

# EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

November 2024

T E X A S

Master Naturalist™  
Elm Fork Chapter  
1999-2024



Celebrating  
— 25 YEARS —



Hello and thank you for your interest in the Texas Master Naturalist program !!!

*We engage Texans of all ages through education and outreach as one of the core tenets of the Texas Master Naturalist program.*

*Our Mission is 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.*

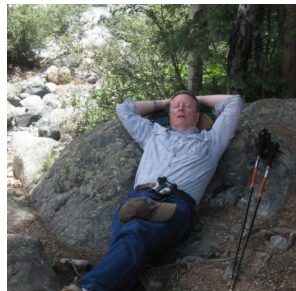
*"If it weren't for the rocks in its bed, the stream would have no song."*

*- Carl Perkins*

## Please Join Us for our Next Meeting

Master Naturalist meetings are open to the public.

This month's meeting program:  
"The Geology of Texas" presented by —  
Scott Kiester, Class of 2003,  
Elm Fork Chapter Master Naturalist



Thursday, November 21st  
9 am to Noon  
Denton County Administrative  
Courthouse, 3rd Floor,  
[1 Courthouse Dr, Denton, TX 76208](https://www.dentoncountytx.gov/1/courthouse)



# Take a Hike

Scientific research and health professionals agree that hitting the trails is advantageous for all aspects of fitness and mental wellness.

## Ray Roberts Lake State Park

3rd annual Walk off the Thanksgiving Stuffing Hike  
9:30 am -11:30 am  
November 29, 2024

Feeling a little stuffed from all the stuffing you ate for Thanksgiving? No problem! Join rangers at the Dogwood parking lot and go for a 5-mile hike to help work it off. Meet at Dogwood Parking Lot. Program is included in park fees (\$7 per person 13 years and older, Free for 12 years and younger).



[Ray Roberts Lake State Park - Johnson Branch Unit Map & Directions](#)

## Thrive Nature Park



Family Nature Walks  
Every 3rd Sunday  
9:00 am—10:30 am

Join Master Naturalists on an easy, family-friendly walk through **Thrive Nature Park**. We never know what we'll see or hear. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet up at the picnic table in the park near the Valley Pkwy. crosswalk. **Free!**

## Get Moving with New Walking Programs at Thrive!

Wellness In Nature  
Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday  
9:00 am—10:00 am

Nature strolls that educate, engage the senses, and uplift the spirits of seniors and caregivers. Led by Master Naturalists, these walks offer a chance to explore our local ecosystem, learn about the habitats around us, and enjoy the beauty of nature. **Free!**



For more information Thrive nature walks call 469.635.5300



Walk with a Doc  
November 9th  
8:00 am—9:00 am

Walk with a Doc is a walking program for everyone interested in taking steps for a healthier lifestyle. You'll take a few minutes to learn about a current health topic, then spend the rest of the hour enjoying a healthy walk and fun conversation. It's a great way to get out, get active, and enjoy all the benefits that come from walking. Walk your own pace and distance. **Free!**

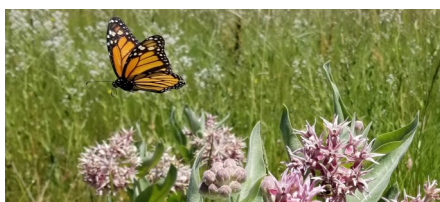
**Thrive Nature Park**  
**1950 S Valley Pkwy, Lewisville, TX 75067**

# Project Spotlight

## Milkweed Seed Conservation

The goal of this project is to gather and package milkweed seeds for distribution to public seed libraries, pollinator gardens, and way stations. In addition, milkweed plants are propagated and both seeds and plants are given away at booths where Elm Fork Chapter Master Naturalists participate in various Outreach events.

With monarch butterfly populations in decline and with their status vacillating between threatened and endangered, propagating the only host plant for this species is paramount. Through habitat destruction, there are fewer and fewer milkweed plants to host the eggs and larvae.



Adding these plants to existing or future plantings will have a direct impact on the survival of this species. Milkweed seeds are harvested from permissible areas and processed, and distributed with information on how to germinate and grow milkweed in private and public gardens.

Elm Fork Chapter volunteers assist with the following activities:

- ◇ Harvesting seeds
- ◇ Removing floss
- ◇ Packaging seeds in envelopes
- ◇ Labeling seeds with abbreviated instructions and scientific name and including more detailed instructions as an insert
- ◇ Distributing seeds.

Seeds can be harvested twice a year, late June and late October. The germination, potting and transplanting takes an additional 3 months.

There are over 100 species of milkweeds in the Americas and over 30 of them are native to Texas. Two of the most important for monarch butterflies are Antelope Horns and Green Milkweed. They are common milkweeds that grow in pastures and along roadsides throughout the central flyway of Texas, the path that most Monarchs take on their migration through Texas.



(Green Milkweed, *Asclepias viridis*)

The overall shape for a mature Green Milkweed plant is multiple stems ascending into a V or vase shape from a central point. It grows taller in Texas than in other states, and some particularly happy plants reach over two feet tall.



(Antelope Horns Milkweed, *Asclepias asperula*)

The overall shape for a mature Antelope Horns Milkweed plant is sprawling with multiple stems radiating out in a circle from a central point. Some lie very close to the ground. Those getting less than full sun may be a bit taller and more upright, but they are never as tall as Green Milkweed.



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

# Plant Native

## Choosing plants for fall seed sowing

Fall is a great time to select native plant seeds and get a jump start on your spring gardens by sowing seeds now. You will not only save money on plants, but fall-seeded plants bloom sooner than spring-seeded plants.

**- SEED BALL RECIPE -**

“Remember when you were a kid and used to eat dirt? Well, this is the best,” Neiman told a group of students as he sifted one hand through a bucketful of red powder clay. “And you have to use this when making seed balls.” Neiman, who owns the Native American Seed Company in Junction, talked about restoring Texas’ diminishing tallgrass prairies as he showed the youngsters what goes into a seed ball recipe:

- 6 parts dry sifted clay
- 1 part dry sifted compost
- 2 parts seeds (native grasses and wildflowers)
- 1 part water

are mixed into a mushy dough and rolled into half-inch balls. The balls are then allowed to dry and harden. After that, they simply may be tossed on the ground; Mother Nature does the rest.

- from Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine

There are many places to buy native plant seeds, but one Texas company that is dedicated to helping people restore the earth with native plants is Native American Seed.

This family-owned business is located in Texas and different from many other wildflower seed companies because they only sell seeds for plants that are native to our bioregion.

Native American Seed is also committed to environmental education.

<https://seedsources.com/learning-naturally/>

Seed balls can be a fun family or group project and can protect seeds and keep them in one place until they receive enough water to grow -- just scatter them where you want them to grow and let nature take over. It really is that simple!

If you're interested in growing Mikweed for Monarchs, it's recommended to cold stratify the seeds first. Here's is a process for seed stratification to follow, courtesy of Native American Seed.

1. Mix seeds with pre-chilled distilled water and let soak for 24 hours in the fridge.
2. After 24 hours, pour seeds into strainer and rinse with distilled water.
3. Moisten vermiculite with distilled water. The quantity required varies to vermiculite quantity...moist but not dripping is best.
4. Mix rinsed seeds into vermiculite using your hands, and wear sterile gloves.
5. Seal container and store in fridge for 30-45 days at 35-45 degrees. Remove and plant immediately if you see mold.
6. Plant entire mixture or sift seeds out and plant in prepared seed bed when soil temps are warm (70 degrees+).
7. Water often until germination occurs.



## FREE POLLINATOR FRIENDLY PLANTING GUIDES



Invite pollinators to your neighborhood by planting a pollinator friendly habitat in your garden, farm, school, park or just about anywhere!



There is a wide variety of native plants that you can add to your garden and consider to begin the process of creating a completely native landscape on your property.

If you're interested in obtaining pollinator planting information and a searchable database where you can download your own plant list, Check out this [Find Your Roots Tool!](#)

Also, consider downloading a planting guide for our ecoregion!! <https://www.pollinator.org/pollinator.org/assets/generalFiles/Great.Plains.Palouse.Dry.Steppe.2020.ver2.pdf>

Visit our [YouTube Channel](#) for educational videos on many topics!!!



# Nature Talks



## Let's talk Turkey!

10:00 am -11:00 am  
November 23, 2024

*Once on the brink of extirpation, wild turkey in Texas have experienced a comeback thanks to the collaborative efforts of state agencies, non-profits and private landowners.*

Come to the **Ray Roberts Lake State Park Nature Center** to learn from a Ranger about our favorite holiday bird! Learn about the history and myth of these famous birds, then create some fun turkey masks to take home. Program is included in park fees. (\$7 per person 13 years and older, Free for 12 years and younger).

**Ray Roberts Lake State Park - Johnson Branch Unit**  
**Map & Directions**

## Every Rock tells a story...

In 100 million years, the landscape and wildlife of North Texas has changed dramatically, as Denton, Wise and Cooke Counties were once entirely immersed by the ocean. This area was home to a variety of ocean creatures and dinosaurs as the oceans receded giving way to wetlands.

Today's North Texas geological land features were formed by the ocean and massive water currents, and redefined as tectonic plates shifted. Mass extinction, weather phenomena, and adaptation of plants and wildlife also redefined much of the Texas landscape into modern plains, lakes, rivers, and forests.



**If you know where to look, you can still see the little stories left behind.** Rock and fossil hunting can be very exciting and educational. A rare fossil find of a prehistoric fish from over 100 million years ago was made in the backyard of residents of Aubrey, Texas in 2012 and is now on exhibit at the University of North Texas.

Check out this group of geologists sharing their passion with collectors and explorers interested in the world of geology!  
<https://rockchasing.com/fossils-in-texas/>

## More Educational Opportunities...



**Interested in having a Master Naturalist as a speaker for your next event?**

The Elm Fork Chapter Speakers Bureau provides a resource to the community for quality speakers presenting on topics related to issues that correspond to the Chapter's mission and vision.

**Request a Speaker**

**Questions ???**

email [speakers@efctmn.org](mailto:speakers@efctmn.org)

In addition to this **Educational Opportunities** newsletter, The Elm Fork Chapter produces a monthly newsletter for it's members; **"Naturalist News"**. *This newsletter provides more education and detailed information on our Chapter, including the work and play involved in our projects, and training.* Now available in an audio version:

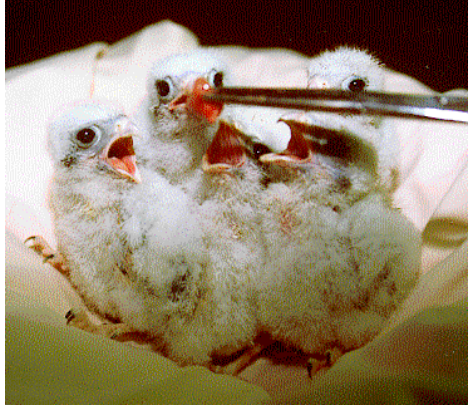


# You Can Help!

Texas Parks and Wildlife has made available a list of permitted wildlife rehabilitators in the state of Texas for your use should you find a wild animal in need of assistance. —[Wildlife Rehabilitator By County](#).

Most wildlife rehabilitators work out of their homes, and volunteer their time. No state funding is available for animal caging, veterinary care, medicine or food. For this reason, most rehabilitators depend greatly upon donations from the public to help defray the costs associated with rehabilitating injured wildlife.

**Remember, wildlife rehabilitators are volunteers.**



Please note that Texas Parks and Wildlife Department staff advise the general public not to handle or attempt to transport injured, sick or orphaned wildlife. In order to possess or transport any indigenous wildlife in Texas, a permit is required by Texas law (PWC Chapter 43, Sec. 43.022).

Please take some time to familiarize yourself about rabies and other diseases wild animals carry. Wild animals can carry diseases that are transferrable to pets and humans. For more information, visit the [Texas Department of State Health Services Zoonotic Health Topics webpage](#).

Realize that you may not be able to contact a rehabilitator immediately. Wildlife rehabilitators are permitted to work on only the species named on their permits, so please keep in mind they will not be able help with species that are not named on their permits and may refer you elsewhere. Patience is often necessary when trying to secure help for injured or orphaned wildlife.



**DFW Wildlife Coalition** strives to encourage an alliance between licensed wildlife rehabbers, wildlife centers, rescue organizations and government agencies to provide solutions for wildlife and our citizens.

DFW Wildlife Coalition strives to share solutions by giving proper referrals when wildlife needs help, providing education about native animals, and promoting coexistence in our neighborhoods. Hotline volunteers will listen compassionately and assist in problem-solving the wildlife concern or emergency you are experiencing in your yard or community. Every call is important to both the citizen and the wildlife involved! Volunteers are making a difference one call, one person and one animal at a time.

## Lights Out Texas!

**Texas is globally important for birds.** Approximately 1 of every 3 birds migrating through the U.S. in spring, and 1 of every 4 birds migrating through the U.S. in the fall, or nearly two billion birds, passes through Texas in one of the planet's greatest wildlife spectacles.



**Lights Out, Texas** is a campaign of education, awareness, and action that focuses on protecting the billions of migratory birds traveling through Texas.

### HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Building owners, businesses, developers and homeowners can help protect migrating birds by turning off all non-essential nighttime lighting on buildings and other structures from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. each night.

<https://texanbynature.org/projects/lights-out-texas/>

# About Us...

## 2024 marks the 25th anniversary of the Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists



### 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.

### Vision

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



Conservation



Preservation



Restoration

### Training

The Elm Fork Chapter offers training for new Master Naturalists each year. Classes include instruction from statewide curriculum materials and from local experts on a wide range of natural resource topics. Look for information about the Training Program on the website.



### Service

Members volunteer thousands of service hours each year through work on projects which involve education, public outreach, trail clearing, tree planting, prairie restoration, and so much more.

We look forward to YOU becoming a Texas Master Naturalist!!!

To become a Texas Master Naturalist, please email us at:  
[training@efctmn.org](mailto:training@efctmn.org).

The Texas Master Naturalist-Elm Fork Chapter proudly serves Denton, Cooke and Wise counties.

The Elm Fork Chapter was established in 1999, as one of the first chapters in the state. We are a group of over 200 active members, sharing our curiosity, knowledge and love of nature.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is a partnership between the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife, and other local partners.



Keep up to date on the wonderful world of the Elm Fork Chapter Texas Master Naturalist program.



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