

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 7

SEPTEMBER 2021



Bob Brennan

PHOTO BY BOB BRENNAN AT SOUTHWEST NATURE PRESERVE

September Zoom Meeting

Covering City Council: Are We All on the Same Page?

Kailey Broussard, Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Wednesday, Sept. 1

Social time and equipment setup 6:30 p.m. Program begins 7 p.m.

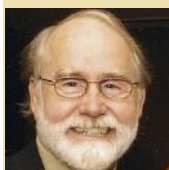
Join the Zoom meeting by clicking this URL <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85072273970>

Louisiana native Kailey Broussard covers Arlington accountability issues for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. While pursuing her degree at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication (Arizona State University), she reported on Arizona's congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., pedestrian fatalities in the Sun Belt, and Venezuelan refugees in Peru through a 2019 Carnegie-Knight News21 fellowship. She holds an MMC from Arizona State and a BA from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her work has been recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists regions 11 and 12, Southeast Journalism Conference, Arizona Press Club, and Broadcast Education Association.



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From the President

Not By Dick Schoech

A Ship without a Rudder *Special to ACC by Edward R. Burrow*

This just in: The ACC president is — for the first time in his previously unblemished tenure — unavailable, and his exact whereabouts are unknown.

Rumors persist that Schoech, formerly a reputable educator burdened with an unpronounceable name, might have succumbed to environmental angst and fled the country.

In his only recent message, Schoech instructed the group's long-suffering newsletter editor to substitute the photograph at right for his normally instructive presidential message.



But what is the meaning of this message? It features a blue-sided tree frog (*Agalychnis annae*), a vulnerable species now found mainly near polluted streams in metropolitan San José, Costa Rica. Why here? Possibly because the chytrid fungus devastating amphibians all over the world is more susceptible to pollution than this frog.

Could this be Schoech's message? Seek natural wonders in a tropical paradise if you will, but you may end up at a polluted city stream, hoping that a deadly fungus will die before it kills a beautiful frog?

We may never know. The missing president's message demonstrates an all too typical academic's preference for cryptic complexity. Or is he encouraging us from afar to stand our ground and act locally?

If so, ACC members must expect him to take his own advice, return to Shingle Mountain, noncompliant ozone levels, and rampant tree loss to continue the disheartening but crucial struggle.

But wait, Schoech may be trying to clarify his message with this newly arrived photo of a juvenile bare-throated tiger heron. Nope, still don't get it. He's just too deep.



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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John Darling, editor
ldarling@sbcglobal.net

Contributors

John Blair, Bob Brennan,
Annabelle Corboy,
Manuela Dal Forno,
John Darling, Grace Darling,
John Dycus, Jim Frisinger,
Sam Kieschnick, Ann Knudsen,
Carol Marcotte, 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

You can't get no satisfaction?

Sure you can.

1. Find damp ground with baby privet on it.
2. Pull.



visit us on the web
www.acctexas.org



Inland sea oats

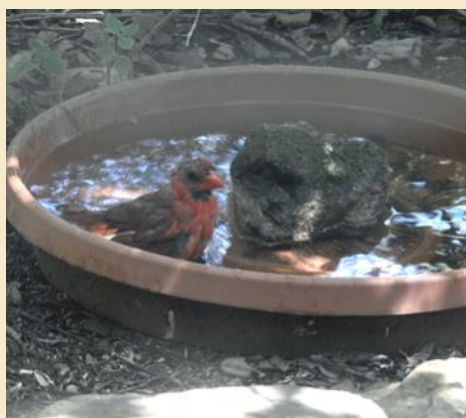
Giant Reservoir? It's Us, Too



All the DFW water wasters who live here now and those in the anticipated future are behind the push for the planned Marvin Nichols reservoir in NE Texas. Is the answer to this environmental disaster simple? No, but you can thank Julie Thibodeaux for an excellent education on this miserable situation. [Read it here.](#)

It's Not Much

This birdbath is just an old plastic plant pot saucer pretending to be terra cotta. It does the job, so it's good enough. But maybe a real one would attract a better class of bathers. After all, who wants to see a wet, molting cardinal?



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



Question Corner John Darling

Q: You might think I'm crazy, but can you tell me if it's true that an almost legendary but humble hairy-chested field biologist once discovered how life actually began? It's incredible, but I just heard that while he was camped on some desolate, windswept plain in northern Nevada, he saved a party of helpless-in-the-kitchen grad students by cranking up his rusty Coleman stove and cooking mountains of French toast. This sounds all wrong, but the story goes that it was like a thunderbolt: A light burst of ice pellets crashed into the bubbling butter and coagulating egg proteins, and the origin of life revealed itself in an instant. Unfortunately, he didn't publish. Could this be true?

A: Yes. Next!



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Speaking of Trees Grace Darling

Foaming Trees

Masses of bubbles piling up at the base of trees, especially after heavy rains, are not a rare sight but one that may cause unnecessary concern. This is the usual pattern: During dry periods salts, plant chemicals, and other particulates in the air accumulate on the bark surface. All the elements are there for making a crude soap except for the final ingredient — rainwater. As rainwater trickles down the tree trunk (stemflow), its surface tension is altered and it collects deposited dust particles (salts) and plant residues (acids) on the bark, forming a simple soap solution. In its down-trunk journey the solution encounters bumps such as bark plates, furrows, and ridges that tumble, stir, and aerate it — stemflow mixing — until bubbles form,



Simple soap solution after rain.

and bubbles collecting at the root crown may look as if the tree is foaming. Stemflow mixing has no known harmful effect on tree health. [Read more here.](#)

Alternatively, trees growing close to streams and rivers may gather true soap foam from waterborne phosphates carried by surface flow from those bodies of water or coming up through rocks from polluted ground water, but that too dissipates in a short time and has no lasting effect. [Learn more.](#)

And then there is [alcoholic or foamy flux](#), which is fortunately rare. This disease begins when bacteria normally found in soil and water enter a tree through wounds and take hold under the bark and in the cambium layers. As the bacteria eat the subsurface tissues, they create anaerobic conditions inside the tree, producing a gas that presses against the bark. When the pressure builds to a certain point, the exudate oozes out of the base of the tree or out of cracks in the bark and other wounds as a foam — a fermentation product. Get close enough and you will smell something like beer. You might even find some local insects having a drink. While tree injuries and bacterial infections are never a good thing, foamy flux is often thought of as benign, since it does not damage the



Alcoholic or foamy flux

heartwood of the tree and often dries up when the weather turns cooler. [Preservation Tree blog, August 2017]

The World's Largest Living Organism

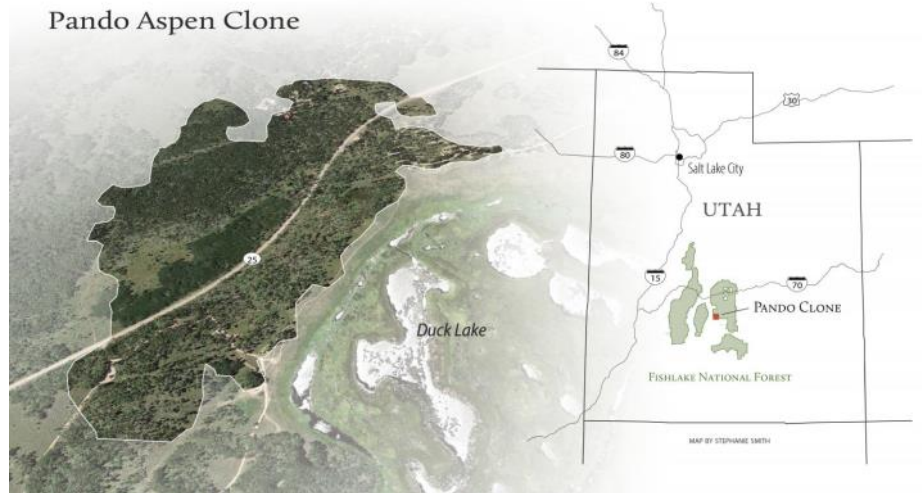
What weighs 13 million pounds, has been around since at least the last Ice Age, is the largest living organism on Earth, and until 50 years ago nobody knew it was there? The answer is the Pando Aspen Grove in the Fish Lake National Forest of south-central Utah. The 47,000 aspens there are actually the same tree — clones of a single root system — spread out over 106 acres. The root system, if stretched out end to end, would cover 12,427 miles, a distance equal to half the circumference of Earth.

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Speaking of Trees continued from page 6

Despite its remarkable past, Pando's future is of concern. The problem is that there are too many old trees in the grove and too few young ones. Large numbers of deer, and sometimes cattle, eat the new clones — called suckers — before they have a chance to grow. The real cause of the problem is — you guessed it — humans. Over the years, a combination of growth, development, and hunting laws have given increasing freedom to the local deer. Cabins built near Pando mean deer hunters are off-limits in the area, and predators like wolves and bears that once kept the deer in check have all but disappeared from the forest.

“We have what you call a gallery forest; it's easy to walk through but it's missing generations. A society of only old people isn't sustainable,” says professor Paul Rogers of Utah State University



and the world's foremost authority on Pando. The solution to this messy problem has proved elusive. In the meantime, Pando stands, and as its reputation grows Rogers notes that the number of visitors — international tourists, especially — keeps increasing.

Although, to be fair, even when you know what you're looking at, there's not much to see that's

different from any other large stand of aspens. But that's not to say there's no magic. “Stroll in there, sit down and take in the massive size of it,” says Rogers. “For me that engenders some humility, some perspective about my role in the world and my place in it. And if you're lucky, and you're there early in the morning when it's extra quiet, you can hear the birds chirping, amid the quaking of the leaves, and sense the enormity of the history. It's a pretty amazing thing to feel.” [Deseret News, August 15, 2021]



Milkweed and Marrowbone

UTA Milkweed John Darling

In the May newsletter you might have noticed a small photo (*right, top*) of a green milkweed I noticed growing along a path near Center and Mitchell streets. It was emerging in an area —The Green at College Park — designed to slow, filter, and detain rainwater runoff before it enters Johnson Creek.

At that time this appeared to be the only campus milkweed. Grace Darling and I searched and eventually found three more here, only one of which produced seeds like those on the original plant (*right, middle*). For that plant, this season's climax occurred on August 14, when a monarch caterpillar was feeding on its leaves (*right, bottom*). Sadly, we could not locate the larva later, so its fate is a mystery.

It's a pleasant surprise to find any milkweed on the UTA campus, and we must hope to see even more efforts on behalf of all pollinators there and throughout Arlington.



Marrowbone Spring By [John I. Blair](#)

Who would guess
But for the silent metal sign
How much has happened here?
A shallow swale
Strewn with rocks and sticks,
Trashed with waste
From parking lots nearby,
On wet days muddy,
Hard as brick on dry.
Famous once
For sandstone-filtered waters,
Magnet for thirsty animals, thirsty folk,
It saw life ebb and flow
For eons on this baking prairie.
Then came the Texians,
Sam Houston, soldiers
At a military post,
Plantations set in dusty fields,
Slave cabins, sorrows, joys,
Church picnics, brawling boys.
A scattered town, Comanche raids,
Rumbling coaches bound for Abilene,
Cotton far as eye could see.
But all these memories are gone,
Consumed by urban wilderness,
Mile after concrete mile;
Rains sealed from the aquifer,
This sweet oasis shrank
To an anomaly,
Unrecognizable.
What's here now?
Not even ghosts.

©2009 John I. Blair

The Next Bioblitz

Sam Kieschnick

September 5 - 11! Cancel all your plans and obligations. It's time to bioblitz!

Hey, all!

Last year, we had a trial run of a "[socially distant bioblitz](#)" on the first full week of September.

The main question was "what area of the DFW metroplex has the most species and most participation with most observation?" Well, we saw that each area has loads of interest, great observations, and some unique finds! If you'd like to read up on the results, [here's the long post](#).

Because we did it last year, now we have a year to compare. What all will we see this year?

This project is broken up into the 6 areas of DFW, and each of these areas is served by a Texas Master Naturalist chapter. If you observe in any of these areas, those observations are automatically added in that specific project. Here are the projects:



[Collin and Hunt Counties, the Blackland Prairie Master Naturalist chapter](#)

[Parker and Tarrant Counties, the Cross Timbers Master Naturalist chapter](#)

[Cooke, Denton, and Wise Counties, the Elm Fork Master Naturalist chapter](#)

[Ellis and Navarro Counties, the Indian Trail Master Naturalist chapter](#)

[Dallas, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties, the North Texas Master Naturalist chapter](#)

[Hood, Johnson, and Somervell Counties, the Rio Brazos Master Naturalist chapter](#)

You DON'T have to join any project, or this one, for your observations to count.

Just make observations from September 5 - 11 in one (or several!) of these areas, and the projects automatically grab them. No other steps needed!

Also, each day there will be a challenge with a sub-challenge. These can be pretty challenging, so try your best to get as many as you can! What's your reward? Sam's respect. And that's worth its weight in gold! I'll put the challenges on a journal post in this project on September 1.

Most of all, we'll be using these results, especially the observations made in public areas like parks, to guide land management. It's a powerful thing when we talk to a park manager or a city council and show them not just the biodiversity that exists in the area, but also the constituency of naturalists that actively seek out this biodiversity! So yes, we need you!

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me!

Sam Kieschnick [@sambiology](#)

Urban Wildlife Biologist, DFW, Texas Parks and Wildlife

sam.kieschnick@tpwd.texas.gov 214-215-5605 (c)



Randol Mill Park Photos by Carol Marcotte

At the ACC editorial offices we hear that the dog days of summer are in full control at Randol Mill Park. However, volunteers persevere, collecting trash, removing invasive plants, and working on the pollinator garden.

Carol Marcotte recently photographed a cicada killer wasp dragging a paralyzed cicada to her burrow in the park. The basics of the story are simple: Female wasp paralyzes cicada, hides it in burrow; lays an egg on it; larva feeds on hapless cicada then overwinters until the following spring. But as always, there's much more. Read [this](#) for more information, and [this](#) for a fascinating study that shows just how complicated the story can be.



Blackland Prairie Site Guy Random



It's the Ides of August: Bluestems, so many other grasses, and a few flowers are baking and thriving while pushing past all those crisp remains (and seeds!) of earlier successes. Unstoppable.



Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason

Princess Cruise Lines has nothing on the Molly Hollar Wildscape Tours. In fact, we have a reputation more in line with National Geographic. Not to brag, but our guides are certified Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners with deep knowledge of their environs. Ann Knudsen is one such guide.

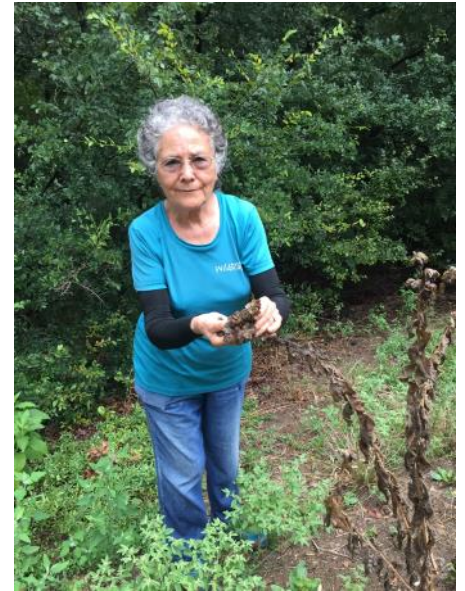
The tour in question began at 9 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 18, as participants Bev Crawford, Josephine Keeney, Carol Marcotte, Joe Martinez, and

Marylee Thomason gathered at the trailhead. Some came lightly armed with hand clippers; everyone showed anticipation. All approached the tour as Peace Corps volunteers in an exotic land.

Ann led the group through the wildscape forest, pointing out things needed to solve erosion problems and improve the look and safety of the area. Carol frequently loaned her clippers for immediate fixes.



Joe Martinez shows Bev Crawford where the tree skeleton will be buried. Bev is not sure she wants any part of that caper.



In the Pocket Prairie Josephine Keeney recognized this desiccated plant as a species of rosinweed, a Texas native whose seeds she collected for future use in the wildscape.

The annual lambsquarters dominated the Pocket Prairie. Action needed. Thin the numbers by two-thirds to bring the scene into balance.

For heaven's sake (tone of voice said it all), roll up the ugly hoses on the adjoining trail.

Where the Prairie Trail converges with the Overlook Loop we passed a skeletal tree long past any chance of revival. Cut it down to the ground. Toss the body onto the slope with the rest of the dead stuff to discourage people from running up the hill and damaging plants.

continued on page 13

Wildscape Update continued from page 12



Badly eroded trail on the Overlook Loop. Attempts to fix it in the past have failed, but a new strategy is sure to succeed. Stay tuned.

The path down from the Prairie to the Overlook is badly eroded — even veteran hikers tread carefully. Fortunately, a friend of Josephine Keeney donated several large stones, which someone desiring a little weight training could combine with cement and crushed granite to stabilize the trail.

The Overlook has a new bench, and its shade cage is slowly being covered with lovely coral honeysuckle, but the top is sagging. Enterprising volunteers Bev Crawford and Marylee Thomason are planning a graceful arch to support it.



Carol Marcotte carefully winds fledgling coral honeysuckle vine up the shade cage around the Overlook bench.

Behind the bench, a garden of native Texas plants has been invaded. A non-native *Lantana camara* has insinuated itself and is propagating. *Out with it!* was the order. Someone might think it belongs and plant the invader at home.

As we walked through the wildscape, various situations inspired Bev Crawford to song. When Josephine spotted a privet and Joe Martinez yanked it out, Bev serenaded us with “I’m Not Your Problem Anymore.”

When Ann discovered a leak in a hose at trail’s edge, we were treated to “There’s a Hole in the Bucket.”



Ann Knudsen identifying Lantana camara for extinction from the hill behind the Overlook.

“Bridge Over Troubled Waters” rang out as we surveyed the to-be-repaired stone bridge.

“Slip Slidin’ Away” accompanied a warning that the stones were slippery.

More action-needed assignments cropped up as we walked. Sedge grasses are an effective defense against erosion. Some should be dug up and replanted along many of the trails to slow the water in heavy rains. A seedball-making party is in our future. We will toss the results onto bare ground where we want more to grow. Crazy as it sounds, this is a tried and true way of planting.

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Wildscape Update continued from page 13

Another song that relieved tension emerged as the result of a near disaster. Trusted guide Ann stopped at the edge of a planted area and said the winter honeysuckle growing there should be cut and painted with stump killer. Joe Martinez immediately grasped the top of a sapling and broke it, saying, “You mean little trees like this one?” Ann leapt forward, saying, “Nooooo,” but too late. Joe was very sorry and said so. Bev Crawford chimed in with “I’m Sorry, So Sorry” to a chorus of laughter.

Ann revealed that when her children were young, she and her husband would launch “I’m Sorry, So Sorry” when the kids were apologizing for something they did. Her daughter, who hated the song, vowed to never do that to her own children. She admitted recently, however, that she does.

As the light rain increased to medium, we walked out along No Horse bridge to the tune of “Singin’ in the Rain.” Ann even did a little dance and heel kick as she led the parade.

You have the songs, but did you know the artists who made them famous?
Test yourself before reading the answers printed backward below.

“There’s a Hole in the Bucket” – attedO and etnofaleB
“I’m Not Your Problem Anymore” – rolyat tfiwS
“Bridge Over Troubled Waters” – nomiS and leknuFraG
“Slip Slidin’ Away” – luaP nomiS
“I’m Sorry, So Sorry” – adnerB eeL
“Singin’ in the Rain” – eneG ylleK



Green on green: A watchful wildscape resident waits for a meal. Photo by Ann Knudsen.

Southwest Nature Preserve Annabelle Corboy and Jim Frisinger

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](#).

September Program

Lichens!

Presented by Manuela Dal Forno
Tuesday, September 21, 7 p.m.



Please check the website (www.swnp.org) or Facebook (www.facebook.com/FriendsofSWNP) for location a day or so before the program. We may meet in person at the Arlington Police Department – West District Service Center or we may be using ZOOM.

Lichens are complex symbiotic units formed by a main fungal partner, a green alga and/or a cyanobacterial partner, along with a diverse community of microorganisms. They represent an important biological group present in most terrestrial ecosystems, with key functions such as colonizers, food source, nitrogen fixers, among many others. During this talk, you will learn more about lichens in general — what they are, why they are important, and how to detect important characters to identify them in the field and in the lab.



Manuela Dal Forno (Manu) is a Brazilian-American researcher interested in multiple aspects of the lichen symbiosis. She earned her PhD in Environmental Sciences and Public Policy at George Mason University in Virginia and later was awarded two postdoctoral fellowships to work at the Botany Department at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. She joined the Botanical Research Institution (BRIT) in 2019. Her research has particularly focused on the discovery of new species, especially in the tropics, and how they are related to one another.

Photos provided by Manuela Dal Forno.

Please look for details and updates at <http://www.swnp.org> or <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofSWNP>

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Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 15

A Spider Walk for Southwest Nature Preserve by Michael Smith

At Southwest Nature Preserve, the evening of August 14th was focused on discovering and understanding spiders and their kin under the guidance of Meghan Cassidy. She is a naturalist, photographer, and a strong advocate of everything in the class Arachnida. Those animals, the arachnids, include spiders, harvestmen, scorpions, ticks, and a few others, many of which are misunderstood and sometimes feared. There is much to love about arachnids, though, and the walk on the 14th showed it.



Freshly molted striped bark scorpion

Meghan brought a few examples to get us started, including a wolf spider, yellow garden spider, and a solifuge. During the discussion of those critters, a family discovered our little group and joined for a while. Their pre-adolescent boy promptly found a striped bark scorpion and brought it to us. It had just molted and was bright, soft and vulnerable. An interesting discovery was that, while scorpions show up as fluorescent yellow-green under a black light, this one did not. There is a change in the chitin after it hardens that is necessary in order to fluoresce under black light.



Meghan Cassidy

About a dozen participants came together before we started the walk. Many of them were easily pulled into a genuine fascination with the little things of this world. For them, spiders are no less worthy of study — and of admiration and respect — than any other wildlife.

I tentatively place myself in that group, despite my continuing tactile defensiveness of webs or what feels like clutching, unpredictable contact of spider-on-skin. I can admire the symmetry and patterns of webs and be fascinated with the sparkling



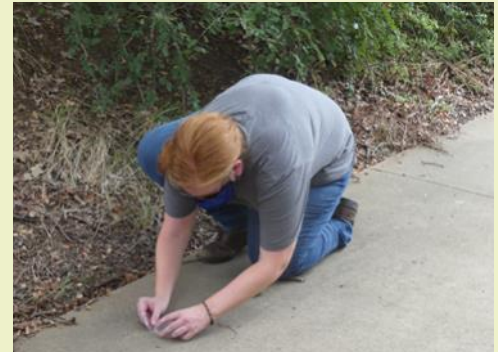
Participants examine a captive spider

continued on page 17

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 16

way that sunlight can reflect off the silken strands. I am captivated by the pretty patterns of yellow garden spiders or green lynxes, and wonder at the strange, crab-like, thorny forms of spiny-backed orb-weavers. It's the grasping, tactile contact with a bigger spider that I struggle with.

The admiration and wonder are stronger than the crawling residue of fear. I joined the ranks of the other naturalists, searching the vegetation alongside the trail, capturing a small species of lynx spider to ask Meghan to identify, and listening to the give-and-take of discussion as she shared her extensive knowledge of these arachnids and their natural history. We found leaves folded around silken "sleeping sacs" that some spiders use for a daytime refuge, and some of them contained shed skins of growing spiders.



A brief capture on the sidewalk



A dotted wolf spider seen at the preserve

It was such a positive experience, being a part of a group whose delight was in discovering and sharing things about the natural world. Somebody would find something on the sidewalk and everyone would immediately crouch down to see it up close, photograph it, and find out what Meghan would have to say about it. "It's a dotted wolf spider," Meghan explained, pointing out the pattern on its abdomen and how it lacked the chevrons that defined the rabid wolf spider (which is not really "rabid" or aggressive, just fast).

continued on page 18



Everyone gathers to look at a spider

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 17

After sunset, Meghan showed us how to shine flashlights into the leaf litter and look for the greenish reflected light from the eyes of wolf spiders. At the ponds, we were able to see many long-jawed orb-weavers (the name emphasizes their jaws but once again they are not aggressive or dangerous) spinning webs over the water. In the trees, other orb-weavers were constructing their target-shaped webs. The tinier spiders wove orbs so fine that they looked like small circles of woven mist clinging to a flower stem. At the north pond, participants with black lights discovered two tiny scorpions. Despite being babies, they fluoresced green in the black lights, otherwise we never would have found them.

As the evening was wrapping up around 10:00 p.m., I walked ahead a little and watched the approaching group, now visible as a half-dozen flashlight beams shooting out of the tree canopy at shifting angles like some luminous beast of the woods. These were my kind of folks, people who would stay past the designated time and never give it a moment's thought, lost in discovery and wonder.



Examining the web of a funnel weaving spider

Miscellany

Cottonwood

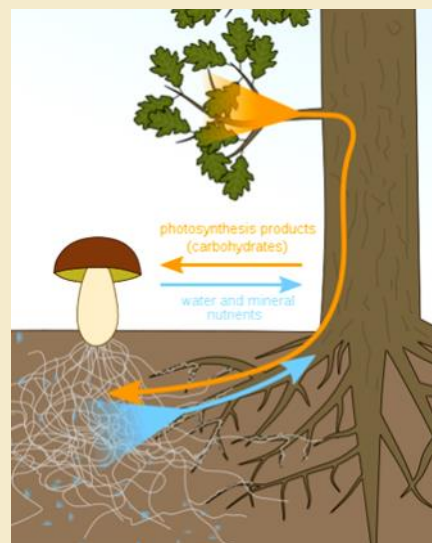
By [John I. Blair](#)

One side scarred from storms,
It still stands tall, strong,
Striving toward the day.
Thousands of shining deltoid leaves
Twirling loose on long stems
Fill the air with rustling sound.
Half-turned, ready
To step into my car,
I stop, feeling something –
Something about the tree,
A sense of semi-sentience,
A notion that it knows I'm here.
There's no communication,
No speech, no gestures;
Just a presence, purposeful
If purpose can be measured
Over years, decades,
Centuries.
Unique in place, in past,
This cottonwood has spirit, pride;
It's there in more than mere location.
If I'd learned the language
And could form the words that slowly,
I'd say hello.

©2010 John I. Blair

Help Your Garden Fungi

Here's [a slightly different take](#) on organic gardening: The very simple things we can do to enhance our mostly invisible fungi don't just benefit plants, they also encourage soil organisms and the myriad invertebrates that inhabit our undisturbed leaf litter.



Gray to Green!



Looks like this UTA parking lot is still the only place in town where rain can flow from asphalt to plants instead of the reverse. Happening here for 10 years, but only here.

Mandatory Moth

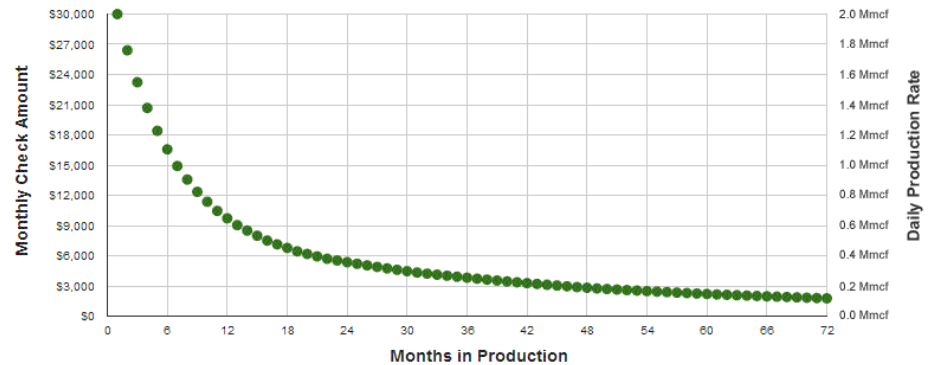
This striking melonworm moth showed up at the UV light at home. The species can be a serious squash pest in gardens, but it responds to organic controls. On the other hand, just look at it!



In Case You Missed It Grace Darling

“What’s good for oil is good for Texas” — no more. A recent report by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), an independent think tank whose mission is to “accelerate the transition to a diverse, sustainable, and profitable energy economy,” notes the oil and gas industry is on the decline in Texas. The analysis finds “significant deterioration in the industry’s tax revenues, employment levels, and overall contribution to the state’s economy” since the 1990s, with oil and gas contributing 10% or less annually to state tax revenues for the last 20 years. Report co-author Trey Cowan hopes Texas policymakers will “recognize the potential risks of continuing to buoy” an industry faced with growing competition from foreign producers and the disruption caused by renewable technologies, including solar, wind, and electric. “Cowan wants his research to . . . spur action that will prevent the downfall of communities dependent on oil and gas jobs.” [[here](#); and Haley Samsel, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, August 12, 2021]

“While the decline curve of a natural gas well can leave a well producing over 20 years, albeit with declining output, shale oil wells [are] the equivalent of mopping up spilled milk,” wrote



Ed Wallace last year. And speaking of fracking, “when the biggest thing in the energy industry . . . delivers so little for far too short a time at too high a cost, that’s not a long-term proposition or a viable solution.” Wise up, Texas. [Ed Wallace, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, August 28, 2020.]



Is hydrogen the magic bullet? Hydrogen, the most abundant element in the universe, is increasingly viewed, along with electric vehicles, as one way to slow the environmentally destructive impact of the planet’s 1.2 billion vehicles, most of which burn gasoline and diesel fuel. Transportation is the single

biggest contributor to climate change in the U.S., which is why hydrogen as fuel is seen as potentially important in reducing carbon emissions. Hydrogen-powered cars, buses, and trucks, as well as planes and trains, emit nothing but harmless water vapor.

Here’s the catch: Hydrogen is made globally using natural gas or coal, mainly for refineries and fertilizer manufacturing. Researchers from Cornell and Stanford universities found that most hydrogen production emits carbon dioxide, so hydrogen-fueled transportation cannot yet be considered clean energy. But advocates say that a growing use of electricity from wind and solar energy, which can separate hydrogen and oxygen in water, could make hydrogen production a cleaner and less expensive process. May the wind fill their sails. [Mark Gillispie and Tom Krisher, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, August 15, 2021]

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Orchids and whatnot.

Hexalectris grandiflora (Orchidaceae). This unique orchid is, in my opinion, just as spectacular as the Lady Slippers found deep in the Pineywoods. *H. grandiflora*, like others of its genus, is a non-chlorophyll producing myco-heterotroph. In other words, instead of obtaining energy through photosynthesis like most plants, they obtain their energy and nutrients from mycorrhizal fungi of plant roots. The host associations are not fully understood, but there appears to be a relationship between the genus *Hexalectris* and various species of white oak.

H. grandiflora has been documented in scattered sites in central and west Texas including the Chisos Mountains, White

Rock Escarpment, and various sites in the Edwards Plateau. They are apparently rare and seldom encountered in these areas, however, and their real stronghold in the state is the Davis Mountains. Here they occur in high-elevation shaded canyons with abundant oaks. They are often found growing along the driplines of large rocks. They typically begin blooming in late June to early July following the arrival of the summer monsoon and may bloom into September in wet years. [Matt Buckingham, Texas Flora page, Facebook August 18, 2021.]

Mosquito bite prevention, the personal responsibility way. The City of Arlington partners with Tarrant County Public Health to educate the public on simple measures they should take to prevent potentially dangerous mosquito bites. Read more [here](#).

- DEET is an ingredient to look for in your insect repellent. Follow label instructions, and always wear repellent when outdoors.
- Dress in long sleeves and pants when you're outside. For extra protection, you may want to spray thin clothing with repellent.
- Drain standing water in your yard and neighborhood where mosquitoes can breed. This

includes old tires, flowerpots, clogged rain gutters, etc. Mosquitoes may develop in any water stagnant for more than three or four days. For shallow standing water that cannot be eliminated, check regularly for the presence of mosquito larvae and if seen, apply a biological larvicide often referred to as "mosquito dunks," available at local hardware stores.

Any other mosquito-control method, such as spraying with ultra-low volume permethrin, electric zappers, baited traps, etc., is potentially disastrous to the local wildlife. As indiscriminate bug killers, these devices threaten butterflies, moths, dragonflies, ladybugs, bees, and many other beneficial insects as well as the birds, bats, amphibians, and any creature who depends on them for its survival. Indeed, 96% of all terrestrial birds rear their young on [insects](#). And if you want to support the bugs to feed your birds, make sure to [plant natives](#).



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August Zoom Meeting
Wednesday, Sept. 1, 6:30 p.m.

Covering City Council:
Are We All on the Same Page?
Kailey Broussard, Fort Worth Star-Telegram