



A northern cottonmouth, another venomous snake that will not chase you

and step away or to the side until you're about ten feet away. If the snake is moving, don't get in its way and remain still so that you can watch what it does. You may get a great opportunity to observe how the snake's amazing body moves among rocks and branches, or see it swim (a beautiful display of graceful curves). From a safe distance, it doesn't matter if you are able to identify it, because even if it is venomous it cannot hurt you from ten feet away. If the snake moves in your direction, remember that this is a navigation error on the snake's part and move out of the way.

I do not mean to suggest to anyone that venomous snakes are no big deal. Just as these snakes are not "mean" or "bad," they are



A broad-banded copperhead from Wise County

also not "friendly" and they do not know if our intentions are benign. They are simply wildlife – fascinating, often beautiful, and potentially quite dangerous if we don't keep our distance. What I have learned is to respect them without undue fear and to understand their habits well enough to watch them in the field without incident.

Part 2 will appear in the next issue. It will cover venomous snakebite and what to do (and not do!) if you are bitten.

¹Ruha, A., Kleinschmidt, K.C., Greene, S., Spyres, M.B., Brent, J., Wax, P., Padilla-Jones, A., & S. Campleman. 2017. The Epidemiology, Clinical Course, and Management of Snakebites in the North American Snakebite Registry. *Journal of Medical Toxicology*, 13:309-320.

²Price, A.H. 2009. *Venomous Snakes of Texas: A Field Guide*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

³Smith, M.A. *An Identification Guide to Venomous Snakes of North Texas*. [Online here](#) (accessed 5/30/21)

⁴Norris, R.L., Pfalzgraf, R.R., & G. Laing. 2009. Death following coral snake bite in the United States – First documented case (with ELISA confirmation of envenomation) in over 40 years. *Toxicon*, 53, 693-697.

⁵Rattlesnake Solutions. Do Snake Repellents Work? [Online here](#) (accessed 5/29/21)

⁶Smith, M.A. & C.R. King. 2018. *Herping Texas: The Quest for Reptiles and Amphibians*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.

Question Corner continued from page 5

along the Pearl River — just a strange coincidence — and it was always skulking in heavy brush. In fact, Cornell's [All About Birds](#) web site mentions “a tangled mass of shrubbery,” “dense cover,” and “tangled thickets, hedgerows or forest edges” as habitat.

It would be easiest to say that the puddle is the bird's best water source, so it was leaving preferred habitat just long enough to drink. In a Kentucky study, the core area of the brown thrasher's home range was very roughly four acres. If the home ranges of local thrashers are comparable, your bird's home must include enough brushy areas to support its normal feeding and nesting needs or it wouldn't be there at this time of year.



Speaking of range in the larger sense, we appear to be more or less at the edge of the brown thrasher's permanent and winter range. That is, our permanent residents are joined in winter by birds from farther north. Some northern individuals even leave the breeding range altogether and winter as far south as Central Texas.

As a side note for all the native plant enthusiasts, [that Kentucky study](#) was focused on possible effects of non-native plants on bird decline. The authors found a disproportionate use of alien bush honeysuckle by brown thrashers for nesting. They noted that the birds are likely to forage in other areas because bush honeysuckle produces a barren understory, presumably containing a reduced population of invertebrate prey items. In order to aid thrasher nesting efforts, the investigators recommend planting appropriate native shrubs before any large-scale removal of bush honeysuckle. They sound like pretty good investigators.



Blackland Prairie Site Guy Random



It's nearing late May, and green has taken over. Still no rush of striking flowers, rather a slow-motion procession of succession: a few fading, some coming on, and others just wonderful.



Milkweeds: Green vs Antelope Horns Carol Leonardi Clark

Each spring I am asked to referee spirited online arguments about what kind of milkweed someone is looking at in Texas or Oklahoma, and the arguments usually center around two kinds of milkweeds that are closely related. Both are in the genus *Asclepias*, the genus for all true milkweeds. Why me? Because I am a Monarch Watch Conservation Specialist and work with Texas milkweeds a lot. Each year I spend several hundred hours visiting, harvesting seed from, and cleaning the seed of these two species, so to me they are like old friends with distinctly different qualities and personalities, and they are fairly easy to tell apart.

First let's settle the issue of common names — at least temporarily — long enough to write about the plants. I am going to call *Asclepias viridis* “Green Milkweed.” Why? First, because it is a literal translation of the

formal name of the plant, so it makes sense. Second, because all other common names for this plant are either used for other plants, too, or are so close to sounding like something else that they lead to a lot of confusion. Third, because the plant truly is green or greenish from top to bottom, so it fits. I particularly dislike using “Green Antelope Horns Milkweed” for this plant because it invariably leads to confusion with its cousin.

I'm going to call *Asclepias asperula* “Antelope Horns Milkweed.” Just that, and yes, it has many common names, but this is the one I hear for it most often across Texas, so this is what I'll use. Furthermore, I choose to capitalize common names because I think it helps clear up confusion. One of the common names for *Asclepias viridis* is “Green Antelope Horns”. If I chose to use that and not capitalize it, just printing “green antelope horns,” you

would no longer be able to tell if I meant Antelope Horns plants that are green at the time, or Green Antelope Horns plants.

What follows is an attempt to outline the distinguishing features of the two plants, to help you all tell them apart.

Shape

Green Milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*) The overall shape for a mature plant is multiple stems ascending into a V or vase shape from a central point. It grows taller in Texas than in Kansas, and I've seen some particularly happy plants that were over two feet tall.

Antelope Horns Milkweed (*Asclepias asperula*) The overall shape for a mature plant in full sun is sprawling with multiple stems radiating out in a circle from a central point. Some lie very close to the ground, but those getting less than full sun

continued on page 15



Green Milkweed, *Asclepias viridis*



Antelope Horns Milkweed, *Asclepias asperula*



Green Milkweed in the wild

Milkweeds continued from page 14



Antelope Horns Milkweed in the wild

may be a bit taller and more upright. Where they grow together, it is never as tall as Green Milkweed.

Roots

Both *Asclepias viridis* and *Asclepias asperula* have very similar long taproots, enabling both species to grow in the same spot for decades. They don't spread via underground runners, and don't form colonies.

Leaves

Green Milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*) The leaves are usually blunt ovals in most of the eastern half of Texas. However, there is some leaf variation. Local populations and individuals in



Blunt, oval leaves of Green Milkweed



Long, starchy taproots, Green Milkweed

other populations may have considerably more narrow and pointed leaves that can make it resemble Antelope Horns Milkweed. Leaf shape is reliable if they are oval, but not if they are narrow and pointed. Leaves are randomly arranged, mostly alternate on the stem, but occasionally opposite. In person, the leaves are somewhat shiny and feel smooth and flexible. Under magnification, especially on new leaves, short soft hairs will show.

Antelope Horns Milkweed (*Asclepias asperula*) The leaves are always (watch someone find an exception now that I've said that!) lance shaped. They can be fairly narrow or very narrow, and



Green Milkweed leaves showing fine hairs on both surfaces of young leaves

always pointed at the tips. As far as I know, leaf variation is minimal, and Antelope Horns will not have wide oval leaves that resemble a typical Green Milkweed. Leaves are randomly arranged, mostly alternate on the stem, but occasionally opposite or even whorled. In person, the leaves have a matte finish to them, a stiff feel, and feel rough to the touch. Under magnification tiny nubs of fiber dot the leaves, but they are not as long or soft as the Green Milkweed fibers.

continued on page 16



Lance-shaped leaves of Antelope Horns Milkweed



Sparse, stubby hairs on back of Antelope Horns Milkweed leaf

Milkweeds continued from page 15

Buds

Green Milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*) The buds are inflated with five soft “ribs”, at least as tall as they are wide, and sort of balloon-like, with a rounded top. The buds are glossy. Just before they open, you may see a pentagonal hole at the center.

Antelope Horns Milkweed (*Asclepias asperula*) The buds are distinctly star-shaped and flattened on the top. They are wider than they are tall, and do not have the inflated look of their cousin species. The buds have a pebbled matte finish, and just before they open, you may see

five narrow slits radiating from the center on the top surface of the bud.

Flowers

Green Milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*) Flowers are held in loose irregularly shaped clusters with an overall cream, to yellow, to bright pale green coloration. The coloration of the petals and the placement of color on the “hoods” varies. The hoods that surround the center of the flower spread sideways before turning up, are lavender for most of their length, and may show lavender and white stripes towards their tips. Sometimes the bulbous tip of the

hood is completely white, and other times it is lavender. The hoods do not extend as far as the edges of the circle made by the petals. They stop noticeably short of that perimeter.



Green Milkweed flowers



Green Milkweed flower with pollen packet lodged in center and short lavender hoods



Green Milkweed buds, shiny and tall, with rounded tops



Green Milkweed buds about to bloom, showing pentagonal hole in center



Antelope Horns Milkweed buds, flattened and star-shaped



Antelope Horns Milkweed buds with radial slits just before blooming

Antelope Horns Milkweed (*Asclepias asperula*)

By contrast, flowers are held in very organized spherical or hemispherical clusters – so organized that the flowers fit closely together and the overall effect is a 3-D tessellated shape. Coloration of the petals is again from cream through yellow to

continued on page 17

Milkweeds continued from page 16



Antelope Horns Milkweed showing the tight, organized flower head



Antelope Horns Milkweed flowers, with maroon and white hoods reaching to the edges

light green. The hoods around the center of the flower spread wider and flatter than those of the Green Milkweed. Their tips extend all the way to the edge of the circle made by the open petals. The hood coloration is maroon and white, typically with less colored area than the Green Milkweed hoods.

In your location you may see color combinations in the flowers of both species that make you wonder which they are, but the shape of the flower clusters and the position of the hoods should still work.

Habitat and Range

Green Milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*) This plant is fairly flexible in its soil and moisture needs, growing in sandy soils, well-drained rocky soils, and deep moisture-holding clay soils. It grows in drainage ditches that flood occasionally and also in shallow poor soils over cracked chalk rock. Typically, it is happiest out in a pasture or in a prairie in full sun, but it will even tolerate part shade. It will bloom best with plenty of sun. It grows tall enough to coexist with taller prairie grasses. Its range includes most of the eastern two-thirds of Texas.

Antelope Horns Milkweed (*Asclepias asperula*) This plant is considerably fussier about light

and moisture in my experience. It really prefers a hot full sun location with well-drained soils. Out in the wild in North Central Texas, I find it most often on very well-drained sites, frequently growing right out of cracked chalk rock or very shallow soils over rock. Rich moisture-holding soils and “wet feet” over the cold winter may cause this plant to decline or die. Its lower growth habit makes it ideal for low-competition sites, where the soil and moisture conditions don’t allow larger grasses and plants to thrive. Its range includes most of the western two-thirds of Texas with extensions into some eastern areas as well.

continued on page 18



Green Milkweed with mixed grasses in the wild

Milkweeds continued from page 17



*Antelope Horns
Milkweed growing
out of cracked
limestone in the wild*

It's not uncommon to find both milkweeds within a few feet of each other on a prairie or pasture site in North Central Texas where their ranges overlap.

By now you're ready to pull out your old photos and figure out which of these two wonderful plants you saw. No more mystery and confusion, right?

Pods

Both species make similar seedpods (follicles) with variable surface textures, so pods alone are not good distinguishing features.

Hybrids

Rarely, you may find a plant with characteristics of both species, and hybrids are thought to exist but occur only rarely. Of the many thousands of plants I've inspected, only a handful ever seemed like they could be hybrids.



Seedpods (follicles) of Antelope Horns Milkweed

Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason

Rain just bullied the wildscape this month. Lots of rain. Noah-looking-out-an-ark-window rain. The flooding type that moves logs and large rocks and might wash you off your feet if you tried to ford a stream. We volunteers wisely stayed home, high and dry. Presumably most park walkers did, too, because we haven't turned up any bodies.

In the aftermath, everything from the lowest-growing frogfruit to the tallest oak is displaying gratitude with new growth, green leaves, and flowers. Of course, that includes plants that we are not crazy about. The first Wednesday following the storms Joe Martinez had a premonition and arranged to be elsewhere



Eagle-eyed Josephine Keeney picked out and terminated invasive knapweed that tried to hide amid the abundant foliage in the Butterfly Garden.

even before the notice went out that we would be weeding.

It is always a race between the weeds and the gardeners over seed dispersal. The plants want to get their offspring out the door before grasping hands yank them into oblivion. One very pretty pink flower showed up almost unnoticed, but sharp-eyed Josephine Keeney spotted it. "That's knapweed. It's not native," she declared, "and very invasive." Reluctantly we pulled it out.

The wildscape is a big place and occasionally someone gets lost. One day Ramona Gratton and Marylee Thomason were searching for the one who moved the wheelbarrow full of tools. Suddenly, Ramona brightened and pointed out Carol Marcotte coming down the trail. "There's the human!" And it was.

The next Wednesday Eric Strickland came with a Kubota full of large tree stumps, which he donated to the wildscape. Eric is moving and clearing out his yard for the new owner. We are the lucky beneficiaries.

The stumps were strategically placed along the erosion streams in the bioswale. He went back and brought a second load. When Marylee Thomason picked up a

long piece, Eric laughed ("with you, not at you") because it was at least half her size. "Old, but not feeble. So there!" she told him with a smile.

Many hands make light work and great progress. The gardens along the sidewalks look much nicer than this time last year, when rain showers nearly every Wednesday kept volunteers away. The job seemed overwhelming at first, but we (and the walkers who express their appreciation) see the difference.

The last Wednesday Ann Knudsen treated the small band of volunteers in rubber mud

continued on page 20

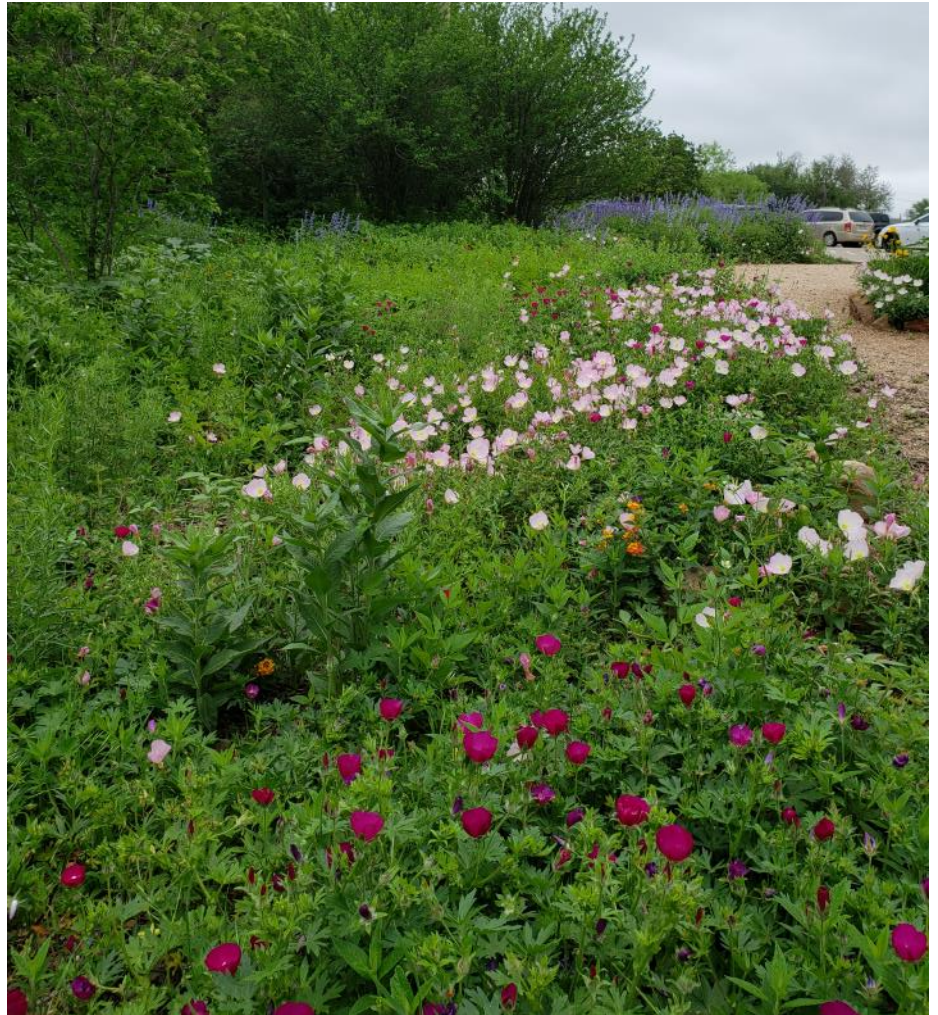


Eric brought TWO loads of stumps. From left, volunteers Joe Martinez, Eric Strickland, Ann Knudsen, and Robin Agee. Robin and photographer Marylee Thomason placed them in the bioswale.

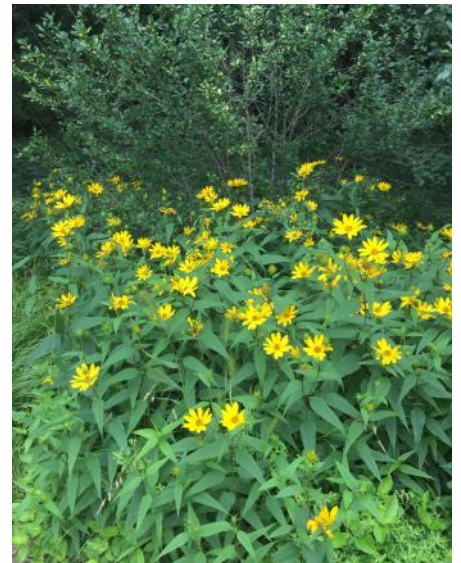
Wildscape Update continued from page 19

boots to a tour of the wildscape to assess the water and freeze damage — dead branches and a little vandalism, all easily handled. The ground was so wet we pulled some small privets out of the ground without digging.

There were bright spots such as the vigorous new growth on the coral honeysuckle that will eventually cover the wire arbor at the overlook. The Photo Op garden looks enticing with new plants coming up and filling in. The adjacent Great Southwest Rotary garden has some good-looking milkweed. We admired it all, then sat down for a healthy snack of oatmeal and apricot jam breakfast bars and good conversation before retiring for the day. A rare opportunity. Thank you, Ann.



Spring beauty at the wildscape. Photos upper right and lower left by Ann Knudsen. Lower right, Marylee Thomason.



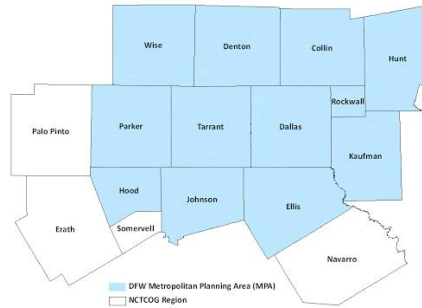
In Case You Missed It Grace Darling

Sustainability – Sustainability is the balance between the environment, equity, and economy. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. [From the *UN World Commission on Environment and Development*]



This month's ICYMI is devoted to a few of the many sustainability resources provided by the reliable North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) to residents of our 16-county region.

The NCTCOG is a voluntary association established to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. But the fruit of the NCTCOG tree is not only for municipal governments; all stakeholders can benefit from its work. The Environment and Development Department and the



Transportation Department offer multiple web sites, committee reports, programs, projects, presentations, checklists, templates, and other tools for households and businesses interested in reducing their carbon footprint. Working together, these two departments address every aspect of life in 21st century North Central Texas, with all its opportunities and limitations. Below are some of my favorite offerings particularly relevant to families.

Water

Texas accumulates 10 times more trash on its coast than any other Gulf state, and 69% to 95% of this trash is made up of plastics

such as bottles, straws, bottle caps, and broken-down material. Through the Trash Free Waters Project, NCTCOG works to implement community engagement strategies throughout six river basins in the Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston areas to reduce trash in our waterways, most of which originates on land. Look [here](#) for a gateway to COG's watershed management topics.

To understand the basics of the hydrologic cycle and how people affect it, we must start with [Stormwater to Drinking Water](#) and the non-COG-produced [Stormwater Pollution and Green Infrastructure Solutions](#). Be sure to watch the recent [Wrangling Trash from Waterways – Texas Style](#) recording; the [Municipal Stormwater BMP Show & Tell](#); and its foundational document, [Early Stormwater Planning with iSWM BMPs](#).

continued on page 22



In Case You Missed It continued from page 21

Solid Waste

In 2017, 10.7 million tons of waste were disposed of in landfills in the North Central Texas region alone, making it the highest in the state and accounting for almost 30% of Texas's total waste. The two active municipal landfills in Tarrant County have a combined remaining capacity of only 36 years, perhaps less given the continued population and economic growth in Fort Worth and the use of landfills as a primary disposal option. The solid waste management issue is now urgent.

The first step in tackling the problem is to rethink waste in terms of source reduction and creative reuse. NCTCOG programs such as [Time to Recycle](#) and [Report Illegal Dumping](#) help inform residents about what they should and should not put in their trash bags and how to keep contamination of recyclables down, what constitutes illegal dumping, [composting of yard and food waste](#), and the proper disposal of tires, batteries, household chemicals, and pharmaceuticals. These sites also offer a lot of original ideas and examples to creatively repurpose many items around the house before they end up in the trash and destined for the landfill.



Construction Ordinances

Since 1967, the [Regional Codes Coordinating Committee](#) has promoted the standardization of model construction codes in an effort to simplify the construction process, advance the safety of building systems, promote common code interpretation, facilitate the mobility of contractors, and reduce training and construction costs. Its five advisory boards, composed of local public and private code professionals, continually review the latest editions of the model construction codes and recommend uniform amendments for the North Central Texas region. The Energy and Green Advisory Board, for example, is currently discussing possible amendments to the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and the International Residential Code (IRC) that, once adopted,

could affect all future new buildings and major renovations in our cities for years to come.

[ConserveNorthTexas.org](#)

The Dallas-Fort Worth region is expected to grow by 48% by 2040, to approximately 10.6 million people. Conservation and resource efficiency will be critical to accommodating growth while also preserving existing regional resources.

This website provides users a “one-stop shop” for a comprehensive inventory of programs, tools, case studies, and other resources that address water, energy, and transportation topics. It is hoped that this will help users quickly locate resources that meet their needs while also highlighting “silo-busting” projects that have found ways to conserve resources in multiple areas.

Southwest Nature Preserve Annabelle Corboy, Jim Frisinger, Jan Miller

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. You will enjoy much more about the preserve when you take a look at the [December newsletter](#).

Upcoming Programs hosted by Friends of SWNP

How Wildlife Survives in the City – Tuesday, June 15, 7pm via ZOOM



It's not easy to be a wild animal living in the city. Human development creates many challenges for wildlife and animals must find a way to adapt in order to persist. In spite of this, our communities are filled with amazing species and breathtaking natural areas that are worthy of celebration and protection. This presentation will discuss the unique dynamics of urban ecosystems, how the fascinating creatures that live in urban areas manage to survive, and why they are so important.

Our speaker, Rachel Richter, is an Urban Wildlife Biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife in DFW. She has a bachelor's degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Texas A&M and a master's degree in Wildlife Ecology from Texas State. As an Urban Wildlife Biologist, she focuses on making our communities more wildlife-friendly through educational outreach and providing technical guidance.



See www.swnp.org for link to ZOOM meeting.

Bats of the Area and How to Find Them – New Date: Friday, June 18, 7pm at SWNP



Local bat enthusiasts Ellen Ravkind and Anne Alderfer, along with bat expert Kate Rugroden from the Bat World Sanctuary, will provide the program. Kate will talk about the bats in this area and the role the sanctuary plays in education and rehabilitation. Then Ellen will educate us on the echolocation devices from Wildlife Acoustics (Echo Meter Touch 2) as a prologue to Ellen and Anne leading a hike looking for bats.

Wear sturdy shoes or boots, maybe bring bug spray and water, and especially a good flashlight or headlamp with fresh batteries. The walk back will be in the dark, so a good light will be essential.

continued on page 24

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 23

May iNaturalist Observations at SWNP Annabelle Corboy

Spring has brought the naturalists to SWNP! In May, we actually surpassed our April numbers. During May we have had 528 Observations, 252 Species, and 21 Observers. May numbers along with April's were boosted by the City Nature Challenge, which finished on May 3.

This has been a great year for enjoying the signs of spring; maybe some of the freshness is due to all the rain we've received in the last couple of weeks. Whatever the reason, there is a variety of nature to enjoy.

continued on page 25



Above from left, Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) - Observed by jaytee60, Texas Flower Scarab (*Trichiotinus texanus*) - Observed by bob777, Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) - Observed by charley



Above from left, Limestone Adder's-Tongue (*Ophioglossum engelmannii*) - Observed by bendire44john, Standing Cypress (*Ipomopsis rubra*) - Observed by bob777, Purple Prairie Clover (*Dalea purpurea*) - Observed by squaylei2000

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 24

Recent Activities

Yucca Moth Walk

Grace and John Darling hosted a Yucca Moth Walk at the Southwestern Nature Preserve May 14. The preserve's colonies of rare Glen Rose Yuccas were blooming late this year but enough were flowering to put on an early night's show. Male and female moths emerge from their cocoons in the spring, timed with the blossoming of the yucca plant. There is an extraordinary "obligate mutualistic" partnership between this species of yucca moth and this species of yucca. The Glen Rose Yucca needs the moth as its sole pollinator; the yucca in turn is the only host for the moth's eggs. They are so interdependent that one cannot live without the other.



Milkweed rescues

The preserve's Pollinator Meadow took two giant steps forward toward qualifying to become a Certified Monarch Waystation with two major milkweed rescues in the last month. Jim Domke delivered a batch rescued from a future construction site in Justin. Kim Courtney donated 10 milkweeds from her nearby Kennedale pasture. The milkweeds, all green antelopehorns (*Asclepias viridis*), now number 27 since the plantings began in 2018. The steady rains this spring have created a lush environment both for the milkweed and a record number of wildflowers on display this year.

continued on page 26



Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 25

Recent Activities

Nest boxes

Denise Pederson, part of the Cross Timbers Master Naturalist Class of 2020, has stepped up to take care of the two nest boxes at the preserve. They've already hosted a brood each of Carolina chickadees and Eastern bluebirds and are ready to welcome new tenants. Pederson recently completed Kimberlie Sasan's training program on monitoring nest boxes. If you are interested in observing the monitoring at SWNP, send an email to info@swnp.org. If you are interested in becoming a bluebird monitor, you can start with Kimberlie Sasan at kimberlietx@gmail.com.

Nest box successes:

Left, Eastern bluebirds

Right, Carolina chickadees



Prairie rehabilitation

The Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve signed a Conservation Plan with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which details a 3-year action plan to restore 2.4 acres of prairie. The field has already been cleared of most invasives, and soil samples were collected May 7. The analysis of the tests, along with the soil type, gave the Friends' NRCS consultants the information they needed to suggest a seed mix to meet the Friends' habitat restoration goals. The proposed seed mix is made up of green sprangletop, buffalograss (burs), sideoats gramma, big bluestem, indiangrass, silver bluestem, little (native) bluestem, Englemann daisy, dropseed and Maximillian sunflower.

From the Chronicles of Indiana Querido Indiana Querido

Chapter 1: Killing Time at Pep Boys While Waiting for Truck Tires



The question is, How can you achieve self-actualization if you have to wait at Pep Boys and you can't face stewing in a small room filled with daytime television? Answer: Revert to your long-ago persona (hairy-chested field biologist), step outside, and seek adventure in the natural world. While getting your bearings, you admire a solitary monarch, bemoaning its migratory plight in this seriously disturbed stretch of post-oak woodland. All seems lost, but then you spot nature in the distance and rush to investigate. It's something like habitat, filled with things that appear to be plants. Ignoring the faded fact that you nearly flunked Flora of New Mexico, you pull out your phone and throw yourself on the mercies of iNaturalist. The shocking result: Your cell phone thinks there are at least 28 plant species, 16 of which are vaguely native. And you thought we would be bored! *Note: For the sake of scientific accuracy, it must be noted that the survey also included a second plot exhibiting a later successional stage that contained a number of woody species. And that the new tires were badly aligned.*



*Above left, something like habitat. Above right, a later successional stage.
Below, attractively arranged reproductive organs of plants.*



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

Name _____	First-year member \$10	
Address _____	Individual \$15	New Member ☐
_____	Family \$25	
Phone _____	Supporting \$40	Renewing member ☐
Email _____	Sponsor \$100	
	Lifetime Individual \$250	
	Other \$ _____	

How did you hear about us? _____

Make checks payable to Arlington Conservation Council. Mail to ACC, Box 216, Arlington, TX 76004-0216. Or pay via PayPal paypal.me/ACCtexas. Contributions and dues are tax-deductible. ACC is a nonprofit, tax-deductable 501(c)(3) organization. If you cannot pay, let any board member know. The newsletter is available via email and the ACC website.

President Dick Schoech
Vice President Wayne Halliburton
Interim Secretary Grace Darling

Treasurer Marian Hiler
Program Coordinator Grace Darling
Webmaster Frank Keeney

Editor John Darling
Board Members Mike Kolanko,
Nicholas Kocurek (student member)

POST OAK

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

June Zoom Meeting
Wednesday, June 2, 6:30 pm

**Dallas Comprehensive Environmental
& Climate Action Plan**
Susan Alvarez