

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™
Elm Fork Chapter



Naturalist News

December 2022 Volume 24, Issue 12

Happy Holidays!



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Naturalist News



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Possumhaw at CCNHC, from Tammie Walters



What Happens Next

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

December 15th

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Southwest Courthouse

6200 Canyon Falls

Flower Mound 76226

**Spread good cheer and see old
friends to jump-start your
holiday!**

*****Please bring a pot-luck dish or dessert to share
and wrapped nature-theme ornament*****

What Happens Next (cont.)

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY LUNCHEON - December 15th, 10:00 a.m.

'Tis the Season for Giving...

Our Daily Bread

Friends of the Family

Check or Cash will be accepted for donations at the luncheon.
On-line donations will be accepted from December 12th-23rd.
Checks should be made payable to the Charity of your choice.
You will be able to designate on-line which Charity you choose.

What Happens Next (cont.)

IT'S TIME TO RECOGNIZE OUR CHAPTER'S OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS for 2022!



Deadline for Nominations:

December 31, 2022

<https://txmn.org/elmfork/2022-achievement-recognition/>

Nomination Forms for Volunteer of the Year, Outstanding Service Awards and Project of the Year can be found ON-LINE on our website:

Nominations will be accepted on-line or completing the printed nomination forms and returning them at the Chapter Meetings in November and December or by turning forms in at the AgriLife Extension Office, 401 W Hickory, Denton 76201. Forms will be available at the Chapter Meetings, AgriLife Office or you can print your own from the website. Questions: Contact Kathy Webb, awards@efctmn.org.

Awards and Recognition

November 2022

Initial Certifications

<i>Bethany Griffin-Loftis</i>	<i>Class of 2022</i>
<i>Sherri Ursini</i>	<i>Class of 2022</i>



Recertifications

<i>Daniel Arenas Richieri</i>	<i>Class of 2017</i>
<i>Valerie Beardsley</i>	<i>Class of 2011</i>
<i>Whitner (Whit) Dieterich</i>	<i>Class of 2022 (Wow!)</i>
<i>Hugh Franks</i>	<i>Class of 2019</i>
<i>Janet Gershenfeld</i>	<i>Class of 2005</i>
<i>Susan Hamby</i>	<i>Class of 2022 (Wow!)</i>
<i>James (Jim) Hardy</i>	<i>Class of 2019</i>
<i>Ray Kreutzfeld</i>	<i>Class of 2014</i>
<i>Daniel Lemons</i>	<i>Class of 2022 (Wow)</i>
<i>Angela Lindsey</i>	<i>Class of 2018</i>
<i>Sharon Miggans</i>	<i>Class of 2017</i>
<i>Betty Mullenweg</i>	<i>Class of 2001</i>
<i>Marilyn Turnage</i>	<i>Class of 2005</i>
<i>Norma Wilkerson</i>	<i>Class of 2011</i>



Awards and Recognition

November 2022

250 Hour Milestone

Karen DeVinney

Class of 2021

Mary Gunnels

Class of 2020

Carl Malmberg

Class of 2021



500 Hour Milestone

Marty Newman

Class of 2020



1000 Hour Milestone

Karen Penden

Class of 2017



1500 Hour Milestone

Sarah Goodrich

Class of 2016



3000 Hour Milestone

Richard Johnson

Class of 2009



Field Notes in Focus



Common Buckeye (Junonia coenia)

From the gallery of Bryan Lewis

Field Notes in Focus

Following the November chapter meeting presentation on DFW Wildlife by journalist and author Amy Martin, several Master Naturalists joined her on a hike at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center.

We stood in awe of the tall trees, and the massive poison ivy vines growing on them!



Photo by Lin Hampton



Photo by Lin Hampton



Photo by Tammie Walters

Inside Outside News

Advanced Training

3rd Sundays Thrive Nature Walk 9-10:30 am, Sunday 12/18
at 1950 S. Valley Parkway, Lewisville

We'll take an easy stroll through the park looking at nature getting ready for winter. Bring binoculars if you have them. Park in the Rec Center lot and meet at the picnic bench in the park across Valley Parkway near the crosswalk.

Plant Party: Planting a Seed - AT

Wednesday, December 21, 10:00 am–11:30 am

Join us on Dec. 21st from 10:00 – 11:30 AM CDT for **"Planting a Seed"**. We'll have 5 short presentations from experts in the field and will be giving away lots of DOOR PRIZES!

You must register to receive the Zoom link the day before. It's FREE!
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PPSeeds>

Plant Party is a quarterly, advanced plant training series provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

See Plan Your Week or the Elm Fork Chapter Calendar for more volunteer service projects and advanced training opportunities:
<https://txmn.org/elmfork/members-only-calendar/>



Projects in the Community

CLEAR CREEK WAS A BLAST OF TWO THOUSAND 4TH GRADERS THIS FALL

From Jane Duke and Toni Benjamin

Toni Benjamin and I met while volunteering for DISD school days the first year, in 2018. We both had a passion for native prairie restoration and gravitated to teaching at the Pocket Prairie and hiking. We never expected to lead the project, but I volunteered Toni while she was in New Hampshire on vacation. I knew she also had a passion to see our work continue.



We jumped in like Thelma & Louise, expecting to lead the project and then hand it off to another passionate volunteer, but now we plan to lead the activity again next fall, while Sharon Betty and Elise Spain are preparing to lead the project for second grade field trips in the spring.

Our goal was for every DISD student to have the same experience or as close as possible.

We learned many of the students had never hiked even as second graders, because of COVID. So, we had to take 10 minutes to teach proper behavior in nature. We taught ecology is home and Clear Creek is a home and we respect home by using our inside voice, picking up after ourselves, not taking someone else's food, and staying out of someone else's room by staying on the trail. Twice we omitted this introduction because the buses were late, and we regretted it.



Dave Powell, Blackland Prairie TMN, started us out on the right track when he showed us how to create a toolkit and how to stop kids on the trail and give them a 45 second lesson. It was rewarding for the volunteers and the students because it gave structure for learning and flexibility for excitement about things they discovered.

The experience has been rewarding and never boring over the 7 weeks, as we recall a student offering us a dollar tip as he boarded the bus, and a time when a student was sure he heard on a documentary that the drone bee dies after mating with the queen bee... turns out true. One school got ready to leave Clear Creek and we couldn't find the bus driver and her 3yr old daughter. She had joined a hike and turned to go back to the bus and got lost. They were found by one of our volunteers, unharmed, and safely led back. I invite you to talk to all our wonderful volunteers to hear their experiences as well.

CLEAR CREEK WAS A BLAST (cont.)

We learned students aren't watching the clock when they are at Clear Creek. The 30-minute lunches are sacred, and it's not just about eating. We were able to spend more time getting to know the students, in addition to the teachers and chaperones who are all future Master Naturalist candidates we need to recruit.

Lastly, on the hikes we saw an abundance of deer, snakes, armadillos, butterflies, birds, fish and turtles this year, but I'll spare you our volunteer stories of getting lost, stripping on the trail for ants, etc. because...

What happens at Clear Creek Stays at Clear Creek.

Thank you to all our dedicated volunteers!



Projects in the Community

Invasives Removal at Green Acres

John Thomlinson and Brynne Bryan from the 2022 class are dedicated to removing all of the invasive curly dock in the riparian area at Green Acres. Check out their progress in 3 hours on November 22 in the photos here.

Check the Green Acres schedule in Plan Your Week and come and join us!



More progress on November 29th!



For more information: [Becky Bertoni](mailto:becky.bertoni@gmail.com) becky.bertoni@gmail.com 972-878 4058

Projects in the Community

The Box Turtle Head Start Project at LLELA

Hugh Franks, TMN Class of 2019

“Head-starting is a conservation strategy that entails releasing captive-reared animals into nature at sizes large enough to better resist post-release predation.”

“Body mass was positively associated with daily survival probability. Our findings suggest attaining larger body sizes from longer captive-rearing periods to enable greater movement and alleviate susceptibility to predation (the primary cause of death) could be more effective than environmental enrichment alone in chelonian head-starting programs where substantial predation could hinder success.”

From Tetzlaff, Sasha J., Sperry, Jinelle H., and DeGreggorio, Brett A. *“Tradeoffs with growth and behavior for captive box turtles head-started with environmental enrichment”* [Diversity](#), 2019.

About five years ago it was noted that few box turtles have been sighted on the LLELA property and it was decided to start a project to increase the box turtle population. The then-director of LLELA, Dr. Ken Stiegman, and Scott Keister, Elm Fork Chapter Project Manager at LLELA, made this decision and oversaw the start of the program. Carl Franklin, herpetologist and biological curator of the Amphibian and Reptile Diversity Research Center at the University of Texas at Arlington, aided in deciding the initial locations for the enclosures used to house the box turtles and donated the first group of juveniles to get the program started. The enclosures are known as “hotels” by the group that cares for the turtles, the Turtle Moms and a Dad. Henceforth, in this article, enclosures will be referred to as hotels.



As the program developed and grew, an additional five hotels were built by a troop of Boy Scouts in the fall of 2021. After two of the original hotels were donated to LISDOLA for use with the box turtles kept there and used for educational purposes, we currently have seven hotels available. One of the hotels (#1, currently nameless) is reserved for mature box turtles which, for one reason or another, are not suitable for release; these turtles, of which there are currently two (Andy and Frank), are used for teaching purposes at LLELA. Two of the hotels



The Box Turtle Head Start Project at LLELA (cont.)

(#5, the Adolphus, and #6, the Anatole) are currently unused and awaiting renovation. One hotel (#7, the Drover) is unoccupied but is maintained as a place to temporarily house any random turtles found at LLELA until they can be properly placed. The remaining three enclosures (#2, the Ritz; #3, the Rosewood; and #4, the Joule) house the 28 juvenile turtles which are currently in the active head start program. Hotel #4 (the Joule) has been divided into two “apartments: 4BD holds the youngest juveniles, a group of 7 which hatched in the fall of 2020 and were provided by a breeder in Pilot Point. Hotel 4AC contains a group of 8 from the fall of 2019 and came from a Dallas-area hobbyist. Hotel # 2 (the Ritz) houses the seven largest turtles, approximately 4 years old, which are scheduled to be released in 2023, while #3 (the Rosewood) contains 7 residents which should be ready for release in 2024. Also, a part of the project are 6 juveniles (from the Pilot Point breeder) which hatched in 2021 and are being cared for in my home and which should be ready to move to a hotel at LLELA in the spring of 2023.

The process is straightforward—tiny box turtles are turned into larger box turtles and then they are tagged and released. Hatchlings are kept for about 18 months in the “box turtle nursery” at my house, then moved to a hotel at LLELA. As they grow, they are kept together as a group until they are large enough to have a better chance of survival. Three times a week (unless the turtles are brumating) they are fed a diet carefully tailored to both their size and age. They have constant and easy access to clean water and have several hiding places in the hotels. Once they reach a weight of at least 200 grams and can completely and tightly close their shells, usually around four years of age, they are tagged and released. Such a release last occurred in the fall of 2020; none were deemed large enough for release in 2021 and none were released this year due to a lack of funds to purchase transmitters required for location tracking. It is hoped this money problem can be resolved to allow a release in the late spring and/or early fall of 2024.



After release, the box turtles are tracked using radiotelemetry to determine survival rates and home range establishment. Sara Joseph, graduate student at UNT, is responsible for this portion of the project and the detailed data she collects is a part of her master’s degree research.

This project will be continued in the foreseeable future with releases occurring every one or two years and new hatchlings added as older box turtles are released.



For more information contact Hugh Franks at hfranks@mac.com

Tweet of the Month

By Sue Yost, class of 2017

Cardinal [Cardinalidae]



The original meaning of the word **Cardinal** is to describe the group of people who nominate the Pope in the Roman-Catholic religion. The **Cardinal** bird takes its name from the senior figures in the Catholic church.

But what do the pretty **Cardinals** and Catholic church officials have in common? Their color of course. Just like **cardinal** birds have bright red plumage, Catholic cardinals wear red robes.

One of the most common characteristics of a **Cardinal** is that the males are bright red with a crest on their head, black feathers on their faces, and they have a short, orange beak. The red color is primarily due to the presence of the pigment carotenoid in the feathers of the bird. The gorgeous red coloring is achieved by eating plants with similar coloration, such as bright red cherries, dogwood berries, grapes, and other berries. Even eating some insects that have fed on similar colorful plants also contain this pigment.

In the dense habitats, you might not be able to spot the **Cardinal** with your naked eye. Despite its conspicuous plumage, the small size and concealing techniques of the bird make it difficult to spot. Instead, you can figure out the presence of the **Cardinal** near you by its peculiar, cheerful songs. **Cardinals** have different calls for different occasions, as many as 16 variations! The melodious vocalization patterns like "birdie birdie birdie" or "cheer-a-dote cheer-a-dote" are distinctive to **Cardinals**.

Cardinals are the first birds to hit the feeders in the morning and the last ones to visit in the evening. **Cardinals** have quite a varied diet. These birds are omnivores. During the twilight time of low light intensity, the striking plumage of the male doesn't appear too bright, providing the **cardinals** security from their predators. Another reason that is speculated for the birds to visit the feeders during dawn and dusk is to avoid competition and form a cluster at the feeder. Having few species around, they feed on their favorite seeds in tranquility. **Cardinals** also eat fruits and buds, as well as insects like beetles and caterpillars.

To attract **Cardinals** to your backyard feeding stations serve up their favorite seeds: black oil sunflower, striped sunflower, and safflower. Their large seed cracking beak allows them to easily open the thick hull. **Cardinals** need an open tray or hopper feeder to dine at comfortably. They will also feed on the ground.

Once the **Cardinals** have selected their mate, the male plays the lead role in feeding its female. During courtship, the male finds seeds and feeds them to the female using a "beak to beak" method. This display of affection between the 2 can be portrayed as the 2 birds kissing each other. ❤️

Tweet of the Month (cont.)

The female will seek out a proper nesting place. Both male and female **Cardinals** work together to build the nest. They like to build their nests in places that are hidden from predators but can be seen in trees, along with forest lines, residential landscaping, dense bushes and thickets and are made of twigs, leaves, grasses, pine needles, and stems. While the female will do most of the nest making, male **Cardinals** gather the building materials and pass them to the females who do the actual building.

Once the nest is made, a female can lay up to five eggs and will raise two broods. The eggs are greenish white with pale speckles, grayish-white, or even plain white. The female will incubate them for approximately 13 days. While the eggs are incubating, the male will look over the female and the nest. Males become extremely territorial and will "dive-bomb" any intruders, people included. This is where they get their "Angry Bird" nickname from. After the eggs hatch, **Cardinal** nestlings will leave the nest after just 9 to 11 days. **Cardinal** parents mostly feed their chicks insects. This high protein diet helps them to grow quickly

The female **Cardinal** will sing from the nest to her partner when she's feeling hungry and wants some food. Once the male hears this song, he takes over caring for the nest until the female's return. She might also sing to tell the male when not to come, because males with their bright colors could easily show predators where the nest is hidden. Pretty smart lady!

Although there are plentiful **Cardinals**, the juvenile mortality rate is relatively high. Because they are "open-nesters" the nests of the **Cardinals** are susceptible to attacks from the predators. Who preys on the eggs of the **Cardinals**? The list of **Cardinal** predators is extensive. Cats, squirrels, snakes, Jays and Grackles are among the potential predators of the bird's eggs. **Cardinal** nests are also prime targets for parasitic Cowbirds to lay their eggs in. The female **Cardinal** will then incubate and hatch their offspring along her own.

Cardinals are so territorial that they have often been seen fighting their own reflection, say in a car's shiny bumper, side mirror or a very clean window. They can fight for hours, too. This can happen any time of the year but is more prevalent during nesting season.

The average lifespan of **Cardinals** in the wild is three years.

Have you ever seen a bald **Cardinal** with little to no feathers on its head? Don't worry; you're not seeing a sick **Cardinal**. It is a common phenomenon for **Cardinals** to molt at least once a year to replace their old feathers. During this yearly process the bird exposes its blackish-grey, featherless skin on the head and body. The feathers regrow in a couple of weeks, bringing back the stunning plumage of the bird. It is also thought that feather mites cause head feather loss during the hot summers.

Cardinals are such beloved birds that they were chosen as the U.S. state bird for 7 states. These states are Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, and North Carolina.

The St. Louis **Cardinals**, a professional baseball team, and the Arizona **Cardinals**, a professional football team are both named after these feisty birds. College teams, including Texas Wesleyan University, the University of Louisville, Lamar University, and Concordia University, have the **Cardinal** as a mascot.



Tweet of the Month (cont.)

During the 1800s, **Cardinals** became popular caged birds as people were enthralled by their bright red color and distinctive singing capabilities. Constantly under threat of bird poaching, the **Cardinals** would often be hunted, captured, and sold in the market at exorbitant prices. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, **Cardinals** were given utmost protection along with other native birds in North America, prohibiting their sale. Under the legislation of this act, it is against the law to chase, hunt, capture, kill or sell the birds that are listed plus possess their nests, eggs, or feathers.

Cardinals never fail to capture your attention with their impressive appearance and energetic personalities. Seeing a **Cardinal** often or having several encounters with the bird could be associated with a profound spiritual message. Seeing a **Cardinal** is known to bring good luck, signifying windows of opportunity available for you. The bird is also a symbol of manifestation, devotion, and loyalty, inclining you to form deeper relationships with yourself and find a soulmate with a solid emotional connection.

To some religious scholars, the **Cardinal** is a spiritual messenger from God, sometimes appearing to boost your confidence and give you immense encouragement to work towards your goal. A **Cardinal** might also visit to soothe you after the death of a loved one. Many people also believe that seeing a **Cardinal** is a sign from a lost loved one.

Traditionally, many native American tribes believed **Cardinals** to be good omens, particularly in the Southeast. Some tribes also believed these birds were associated with lightning and could predict the weather and rain.

Cardinals are one of the easiest birds to identify and are by far everyone's favorite. Add a platform feeder filled with sunflower and sit back and enjoy a splash of nature's red this holiday season! "Cheer-cheer-cheer"!



Features



Mossy World

by Jeanne Erickson

Imagine a walk in the woods or among rocks and boulders or meandering ravines without their ever-green blanket of mosses. Now add them back. So much better.

Mosses are tiny, primitive land plants - they have no flowers, fruits, seeds or roots. They are low in stature, forming crusts in arid areas, lush green carpets in wetter areas. Their leaves are only one cell thick. They have the incredible ability to withstand desiccation for years and revive with the addition of water.

Mossy World (cont.)

Mosses exist on all continents - even Antarctica - and on a wide variety of substrates - trees, logs, soil, rock, litter and animal carcasses as well as man-made materials. They occur in deep forests, open prairies, arid deserts, from deep shade to full sun exposure. Few animals or insects eat them.

People can see that mosses are beautiful and soft and comforting too, but also ask - what good are mosses? Some of the answers are as subtle as the beauty of mosses themselves.



Moss growing on downed trees

Most mosses are perennial and green all year. They are some of the first colonizers of bare areas - in prairies, forests, deserts, tundra, along the sides and edges of gullies and ravines, slopes and cliffs, hiking trails and road cuts. They can grow where other plants cannot. They catch tiny wind-and-water borne particles, both organic and inorganic, and in doing so, build and hold soil, and thus slow erosion.



Moss growing on bare soil

Mosses provide soft landings for fern and lichen spores and grass and forb seeds to settle and take hold. Their ability to capture, hold and slowly release moisture enhances the growth of these new vascular plants. Mats of moss help keep soil cooler as well as enhance the work of the fungi below by holding in moisture. In wet areas, they can absorb up to half the rain that falls, releasing it back slowly over time and thus buffering temperature and humidity conditions.



Seedlings growing in moss

Mossy World (cont.)

Mosses serve as nurseries and shelter for a vast array of micro-organisms and invertebrates, including aphids, nematodes, rotifers, tardigrades, larval insects and slugs, which in turn support larger wildlife up the food chain. Some birds (like chickadees and vireos) use mosses in nest building. Without mosses, there would be no peat for potting soil or sphagnum to line hanging baskets or to enhance bonsai gardening.

Without mosses the world would have much less beauty and wonder and intrigue. Mosses have much to teach about seeing and understanding and experiencing at a slower pace and a smaller scale. Learning about mosses may seem daunting at first, but the small volume of essays, *Gathering Moss - A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer is the perfect introduction. It should be the next book on your reading list.



Seedlings growing in moss



Moss growing along edge of gully



More Features

Ho Ho the Mistletoe

Sue Yost class of 2017

I moved from the Midwest to Texas 30 years ago. I thought it was so cool that growing right up in my trees was mistletoe! Mistletoe! A Christmas tradition! That first year, every Christmas card I sent had a sprig of my honest to goodness real mistletoe pinched off from MY trees enclosed as my Texas gift to them.

Fast forward to 2022 and you will see my trees practically bare of mistletoe. As I learned more about living in Texas, I soon discovered why I was not to have that holiday greenery growing in my trees. We hired an arborist to come out and remove it all. I must admit, after 30 years, it is starting to come back, likely because of the berry eating birds I attract to my yard. More on those later.

Mistletoe *Phoradendron flavescens* is common throughout Texas and there are hundreds of species around the world. Mistletoe is also known as birdlime mistletoe, Herbe de la Croix, Mystyldene and Lignum Crucisa and is commonly found on many hardwoods such as oaks, pecans, elms, and hackberries. It is usually noticed only when deciduous trees lose their leaves for winter. This time of year, mistletoe stands out, being the greenest part of the tree canopy.

Leafy mistletoes are not complete parasites because they only withdraw water from their tree hosts. The flowering mistletoe plants have small round leaves, thick green stems, and pearly white berries. Most mistletoe plants reach a maximum size of 12 - 18 in. diameter. Mistletoe is a plant and is spread by seed like any other plant. The mistletoe fruit is a white berry that is very sticky when broken. This stickiness allows the seed to cling easily to birds, squirrels, and trees. They are spread when birds eat the sticky berries and deposit the seeds in their droppings as they perch on other branches and trees. The berries may also stick to their legs or beaks and be wiped off on different branches. The seed then germinates and penetrates the bark of the tree to initiate the new infection. For 2 - 3 years, a specialized root system grows in the branch, followed by emergence of a new mistletoe plant.



Among the birds that find mistletoe berries delectable are Mockingbirds, Cedar Waxwings, and various thrushes such as the Eastern Bluebirds and Robins and because it supports wildlife it is a beneficial plant.

Germination is much like that of any other plant, but mistletoe roots aren't roots. Mistletoe has rootlike structures called *haustoria* that grow into the tree's sapwood. The

Ho Ho the Mistletoe (cont.)

haustoria absorb the tree's water, nutrients, and sugars directly from the sap stream, creating a blockage in the tree's system. As the haustoria grow, the tree reacts with additional growth around the haustoria. Infested branches and trunks develop swollen areas around the mistletoe in an attempt to stop the mistletoe and resume unobstructed flow of sap and water.

Because mistletoe has leaves of its own, it is called an *obligate hemiparasite*. Obligate because it doesn't grow in the earth and must have a host tree to live on, and hemiparasitic because it doesn't completely depend on the tree for its entire livelihood as a true parasite does.

Tree experts know that mistletoe grows best on stressed and weakened trees. It comes as no surprise that trees growing in cities and lawns are often infested. Our built environments (cities, suburbs, etc.) stress trees, making them susceptible to mistletoe infestation.

The initial growth of mistletoe in a new infestation is slow and does little to the tree.

Later—generally, years later—the mistletoe reaches a size that requires so much from the tree that branches beyond the infestation begin to die off because of lack of water. Often, the tree reacts to the mistletoe as if it were a disease or insect. The tree closes off the damaged portion of itself to contain the problem, leading to more dead branches.

Whole trees rarely die of mistletoe but rather of many problems together, mistletoe being only one of them.

As the amount of the tree infested with mistletoe increases, the tree becomes more and more stressed, allowing additional problems to develop. Common secondary problems associated with mistletoe are diseases and pests taking advantage of the stressed tree. Because of this scenario of mistletoe helping along other problems in the tree, the sooner you manage mistletoe, the better your chances of preventing tree disfigurement and death.

You discover mistletoe, now what? The healthier your tree is, the better it can resist becoming infested with mistletoe or resist the mistletoe already in it. Good tree management always begins with creating the least stressful conditions possible for tree growth—good, uncompacted soil with proper levels of minerals, organic matter, and water. If mistletoe is already established in a tree, the most common control option is pruning it out. In small trees or infestations growing close to the ground, anyone can simply cut the mistletoe off the tree. However, because the haustoria are still inside the tree, mistletoe is likely to regrow. Complete control only happens when all the mistletoe, both inside and outside the tree, is removed. To completely remove mistletoe, prune at least 6 inches below the spot the mistletoe branches are growing. When



Ho Ho the Mistletoe (cont.)

removing branches, cut back to the branch collar or to a secondary branch to help the tree recover from the removal. Or, call a certified arborist to take it out.

The evergreen nature of mistletoe led ancient cultures to believe it had magical powers and made it the focus of traditional lore.

- In ancient culture, mistletoe was used for its healing properties.
- Greeks used it for everything from menstrual cramps to spleen disorders.
- Ancient Greeks considered the plant an aphrodisiac.
- Greeks also thought it could help ensure eternal life.
- In Rome, it was used in a balm to ward off epilepsy and ulcers.
- Because mistletoe could blossom even during the frozen winter, Celtic Druids used it to restore fertility to animals and people. Mistletoe's associations with fertility and vitality continued through the Middle Ages.
- The Druids believed mistletoe provided protection from all evil, and that the oaks it was seen growing on were honored as well.
- Norsemen were allowed to steal a kiss from any woman caught standing under the mistletoe; refusing the kiss was considered bad luck.
- Norsemen believed the mistletoe was a plant of peace; when enemies met under the mistletoe, they were obliged to stop fighting for at least a day.
- In England, young girls took a mistletoe leaf and put it under their pillows at night. They would then supposedly dream about a particular boy or man they wanted to marry someday.
- In the 18th century, mistletoe became associated with Christmas from the tradition of hanging mistletoe in one's home to bring good luck and peace to those within the house.
- The kissing tradition appears to have first caught on among servants in England before spreading to the middle classes. Like the early Norsemen custom, men were allowed to steal a kiss from any woman caught standing under the mistletoe, and refusing was viewed as bad luck.

**Ho ho, the mistletoe
Hung where you can see
Somebody waits for you
Kiss her once for me**

Have a holly jolly Christmas

This Month's Contributors



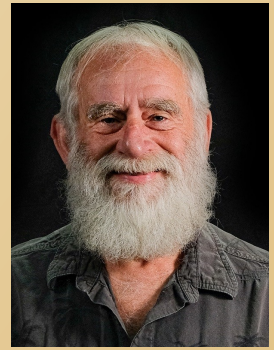
Tammie Walters, Editor



Sue Yost



Becky Bertoni



Hugh Franks



Mary Morrow



Jan Deatherage



Bryan Lewis



Jeanne Erickson



Jane Duke
(Thelma)



Toni Benjamin
(Louise)



Marilyn Blanton
(November's Newsletter)

My apologies to Marilyn Blanton. Not only did I fail to include her as a contributor in last month's newsletter, but I also mis-spelled her name on her *Nodding Ladies Tresses* article. I'm so sorry Marilyn!

Thank you all!

Articles and photos for the *Naturalist News* are always wanted and welcomed!

Send submissions to: newsletter@efctmn.org

Deadline for the January 2023 submissions is Friday, January 13th.

Almost the Last Word

SO, WHAT DID WE LEARN THIS YEAR?

From Jan Deatherage, President

It's easy to describe our organization as a "Learning" one. My guess is that most, if not all, of us joined this chapter to broaden our horizons, get closer to the natural world and make a difference. No one would argue that we haven't accomplished these goals, both individually and as a group. But, how do we continue to evolve such that we can continue to grow at a rate consistent with our ability to adapt and improve?

The annual report card for Elm Fork Chapter is on my mind, and perhaps yours as well. Here are some of my thoughts.

REPORT CARD

Language Arts: _____

With careful craftsmanship of messaging, communication channels and outreach, our quality of communication has made a real difference in our awareness and position in the communities we serve.

Social Studies: _____

Team building, getting reacquainted, Open House / Project Fair - all of these activities have stimulated new relationships and allowed us to nurture and appreciate our shared interests.

Geography: _____

New projects in new areas (Little Elm, Johnson Branch, GTWT Adopt-A-Loop) have expanded our impact and our membership.

Science: _____

From "Who Scat That?" to "Trails of North Texas", we've nourished plenty of brain cells and logged almost 3,000 hours of Advanced training.

Health: _____

N'uff said. We survived 2 disruptive years and came back strong. We can always stay in shape with some effort.

For those of us who remember our formative years, let's say from 1998 - 2010 (about 20% of us are still around) those were the years that we built our foundation. Over the years we've flourished and grown dramatically. The other 80% of our membership is comprised of those who've joined since then. That says a lot about staying power as well as growth. We have lessons to learn from both groups. And we will continue to learn.

Our membership is meaningful. We're more than just a hobby. In order to stay on a positive trajectory, we need to share our thoughts and ideas. I challenge you to think about our report card and let our chapter's leadership know how we should be graded. And in the years to come share the wisdom you've gained to make the world and our organization a better place.

Thanks to all of you for making this year meaningful and rewarding.

Almost the Last Word (cont.)

Nominees for Elm Fork Chapter Executive Officers 2023



JERRY BETTY - President

Texas Master Naturalist - Elm Fork Chapter:

Class of 2018

President 2021

Immediate Past President 2022

Elm Fork Chapter Treasurer 2020

Co-Project Leader for DISD School Days at Clear Creek

Project Manager - 2018 Class Project Greenhouse Restoration at Clear Creek (Class of 2018 Class Project)

40 Years in Industry on the inside looking out



KATHY WEBB - VICE PRESIDENT

Texas Master Naturalist - Elm Fork Chapter:

Class of 2017

Vice President 2022

Served as Project Committee Member - 2020

Wildlife Rehab Project - Co-Project Leader

NPSOT:

Member of Trinity Forks Chapter

Native Landscape Certified

Friends of Furneaux Creek - Vice President

ESL (English as a second language) Teacher

I started my career as a Medical Technologist and ended it as an IT Project Manager, working for several employers along the way, until retirement in 2017.

Nominees for Elm Fork Chapter Executive Officers 2023 (cont.)



MISSY MCCORMICK - Secretary

Texas Master Naturalist - Elm Fork Chapter:

Class of 2019

Coordinated snacks for the 2019 Intern Class

Served on the 2020 Initial Training Committee

Recent participation: CoCoRaHS and Project FeederWatch

Denton County Master Gardener Association:

Intern, Class of 2022

Board of Directors 2023, Secretary (recently elected)

Recent participation: Shiloh Field Community Garden, Communications Committee (web design team)

Retired from UNT in 2021 Experiences - administrative coordinator and event planning

I enjoy gardening, volunteering in the community, running, and adventures with my family.



RAY KREUTZFELD - Treasurer

Texas Master Naturalist - Elm Fork Chapter:

Class of 2014

I was transferred to Dallas by The Coca Cola Corporation in 1974. I consider this Very Good Fortune! In 1978, I joined a wholesale distribution company that sold Proprietary Diesel Fuel Injection repair parts to our dealer network and our internal repair facility. After a decade, I was asked to move on after a buyout. I landed at Fidelity Investments for the next 18 years. While there, I worked in Customer Service, Retirement Counseling and High-Level Customer Problem Resolution before transitioning to computer access control as a Data Security Officer for the remainder of my career. I have been retired since September 2009 and joined the Elm Fork Chapter with the Class of 2014. Van Elliott talked me into joining the Tech

Team and I have served as the VMS Approver for M-Z entries in VMS until October 2020. Jim Gerber is the new primary for this portion of the chapter with me as backup. My class asked me to be Class Representative in 2015 and represent us on the Board. I was then honored to be asked to serve as President of the Chapter in 2016. Following my term as President, I served on the Board as Past President in 2017. I always had an interest in the training of classes and was fortunate to serve on the Training Committee for three years. Besides my interests in the natural environment, I am mechanically proficient and enjoy my mechanical friends, build furniture, remodel my home, love boating, try to stay current on technology and enjoy golf, racquetball, water and snow skiing, staying fit through exercise and being creative when the spirit hits me.

Almost the Last Word

The TMN-EFC 2022 Membership Directory has been revised.

Click on the picture below to link to the updated directory.



Need a nice relaxing EFC Board position?

Harriet Powell will be leaving the board position of Member-at-Large at the end of the year. Nominations from the floor at our Christmas Luncheon for Member-at-Large will be held. A vote will take place if more than one nomination is made.

From the Chapter Operating Handbook:

- ~The Member-at-Large is elected to a one year term and may be re-elected for one additional year.
- ~Convey Chapter members concerns to the Chapter Leadership.
- ~Serve as a member of the Annual Awards Committee.
- ~At the discretion of the President other duties may be ascribed to the Member-at-Large.

*Wishing You All
A Very Merry Christmas*



Tammie Walters, Editor

WISHING YOU
**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**

You are a delightful group to work with, and we appreciate your service to our office and Denton County. We hope you have a joyous holiday season, and we look forward to seeing what 2023 holds!

From Janet and Gina

From Janet Laminack, AgriLife Hort. Agent, MN Advisor, and Gina Steiner, AgriLife Hort. Agent Assistant III

Who We Are



Texas Master Naturalist—Elm Fork Chapter

<https://txmn.org/elmfork/>

OFFICERS

President - Jan Deatherage

Vice President - Kathy Webb

Treasurer - Ray Kreutzfeld

Secretary - Barbara Beane

BOARD POSITIONS

Immediate Past President—Jerry Betty

Member-at-Large—Harriet Powell

BOARD DIRECTORS

Membership - Mary Morrow

VMS - Mike Hatch

Initial Training - Regina Dale

Communications - Donna Wolfe

Projects - Elise Spain

Advanced Training Programs - David Jones

Outreach/Adult Education - Fran Witte

CHAPTER ADVISORS

AgriLife – Janet Laminack, Extension Agent

Texas Parks and Wildlife—Daniel Rios



Our Mission

“To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.”

Our Vision

“In our community, Elm Fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist will be recognized as a primary source of information, education, and service to support natural resources and natural areas today and in the future.”

Regular Monthly Chapter Meetings

Meetings are on the third Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. preceded by a social time at 9:00 a.m.

Chapter meetings are open to the public.

Board Meetings

The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m.

Monthly Board meetings are open to members.

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

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