

Fredericksburg Nature Notes



Newsletter of the Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center

October, 2023 Volume 4 Number 10

<http://fredericksburgnaturecenter.com>

Editor's Musings: **Lonnie Childs**

Dear Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center,

Our Interpretive Center project continues to move forward as our architectural team of SKT Architects and Dunaway work on developing a schematic design. Although we have not formally initiated a public fundraising campaign (soon to come), local donors who wish to remain anonymous have gifted us a \$100,000 donation to cover the estimated design fees of the project. Along with our existing fund balance and other smaller donations, this generous gift will take us through the design phase of the project and provide financial credibility to our effort with other potential donors and grantors. We will only be successful if we can earn the support of generous benefactors like these who believe in the importance of our commitment to educate our community and children about appreciating and preserving our Hill Country natural resources. If you are interested in becoming involved with or supporting our project, please feel free to contact me.

In other good news, our fence contractor has begun work on installing a deer exclusion fence around the Pollinator Garden. The "Oma fence" facsimile will consist of cedar posts with pipe railing to provide an attractive rustic aesthetic and exclude the marauding deer. We will also install a much needed pipe rail on the steps down to Live Oak Creek for safety purposes. Thanks to all who contributed to these needed improvements. We are proud to finally complete these two projects from our Strategic Plan for 2023.

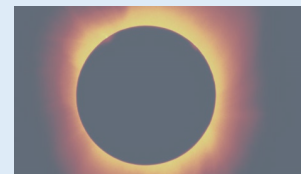
The weather is cooling, we can take pleasure in at least a splash of rain at the park, and we have some time before the year's first frost. That adds up to a good opportunity to visit the gardens or take a hike and experience our second spring at the park. You won't be disappointed.

Happy Nature Trails!

Lonnie

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- Blumen & Flutterin' at the Garten
- Annular Eclipse





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.”*

FFNC Activities—Happy Volunteers Working at the Garden!



Barbara Romano

One of our new volunteers & a Master Naturalist in Training



Laura King



Laura Grant

No weed can escape the two Lauras!

Photos by Deb Youngblood

Tuesday Fundays at FNC are in full swing!

Volunteer!

We continue to perform **Trail Work** with ongoing maintenance and improvement projects. **Gardening Activities** are in full swing with cleaning, trimming, and weeding.

Typical tasks involve gardening skills and trail maintenance, but no experience is necessary. Use it as a learning opportunity. Work in whatever area you choose for as long as you choose. We work some and have a lot of fun outside in the beauty of nature. It's good exercise for the body and great therapy for the soul.

If you would like to join us at the park, we would love to have you!

Work sessions are typically scheduled for **Tuesdays at 8:30am.**

Contact Gracie Waggener at gwaggener@flow-apps.com to receive a weekly email notification about scheduled work tasks for the coming week.



"In the end we retain from our studies only that which we practically apply." Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

FFNC Activities— Monarchs and Milkweed Propagation Workshop



Photos by Deb Youngblood

1



Photo by Deb Youngblood

2

On September 13th, ~90 people were treated to a presentation by Cathy Downs educating them on Monarch butterflies, their miraculous migration, and how to support them by propagating their host plants, Milkweeds. Attendees created propagation kits to take home & grow their own milkweeds. Gracie Waggener, FFNC Board member, was the co-organizer of this well-received workshop.

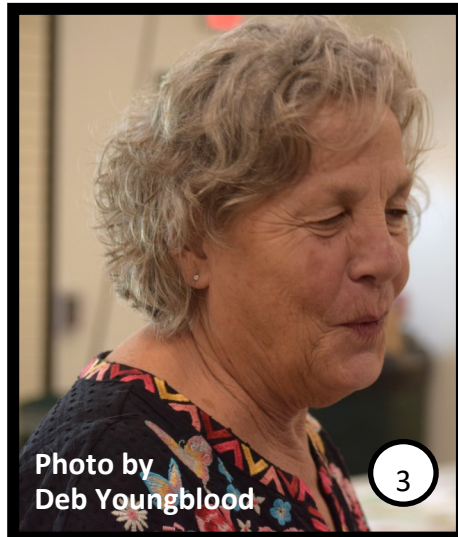


Photo by Deb Youngblood

3



Photo by Patti Guin

4

Photos:

1 & 2—Cathy Downs presents to audience & provides instruction to attendees.

3—Gracie Waggener

4—Carol Knutsen creates her propagation kit.

5—Attendees listen to Cathy Downs.



Photo by Deb Youngblood

5



“No good field work can be reliable without a written record, set down in the field. No record kept in the head can be as accurate or precise as one in writing.” Steven G. Herman

Upcoming Program—Register Now!

Learning Through Nature Journaling

Nature Series Workshop – Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center



Presenter: Nancy Huffman

**When: Saturday, October 28, 2023
10:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon**

**Location: Tatsch House
Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park
Fredericksburg, TX**

**Approved for Two (2) Hours of Texas Master Naturalist Advanced Training Credit
AT23-064**

Nature Journals & Pencils will be Provided

Nature Journaling (or having a “nature notebook”) is a way to record what you notice in nature. It can help fine-tune your observation skills and can also be a way to practice mindfulness as well as helping you recognize things in nature that you are grateful for and enjoy observing. This unique workshop will be conducted by lifelong artist, Nancy Huffman, who utilizes nature journaling as a tool for teaching and to facilitate deeper learning.

Nancy is a certified Texas Master Naturalist, President of the Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society, and Vice-President of the Hunt Garden Club. From her years as an art teacher and environmental service volunteer, her personal journaling ranges from landscape sketchbooks to learning about native plants.

Nancy will guide you through some simple exercises to get started, so that you can jump right in and keep it a stress free and positive experience whether you are a citizen scientist, a student, or an aspiring artist. Nature Journals and pencils will be provided. As part of the day’s activities, participants will also visit the FFNC Pollinator Garden located near the workshop.

This facility has limited seating. You will need to make your reservation early by emailing Gracie Waggener at gwaggener@flow-apps.com

Observations Along the Trail— A little rain!



Palafoxia

Palafoxia callosa

An annual that grows in the dry, gavelly soil on the bluff above Live Oak Creek.



Blue Misflower or Boneset

Conoclinium coelestinum

A perennial that grows along Live Oak Creek & attracts butterflies. A cousin to Gregg's Mistflower that is a popular garden species.



Low Wild or Prairie Petunia

Ruellia humilis

Perennial growing along upper Live Oak Trail. Larval plant for several butterflies.

Observations Along the Trail— Beneficial Weeds?

Prairie Tea or One Seed Croton
(*Croton monanthogynus*)

Photo by Lonnie Childs



Woolly Croton (*Croton capitatus* var. *lindheimeri*)

Photo by Lonnie Childs



Goatweed Leafwing
(*Anaea andria*)

Photo by Bill Lindemann

These recognizable **Crotons** are members of the **Euphorbia family (Spurges)** and are annuals that generally inhabit prairies or woodland edges. All are commonly referred to as **Goatweed or Doveweed** & considered to be undesirable weeds in pastures. Their toxicity is debated, but consensus is that they can cause gut issues with cows and even goats. So why the name?! Crotons can be aggressive spreaders on disturbed soils. However, their seeds are desirable food for dove & quail, & they serve as larval hosts for the aptly named **Goatweed Leafwing butterfly**. Crotons have their place in habitats, but it should be limited in population and space.



Texas Croton (*Croton texensis*)

Photo by Robert L. Stone

Blumen at the Garten



Beautyberry
(Callicarpa americana)

Goldenrod
Solidago sp.



Kidneywood
Eysenhardtia texana



"We still do not know one thousandth of one percent of what nature has revealed to us."
Albert Einstein

Monarchs at the Garten



Photo by Dot Maginot



Photo by Deb Youngblood



Monarch butterflies are passing through on their long journey to central Mexico where they will over winter. It takes 3-4 generations to migrate northward from Mexico to as far north as Canada. Adults stop along the way to lay eggs on host milkweeds which then hatch and continue the migration. The south-bound journey is made by one generation travelling on the winds of fronts and stopping only to feed on nectar plants, which you can provide in your gardens. Unfortunately, not all the southbound migrants will make it, if they encounter high winds or other hazards that damage their wings as seen below.



Photo by Deb Youngblood



Photo by Deb Youngblood

Buzzin' at the Garten



Photo by Dot Maginot

Scoliid Wasp
*Scoliidae family/
Scolinae sub-family*

A sub-family of common solitary wasps that are large, hairy & often black. They are beetle hunters whose females dig in soil, find a beetle grub, sting it, and lay an egg on it. The hatched larva eats the beetle grub. Is this why we refer to food as grub?

Skimmer Dragonfly
Libellulidae family

The most common and colorful of the dragonfly family. They are acrobatic lovers who mate in flight. Skimmers are beneficial insects who feed on mosquitoes, flies, and other flying insects.



Photo by Deb Youngblood



Photo by Deb Youngblood

Swift Setwing Dragonfly
Dythemis velox

Another Skimmer species known for the forward set of its wings when at rest.



"None of God's Creatures absolutely consider'd are in their own Nature Contemptible; the meanest Fly, the poorest Insect has its Use and Vertue."
Mary Astell (a non-gardener probably)

Undesirables in the Garten



Differential Grasshopper *Melanoplus differentialis*

This species common to the central US is an agricultural pest capable of damage of biblical proportions.

Photo by Dot Maginot

Asian Trampsnail

Bradybaena similaris

This species of small, invasive land snail hitch-hiked from SE Asia to the US & around the globe by attaching itself to shipping containers, thus its common name. It enjoys humid environments with lots of vegetation which it destructively consumes. This species could be the poster pest for the slang term—Yuck!



Photo by Deb Youngblood



"To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves."
Mahatma Gandhi

Cowpen Daisies Know No Boundaries

Cowpen Daisy, Golden Crownbeard, Butter Daisy (*Verbesina encelioides*) This golden aster grows within and out of the Pollinator Garden. A freely seeding annual, it takes hold in disturbed soils such as cow pens and thus might be considered a "pioneer" plant in fulfilling an ecological service by anchoring un-vegetated topsoil. In the sandy Pedernales River valley, it can form large stands of golden blooms, or you might see circles of flowers inhabiting the understory of an oak tree where the grazing cows or mower cannot reach it. They serve as April to October nectar sources for butterflies, bees, and fall migrating Monarchs while also hosting Bordered Patch butterflies. Some might consider it a weed, but you can mow its perimeter if you need a tidier look.



Not readily found in nurseries, collect seeds or purchase them at [Native American Seed](#).



Back side of Pollinator Garden

Photos by Lonnie Childs



"When you do something noble and beautiful and nobody noticed, do not be sad. For the sun every morning is a beautiful spectacle and yet most of the audience still sleeps." John Lennon

The Annular Eclipse Comes to Fred!



What: Annular Eclipse

When: Saturday, October 14, 10:30am-1:30PM (roughly)

Where: Your backyard or someone else's with a good view of the sky

By now, you do know that we will be treated to an Annular Eclipse as a preview to the April, 2024, Total Eclipse, right? If not, it's time to prepare for the awesome experience. There will not be another Annular Eclipse in the US until 2039, in Alaska.

What is an Annular Eclipse? It happens when the Moon is farthest from Earth & passes between the Sun and Earth. Because the Moon is farther away from Earth, it does not completely block the entire view of the Sun, leaving a glowing corona around the Sun.

Learn more about the types of solar eclipses at [Solar Eclipses Explained](#).

Check out the Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce [eclipse website](#). There are links to purchase proper eclipse eyewear & info on how to prepare.

[NASA's website](#) also provides useful information, including fun ideas for watching the eclipse indirectly & projecting on to surfaces.

This Annular Eclipse is sponsored by the Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center (we wish).

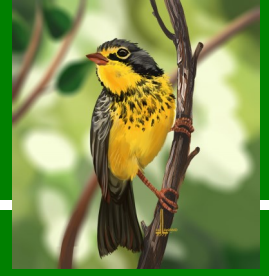
Safety Information:

"The Sun is never completely blocked by the Moon during an annular solar eclipse. Therefore, during an annular eclipse, it is NEVER safe to look directly at the Sun without specialized eye protection designed for solar viewing." NASA

For more information on how to safely watch the annular eclipse, go to [NASA's website](#).



"In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous."
Aristotle



Create an Avian B&B for Migrating Birds

Bird Lover Tips for Fall

- Offer **high-calorie foods** for migrating birds such as nyjer, cracked corn, nuts, black oil sunflower seeds, or nectar. Put out some suet feeders.
- Now that it is cool enough to work outside, consider **adding a water source** which is really beneficial year-round & will attract a greater diversity of birds & wildlife.
- **Plant native plants** that will provide berries as a food source for fall and winter.
- Plant **seed producing wildflowers**. Don't pick or mow the spent flowers & seedheads.
- **Leave leaf litter** under some trees to provide insects for food & a space to endure colder temperatures.
- **Perform feeder maintenance.**
- Make time to **watch for & enjoy migrating birds** not resident in our area.



Nature's News of the Weird



10 Birds that Changed the World Forever

Read all about it. Right Click [HERE](#) & Open Link



"Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—over and over announcing your place in the family of things."
Mary Oliver



Lantana urticoides by Dot Maginot
Texas Native



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