

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POST OAK

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 8

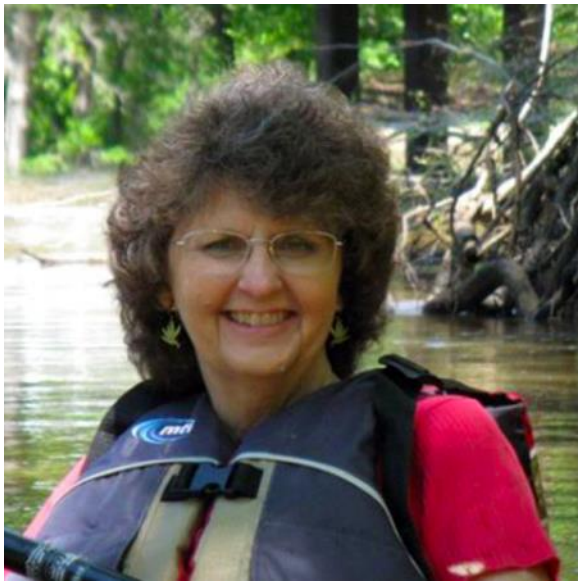
OCTOBER 2021



PHOTO BY GUY RANDOM • BLACKLAND PRAIRIE SITE

October Zoom Meeting Wednesday, Oct. 6

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/82793598270>



Marvin Nichols:
Why Bad Projects Get Good Spin

Janice Bezanson
Texas Conservation Alliance

Wed, Oct 6, 2021
7 pm

Zoom meeting hosted by
Arlington Conservation Council
More Information at <http://www.acctexas.org/meetings>

The Marvin Nichols Reservoir would destroy 66,000 acres of prime bottomland wildlife habitat, force thousands of Texans to sell their family lands, and cost the people of the Dallas-Fort Worth area \$4.4 billion in increased water rates. *continued on page 8*

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From the President

Dick Schoech

Lessons from Costa Rica on Protecting the Environment and Sustainability

I read in horror the president's message in the September *Post Oak*, which put a bastardized Freudian interpretation on two beautiful photos I submitted from my Costa Rica expedition. The column was written by some unknown who didn't have the decency to identify himself. My apologies. Enough said.

Why Costa Rica? It's touted as an environmental success story that is attracting many American retirees and tourists. Something important must be happening in this poor former banana republic that's smack in the middle of Central American countries whose citizens risk their lives to reach the US to escape crime and poverty. As ACC president, I felt it my duty to travel there to learn how this country with a population similar to DFW is succeeding at conservation and sustainable living while its neighbors are failing.

What better way to conduct hands-on research than by attending lectures, hiking, canoeing, bird watching, kayaking, whitewater rafting, and zip lining through CR's rainforests. See the accompanying picture of braving torrential rains in ankle-deep mud to discover the secrets of CR's success.

The first thing I noticed was the pervasive use of the phrase *pura vida*, meaning pure life. It's used when greeting, saying goodbye, thanking someone, and saying something nice when you can't think of anything to say. It constantly reminds people of the attitude and hard work necessary to give all citizens the good life. CR has topped the Happy Planet Index in three of the last four polls based on its stunning beaches, rainforests, biodiversity, stable democracy, educated



Your ACC president slogging through rain and mud to learn the secrets of the rainforest.

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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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Deadline for submissions is the
15th of every preceding month.
Please send them to
1darling@sbcglobal.net

Bits & Pieces

The Terse Treehugger

Beer can + plastic bag

In an old pile of leaves.

Two chances to recycle lost.

Doomed, we're doomed.



visit us on the web
www.acctexas.org



American Beautyberry

Party Time?



A chance encounter with a half dozen of these boxes, a [quick Internet search](#), and soon you've moved from thinking about frivolous consumption of a gas recently in short supply, to its [uncertain future](#), and then to the miserable, avoidable [environmental consequences](#) of balloon releases. Only 10% of helium is used to inflate party balloons, but the result is millions of released balloons that may kill or injure unsuspecting wildlife.

Hoo Cooks for You?

Several nights recently a [barred owl](#) was [calling](#) along Johnson Creek near UTA. This dark-eyed owl needs mature bottomland forest and is often found nesting near red-shouldered hawks. Barred owls eat mostly small mammals, and its biggest predatory threat comes from great horned owls.



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

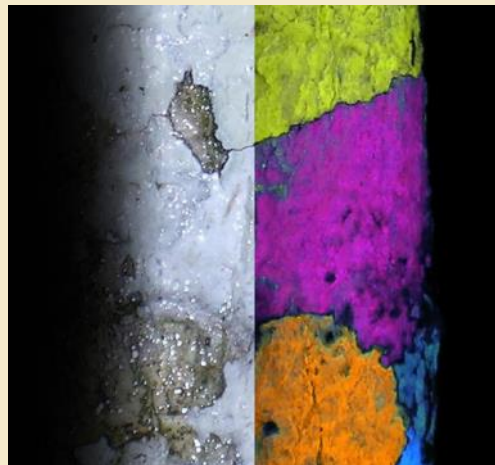


Question Corner John Darling

Q: On Sept. 21 the Friends of SW Nature Preserve presented a great Zoom talk on lichens by Dr. Manuela Dal Forno. So much new information, not to mention beautiful photos. I want to learn much more, so forget all those self-indulgent attempts at humor and recommend some ways to get enriched.

A: Boy, are you in luck. On page 15 of this very newsletter you can find a link to that excellent talk, so watch it again, and pay attention this time. Also, try the links on that page, as well as [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#). That last link might be the most fun. Next!

Matching images (white light, UV light) of a lichen-covered tree trunk.
Image: Robert Lücking © Robert Lücking



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working to conserve
Arlington's natural
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From the President continued from page 3

population, sustainable living, and strong social networks of friends, families, and neighborhoods.¹ By comparison, the US ranked 108th of 140 countries.

- To achieve *pura vida*, CR disbanded its military in 1949 and spent the money saved on citizen education, community healthcare and well-being, and protecting its environment. Some results:
 - ◊ The now-educated population replaced the oligarchy with elected officials who worked for the good of the country.
 - ◊ Health outcomes from a prevention-focused community-based public healthcare system are impressive.² In 1950 around 10 percent of children died before their first birthday along with many young adults. The country's life expectancy was 56 years, compared with 68.7 for the US. By 2019, Costa Ricans at birth were expected to live to age 80, slightly longer than Americans' 79.³
 - ◊ 99% of CR's electricity comes from renewable sources, mostly hydroelectric.
 - ◊ Fossil fuel taxes are used to protect forests, which have been restored from 20% coverage in the 1980s to 50% now.⁴
 - ◊ While countries like Brazil are destroying their rainforests to boost their economy, CR's forest protection has increased biodiversity, resulting in tourism being CR's main source of income. See zip line picture.

CR even has accessible national parks with wheelchair ramps and amenities. See macaw sculpture picture.

Littering and trash are under control. Our guide warned that he could be fined if anyone in our group left a plastic bottle or other trash in a park or preserve. He profusely apologized when we saw substantial trash on an otherwise beautiful Pacific Ocean beach.

CR takes COVID-19 seriously. We had to wash hands before going into restaurants and wore masks everywhere indoors, while traveling in our van, and even whitewater rafting. See picture.

- CR faces many issues:
 - ◊ Climate change is afflicting the country with flooding, landslides, Atlantic and Pacific beach erosion from sea level rise, and rivers raging out of their banks.
 - ◊ CR's mountainous terrain and seven active volcanoes make railroad construction next to impossible, so



ACC's president carefully inspecting the rainforest canopy.



Park sculpture that blind visitors can touch to get a mental picture of the macaws they hear during their visit.

continued on page 7

From the President continued from page 6

motorways comprise the transportation infrastructure. Visitors quickly discover CR's transportation problems while sitting in multiple lanes of traffic among motorcycles, bicycles, street vendors, and people walking everywhere.

- ◇ Crime is a problem because CR is in the middle of the drug and human trafficking corridor from Central and South America to the US.



ACC president (front left) carefully examining water quality in CR.

My biggest takeaway is that empowering citizens with systems and processes that educate, improve health, and protect human well-being produces people who work to improve their environment and local communities. My trip reinforced the community-empowering approaches explained by ACC's April and May speakers, Jim Schermbeck and Susan Alvarez.⁵ Arlington could improve citizen involvement and empowerment by emulating CR strategies.

Also, I experienced that climate change is a planet-wide phenomenon distressing even a small country that's working hard to protect its sustainability. Earth's populations need to unite around controlling climate change using proven worldwide strategies. Today's military expenditures to wage unnecessary conflicts over limited resources could be so much better used. It was nice to study a little country that can offer many creative ways forward. *Pura vida!*

References

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5. Passcode [.v3Y8L# = https://zoom.us/rec/share/YaLVpJYE9Y3v-pRDml7w1xx4xQkGuLI02PCvvYbD8Z6iRu1Cl1NNta5ZbZDTrYX.345haQAPY9CB76du](https://zoom.us/rec/share/YaLVpJYE9Y3v-pRDml7w1xx4xQkGuLI02PCvvYbD8Z6iRu1Cl1NNta5ZbZDTrYX.345haQAPY9CB76du)

October Zoom Program continued from page 2

The Dallas-Fort Worth area is not in urgent need of additional water supply. If the region needs more water in future decades there are cheaper, less destructive ways to obtain it than building a huge new reservoir.

Janice Bezanson, Texas Conservation Alliance's longtime executive director, now TCA's senior policy director, has 40 years' experience protecting rivers, forests, prairies, and other rich wildlife habitats. Janice has successfully campaigned for over 100,000 acres of state and federal wildlife areas that protect diverse ecosystems. She has organized opposition to damming pristine rivers, saving tens of thousands of aquatic and bottomland critters from being left homeless. Her input to state water planning spans several decades.

Janice has served on numerous boards and advisory boards and has been honored with awards from the National Wildlife Federation, Audubon Texas, Chevron, the Big Thicket Association, and the Sierra Club. She was featured in the *Women Shaping Texas in the 20th Century* exhibit at the Bob Bullock State History Museum.

Cooper's Hawk at Birdbath

Thanks to Donna Piercy for submitting this tranquil scene. Someone who knows says it's almost always first-year Coopers hawks that appear at birdbaths. For much more about this hawk [look here](#).



Like a Tortoise

By [John I. Blair](#)

I am at home
Wherever I land,
Here, within my shell,
Like a tortoise
Except for thinner skin
And warmer blood.
Sometimes I retract my head,
Wishing the vicious world
Would not bother me
And let me lumber
From one hushed bower
To another.
But I know
If I'm so imprudent
As too much to go
Against the flow,
Also like a tortoise
I may get smushed.

©2003 John I. Blair



Volunteers Needed for Arlington Biosurvey

Future Lake Arlington Native Garden Site

Saturday, Oct. 16, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Arlington Water Utilities and Tarrant Regional Water District are teaming up to create a native plant demonstration garden and prairie restoration at the Lake Arlington Spillway. Before any construction efforts get underway this fall, we would love your help documenting existing biodiversity on the site. The project site is currently a field of low-growing grasses and forbs, both native and non-native, surrounded by low-lying fields with wetland vegetation and bordered by native trees. The site is owned by Arlington Water Utilities and only accessible with permission via a gated entrance.

We are hosting our first biosurvey on **Saturday, Oct. 16th from 8am to 10pm**. We would love to have anyone interested to join us in documenting the flora and fauna of the site. You can come anytime throughout the day and stay as long or as little as you like. Snacks will be provided under a covered area with chairs for relaxing and socializing.



If you are interested in volunteering, please sign up at this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f4eaaaa2ea4fcc61-lake>.

After registration, we will send an email with directions to the site, instructions for entering the gate and signing in, and a map of the area to explore. If you would like more information not included here, please contact Kimberlie Sasan on iNaturalist at [@kimberlietx](https://www.inaturalist.org/people/@kimberlietx) or by email at kimberlietx@gmail.com.

Randol Mill Park Carol Marcotte

Park & Creek Cleanup

Saturday, October 16, 9 a.m. to noon

Sign in and park at the pavilion. Only rain can stop us!

Bring your grabber, snack, gloves, bug spray, hat, and wear long pants for the creek and pond areas.

Water, some grabbers and litter bags will be available.

Questions: Carol Marcotte carol@carolmarcotte.com

Volunteer Opportunities!

4th Thursday each month, October 28, 9 a.m. to noon

Each month is a different volunteer area; however we focus on the pond, Triangle Garden, Natural Area Prairie and privet.

Volunteers are asked to wear appropriate clothing. Bring your tools as necessary, water, hat, bug spray, and be ready to enjoy nature.

Email carol@carolmarcotte.com to have your name on the contact list. Each month you'll receive an email stating a place to meet in the park, a volunteer area we'll work (you'll know how to be prepared) and updates.



Trailing purple lantana at the triangle garden. It's not a native, but pollinators are said to love it. Looks like that fiery skipper on the left agrees.

Blackland Prairie Site Guy Random



Prairie forecast, early fall: heat followed by slightly less heat. Rain? Maybe someday, but don't bother warning all the plants that like it just this way. Colors like a thumb in the eye of the sun.



Molly Hollar Wildscape Update Marylee Thomason

The unofficial Official Survey results are in. The best and brightest retirees are turning to native plant gardening like mushrooms to an old growth forest. Many are participating in Master Naturalist and Master Gardener classes with dirt-under-the-fingernails experience woven into the curriculum. Three enthusiastic Master Naturalist interns plus one native plant-loving recruit gleaned from Facebook made a surprise appearance Wednesday, Sept. 22.

They wanted to work with native plants in a compatible group. The proven health benefits of spending time in natural settings would be just a bonus. A YaleEnvironment360 paper published in 2020 asks, "How long does it take to get a dose of nature high enough to make people say they feel healthy and have a strong sense of well-being? Precisely 120 minutes." That's right. [Read it here.](#)

How long did it take regular wildscape volunteers to welcome the new volunteers? Precisely six minutes, the time it took to meet and greet. They came to learn how to incorporate native Texas plants into their home landscapes. We are thrilled to have four enthusiastic new workers.



Joe Martinez

Some perks of working at the wildscape might go unnoticed, like the fluid and informal fashion show. Hat styles can catch on and get copied. Sleeves to protect arms from stickers and scratches are a popular addition to the uniform. Some people prefer the understated look, while others favor more outrageous getups. This month's fashion winner is Joe Martinez. Joe started with tattoo arm sleeves, which apparently didn't attract enough attention so he added a flamboyant hat. So far there are no copycat knockoffs. Stay tuned.

Longtime volunteer Josephine Keeney recently donated a large owl house. Always on the lookout for things to benefit the wildscape, she also encouraged a neighbor to donate a large



Josephine Keeney

number of unwanted stones from her yard.

Dana Austin, Carol Marcotte's neighbor, was volunteering at the greenhouse when Josephine suggested that she might have more to do at the wildscape and more room to roam. Dana retired after 25 years as a forensic anthropologist in the Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office. She has gone from the gory to the sublime and is enjoying everything she's learning as a Master Naturalist intern. "It's all wonderful."

Another new volunteer is Teresa Landfield, who says, "It was inevitable that I become a gardener. My name says dirt twice!" Teresa's last name is frequently misheard as landfill,

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Wildscape Update continued from page 12



Dana Austin

which has led to some interesting phone calls early in the morning from strangers inquiring about the city dump. Teresa is a Master Naturalist intern who retired from AT&T and is glad to be free. As of Sept. 22 she was 23 days and counting into her new life. She worked the classic “cord board” for eight years.

Volunteering has been exciting. Recently at the Botanic Garden, she was weeding alone while her partner took a break. Suddenly she heard, “Teresa. Stand up slowly. Now walk toward me. Turn around.” A skunk was foraging right next to where she had been working. Yikes! Teresa felt lucky because other volunteers were getting stung by wasps and bitten by fire ants. She only had a close call.



Teresa Landfield

Patsy Miller is an old hand at the wildscape, frequently working with Molly Hollar on Walk on the Wildside activities. Patsy is still volunteering and organizing volunteers for nature events around the city. She’s a former president of Master Gardeners, a



Patsy Miller



Betty Carroll with Joe Martinez

citizen scientist, certified plant propagator and current intern in the 2021 Master Naturalist class. After 20 years as a reporter for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, “when it was fun to work there,” she’s now happy to spend her time improving the environment.

Knowing that pictures of people at the wildscape should show them working, Joe encouraged Betty Carroll to pose with him for a photo of new volunteers. Joe recruited Betty on Facebook. She retired in May as an accounts payable manager, moved into the duplex next to her son, and started a vegetable garden. But what to do with the rest of the yard? After talking to Joe about native plants, she called her son, who owns the duplex, to get his

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Wildscape Update continued from page 13

approval for planting natives. He is a huge fan so the stage was set.

Betty lives in Oak Cliff but says she enjoys the drive and is looking forward to volunteering. We promised to share plants and seeds and access to our two walking native plant encyclopedias, Ann Knudsen and Josephine Keeney.

Ramona Gratton has recovered from her hip replacement surgery. She came back with the same high energy. Inspiring.

Shout-out to Ramona's husband, Terry Gratton, who sharpens tools for the wildscape. Several volunteers who use our tools have commented on how nice it is to



Ramona Gratton



L-R Jesse Aguilar, Juan Martinez, Jim Runzheimer, Martin Sanchez.

work with sharp tools. Thank you again, Terry. We appreciate you. Great Southwest Rotary Club has adopted the wildscape and Veterans Park for its butterfly garden. The original space has

been planted and looks very nice, but Rotarian Jim Runzheimer has ambitious expansion plans. The club wants to support local parks and encourage citizen participation.

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](#).

Friends of SWNP Program Review – September 21, 2021 Jan Miller

Manuela Dal Forno, PhD, presented an entire introductory course on lichens. Lichens are complex symbiotic units formed by a main fungal partner, a green algal 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. Watch the Zoom recording of her program (at <https://youtu.be/k1-SEzaiwbk>) for more about lichens in general: what they are, why they are important, and how 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 joined the staff of the Botanical Research Institute (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.

Some resources for those wanting to learn more and explore a gallery of lichens:

Lichens of North America (book) and website

http://www.sharnoffphotos.com/lichen_info/index.html

iNaturalist guides and observations

www.inaturalist.org/guides

US Forest Service

<https://gis.nacse.org/lichenair/index.php>

Ways of Enlichenment

<http://www.waysofenlichenment.net/>



Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 15

Selected August iNaturalist Observations Annabelle Corboy



Left, Blue dasher, *Pachydiplax longipennis*. Observed by sambiology



Right, Common lyric cicada, *Neotibicen lyricen lyricen*. Observed by brentano



Left, Eastern pondhawk *Erythemis simplicicollis*. Observed by wildcarrot



Center, Rough green snake, *Opheodrys aestivus*. Observed by sam_moore_



Right, Glassy-winged sharpshooter, *Homalodisca vitripennis*. Observed by sambiology



Left, Striped bark scorpion, *Centruroides vittatus*. Observed by sam_moore_



Middle, Spotted orbweaver, *Neoscona crucifera*. Observed by sam_moore_



Right, Texas carpenter ant, *Camponotus texanus*. Observed by wildcarrot

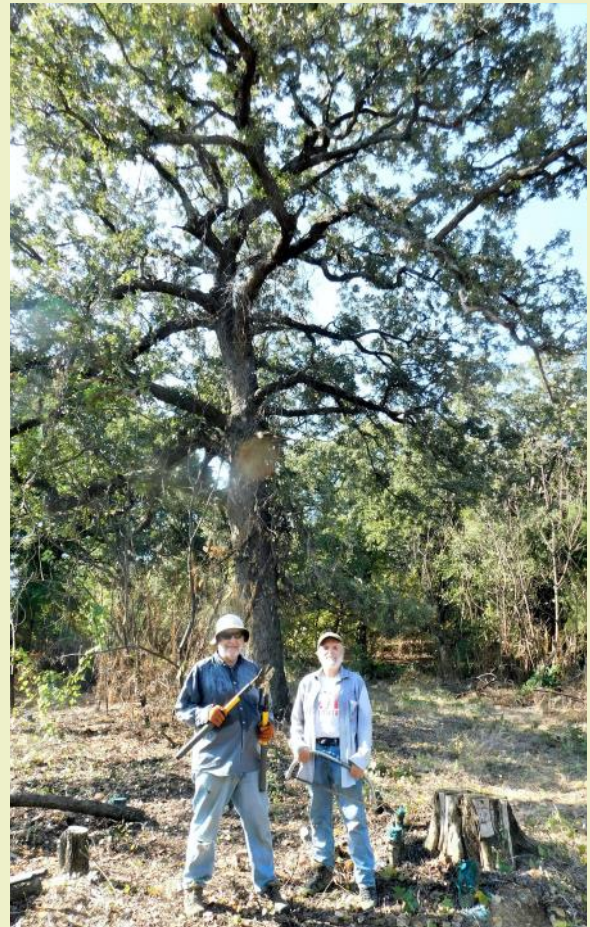
continued on page 17

Southwest Nature Preserve continued from page 16

Oak grove preservation at Southwest Nature Preserve Jim Frisinger

Historic oak preservation plays a key role in prairie restoration in the Eastern Cross Timbers. Nearly a dozen oaks stand as sentinels in or near the prairie at the northeast corner at the Southwest Nature Preserve in Arlington. The mother tree is the historic Caddo Oak, designated a Texas Historic Tree, which at 51 inches in diameter is at least 200 years old. It is the oldest post oak in Arlington.

This month Friends of Southwest Nature Preserve volunteers finished clearing hackberry and Chinaberry around one of the Caddo Oak's great-great-grandchildren, Oak No. 2 at the preserve. At 31 inches in diameter, this post oak is at least 124 years old. Clearing these understory trees removes competitors for scarce water resources when drought stresses the big oaks. Nearby Oak No. 3 is about 40 percent cleared of understory privet, Chinaberry, honey locust, and hackberry. It is 29 inches in diameter and at least 115 years old. Restoring the 2.4-acre prairie will return the "savannah look" where grasslands interspersed with mature oaks meet the upland oak forest.



Volunteers Jim Domke and Jim Frisinger at cleared Oak Tree No. 2. Photo by Sandy Smith



Left, Volunteers take a break on felled Chinaberry logs near Oak No. 2. From left, Sandy Smith, Lynn Healy, Liana Guinn. Photo by Jim Frisinger



Right, Oak No. 3 is now 40 percent cleared of understory trees. Photo by Jim Frisinger

Trees, Please

Coming Next Month: An Issue Full of Trees

Please send in photos of your favorite tree — and maybe a brief word about what it means to you.

Maybe also your thoughts on Arlington's tree situation, what it is now and what it ought to be in the future.

Your tree can be anything, but we prefer native species. Is your favorite an exotic? Make your case, and you'll see it in the November *Post Oak*.

Let's do this before all the leaves fall, unless some leafless tree is your favorite.

Send your tree and/or thoughts to 1darling@sbcglobal.net. Thanks.

Below, two of the editor's favorite post oaks, apparently thriving after many years in an overlit parking lot. (Bonus: Check out Jupiter right above the moon. Not relevant but pretty cool.)



Miscellany

Housekeeping

By [John I. Blair](#)

Twice in two days
I've scooped small bodies
Off the patio

And lofted them swiftly
Through the air
Into the garden tangle,

There, I pray,
To be absorbed
Back into our Mother Earth,

Then grabbed the garden hose
And sluiced soft, scattered
Feathers into the vines

That bind the patio's rim
Even as they conceal
The cat that's done these deeds

And possibly, in her innocence
Of what I really think,
Had offered them as gifts to me.

©2021 John I. Blair 6/12/2021

Exotic Groundcover Removal

Are you plagued by excessive Asian jasmine?

Does your boss tell you to set out cones whenever you park your official vehicle?

Does he tell you not to set them on acres of exotic, ecologically meaningless groundcover?

Here's your passive-aggressive answer.
Warning: This could take a while.



And Speaking of Groundcovers



A local smart guy grew tired of trying to grow grass under his trees and got native landscape designer Ann Knudsen to install a lawn of lyreleaf sage, wood violets, and horseherb. Perfect for where the sun don't shine!

Mandatory Moth

This month's moth is a question mark butterfly because none of the recent moths have looked this good. Yes, superficial. Guilty. But your Honor, sometimes that's just the way it is.



Blackland Prairie Extra



The prairie punchline has to be seeds, and if you're a grass this is your time. It's a good time for purple and yellow, too.

A large photograph of a chipmunk's face, with its large, dark eyes and brown and white fur, peeking through a dense thicket of green leaves.

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

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POST OAK

Arlington Conservation Council
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October Zoom Meeting
Wednesday, Oct. 6, 6:30 pm

Marvin Nichols Reservoir:
Why Bad Projects Get Good Spin
Janice Bezanson, Texas Conservation Alliance