

# Fredericksburg Nature Notes



## Newsletter of the Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center

May, 2020 Volume 1 Number 1

<http://fredericksburgnaturecenter.com/>

### Editor's Note: Lonnie Childs

Dear Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center,

Welcome to our first monthly newsletter. Our intent is to provide monthly communications to our members and supporters on what is happening at the Nature Center, whether it be work projects underway, observations about Mother Nature's offerings, or other content that might be of interest to you. We do this in the spirit of recognizing the hard work and commitment by our volunteers, the financial support by our membership, and the beautiful nature facility that Mother Nature offered us for our enhancement efforts. We heartily encourage your participation at the Nature Center either through work or just enjoying the trails and gardens. If you have observations, sightings, or other content that you would like to share for inclusion in the newsletter, please send them to Lonnie Childs at [lonniechilds@utexas.edu](mailto:lonniechilds@utexas.edu). We would love to hear from you.

Happy Nature Trails!

*Lonnie*

### Trail Notes:

**The trails and gardens are open!** If you are suffering from cabin fever and ready to get out and explore a piece of the natural world, our Nature Center represents a convenient and safe place to experience some "Nature Bathing" which studies have shown can reduce anxiety and lower blood pressure. We do ask you to engage in "social distancing" while on the trails and in the garden and not gather in groups. We have signs posted to encourage all visitors to do so.

**Work Projects:** The pandemic has slowed and delayed our volunteer work efforts. We have continued with needed maintenance in the gardens and been able to continue with enhancements at the Bird Blind. Just prior to the virus outbreak, Texas Exes volunteers helped Mary Ellen Terrell and team work on trail improvements and creation of an enhanced understory area near the Bird Blind. Mary Ellen continues to plant specimen native plants which will



**OUR MISSION STATEMENT: “To enhance, protect and interpret the natural ecosystems of the Texas hill country while providing educational and quality of life opportunities for members of the community and visitors”**

provide natural beauty and improved bird habitat. After the addition of our water feature, Bill Lindemann with help continues to improve the Bird feeding area with a dry creek bed lined with the native plants.

An early April flood dislodged the bridge across the creek. With the City’s assistance, it has been moored back in place. We are assessing whether an improved bridge might be built.

Work efforts at the Pollinator Garden have largely centered on maintenance, but Gracie Waggener and team have added a new planting area with rock paths in the back of the garden.

#### **Upcoming projects include:**

- ◆ Continued enhancements to the Bird Blind area and nearby understory area
- ◆ Renovation of the Cactus & Hummingbird garden at the far end of the Live Oak Trail
- ◆ Assessment & potential of new bridge system

**Volunteer Opportunities:** Our dedicated crew of volunteers generally work weekly on Tuesdays. The pandemic and recommended guidelines have hindered our efforts and caused us to alter our normal work routine. A small crew of volunteers continues to work while practicing social distancing and not congregating in groups. We hope to return to a more normal routine sometime in the future. Our volunteer hours qualify for credit with the Hill Country Master Naturalist chapter. If you would like to consider volunteering, contact Gracie Waggener at [gwaggener@flow-apps.com](mailto:gwaggener@flow-apps.com), and she can explain the opportunities and add you to the weekly email distribution which announces the work schedule for the week.

## **Trail Observations**

It’s Spring, Bird migrations are in full flight, flowers are blooming...you get the picture. So it is a wonderful time to hike the trails and visit the gardens. Here are some of the flora and fauna that you might encounter.

**Snakes:** We have had several reports of snakes sighted along the creek area. Most probably these were harmless, commonly seen Blotched or Diamond-backed Water Snakes, since Western Cottonmouth are not very rare in the Pedernales River watershed. However, if you see a snake on the trail, just remember that they have been practicing social distancing for eons, observe from afar, and give them wide berth so that they can make their escape.



*"And into the forest I go to lose my mind and find my soul. "*

*John Muir*

## Trail Observations continued

**Butterflies:** Bill Lindemann identified a new species for our nature center and also a first occurrence in the county. Meet the Long-tailed Skipper (*Urbanus proteus*)! He looks a little worse for the wear since he flew some distance to check out our Pollinator Garden. This represents #80 on our Butterfly species list.

### **Wildflowers on the Trails:**

This is a great time to walk the trails at intervals which will allow you to see a succession of wildflowers coming into bloom. By early April, 40-45 of our 260 species were identifiable on a typical walk. Some of the species that are present in late April were Texas Star, Drummond's Phlox, Prairie Verbena, Englemann's Daisy, Yarrow, and Little-leaf Sensitive Briar. Here are a few samples to entice you to the trail hopefully.



Long-tailed Skipper  
(*Urbanus proteus*)

Photo by Bill Lindemann



Englemann's Daisy  
(*Engelmannia pinnatifida*)

Photo by Lonnie Childs

Painted Lady



Little-leaf Sensitive Briar  
(*Mimosa microphylla*)

Photo by Lonnie Childs



Texas Star  
(*Lindheimera texana*)

Photo by Lonnie Childs



**"The earth laughs in flowers. "**

**"What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have never been discovered."**

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

## **Bird Sightings @ the Blind**

Tis the season for migration by our avian friends. Birds are returning to the Hill Country for the summer or some are passing through making it an opportune time to visit the Bird Blind regularly to see who is in attendance. The addition of the water feature has proven to be an attractant to more species. Our Species Board posted at the Blind reveals 34 species that have been recently seen. Some of the most popular were a Black-capped Vireo, Painted Bunting, Indigo Bunting, Summer Tanager and migrating Yellow and Nashville Warblers. The creek area also affords another great viewing habitat, so make it a habit to regularly visit this convenient birding sight.



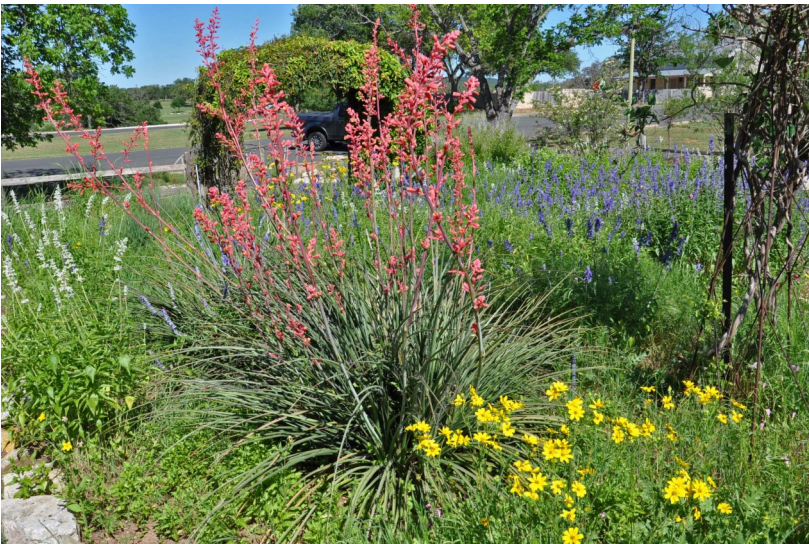


*"The most beautiful gift of nature is that it gives one pleasure to look around and try to comprehend what we see ."*

**Albert Einstein**

## What's Blumen at the Pollinator Garden?

The Pollinator Garden is coming into prime spring form as flowers successfully come into bloom. And it's performing the mission of attracting pollinators (see photos below). Blooming now are Mealy Blue Sage, Coral Yucca, Engelmann's Daisy, Yarrow, Lantana, and Orange Milkweed. Below is what you can see in person, so pay a visit!



Coral Yucca

*Hesperaloe parviflora*



Mealy Blue Sage  
*Salvia farinace* w/  
Sonoran Bumblebee  
*Bombis sonor*



Red Admiral on  
Mealy Blue Sage

Photos by  
Lonnie Childs

**Volunteer Pollinators say thanks for the chance to volunteer. Someone has to do it!**



**“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”**  
**John Muir**

## **Scheduled Events**

May 20 The Original Texans, Archeology Presentation by Steve Stoutamire Tatsch House

**TO BE RE-SCHEDULED**

July 15 Who’s That Knocking in the Woods? A Woodpecker Presentation by Bill Lindemann

**TO BE DETERMINED. LOOK FOR FUTURE UPDATES.**



A Monarch holds court on  
Orange Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

at the Pollinator Garden Photo by Lonnie Childs

**Thanks for your continued support of the  
Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center!**

**If you have not sent in your 2020 dues, please consider doing so.**

**Go to <http://fredericksburgnaturecenter.com/membership> for more information**