

# Fredericksburg Nature Notes



## Newsletter of the Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center

October, 2024 Volume 5 Number 10

<http://fredericksburgnaturecenter.com>

### Editor's Musings: **Lonnie Childs**

**Dear Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center,**

Our first fall front has momentarily broken the overstay of summer heat, albeit a month late. Heavy rains in July and August punctuated our continuing drought and quenched the parched landscape a bit, only to revert to dryness again. Native grasses perked up, went to seed, only to quickly brown out. Our actual weather continues to reinforce the adage that *"Texas weather is long periods of drought interrupted by periodic floods."* But the peaks and valleys of the cycle seem to be intensifying accompanied by the perception that the traditional climatic patterns are waning into less defined patterns. When you live in the microcosm of daily weather, it's hard to have any perspective other than it's hot and thirsty. Maybe Mark Twain provided the simpler answer when he observed, *"Climate is what we expect, weather is what we get."* Anyway, weather is the subject of conversation that keeps on giving, sometimes in rude fashion.

Our landscape at the nature center enjoyed a brief resurgence, but we did not get the full fall bloom of wildflowers that we hope to receive along the trails. However, the gardens provide an ample alternative and doorway into what nature can be with a little water added. Make a visit to the Butterfly Habitat or the Pollinator Garden, and you will be treated to a panoply of blooms populated by pollinators of all sorts.

In closing, FFNC would like to extend a hearty thanks to the Community Foundation for the Texas Hill Country for a \$6500 grant that will allow us to install another new exhibit panel focused on water conservation. The installation of these new innovative exhibits furthers our educational mission and delivers the message in a natural setting, which is the best classroom of all.

**Happy Nature Trails!**

*Lonnie*

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## OUR VISION STATEMENT:

*To create a community of Land Stewards to protect our natural resources into the future.*

## Volunteer with FFNC

### Fun Tuesdays at FNC

Typical tasks involve **gardening skills** and **trail improvement and maintenance projects**, 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 (Spring to Fall). We shorten our work period in summer to avoid heat exhaustion!**

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

### Other Volunteer Opportunities that don't require physical labor:

- **Newsletter**—write articles, editing and production
- **Website**—content management, website maintenance
- **Membership management**
- **Programs**



For more information about these opportunities, contact Lonnie Childs @ [lonniechilds@utexas.edu](mailto:lonniechilds@utexas.edu)

*Our projects are approved for service hours by the Hill Country Master Naturalist chapter.*



## OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

*Promoting the preservation of our Texas Hill Country ecosystems through education and experiences.*

## QR Code Signage Gets a Re-do



Our QR code signage has begged for an update for several years, & thanks to **Trudy Eberhardt**, new & improved signage has been installed in locations easily visible. Trudy prepped the posts, designed new signage, arranged for their manufacture, & organized their installation. A big thanks to **Gordon Downey, Dave Oelreich, Frank Garcia, Billy Guin, & Carl Luckenbach** for assisting with the installation.

For those unfamiliar with the QR code signs, as you walk the trails, you will encounter cedar posts with signage attached & a 1-2 word explanation (ex. Geology) that indicates the subject of more information to be provided via the QR code link. Use the QR code app on your phone to access the additional information that will enhance your educational experience on the trails. Learn while you hike. For the old-fashioned types, we do still provide paper hand-outs at the entrance kiosks that provide this information.



Photos by Lonnie Childs



Dave Oelreich & Lonnie Childs install new posts.

Photo by Trudy Eberhardt





*"If you smile when you see a butterfly, you have happiness in your soul."*  
Diana Cooper

## The Incredible Journey

by Rebecca Stapleton, TMN

Monarch butterflies migrate twice a year, embarking on an incredible journey of about 3,000 miles. Their journey exposes them to numerous hazards including legal and illegal logging, deforestation to make room for urban and agricultural development, the use of pesticides and herbicides, busy highways/ roadways, and climate changes creating drought and severe weather conditions.

In the autumn, they travel south from their northern breeding grounds in Canada and the northern United States. Beginning the journey around the first of October into early November, they arrive in Mexico where they overwinter. About March, they begin the migration back to Canada and the northern US with successive generations laying their eggs along the way in the southern states before they die. The March butterflies only live for about six weeks, so it takes several generations of Monarchs to complete the spring migration back to the north. Monarchs born in late August will live up to nine months and are the ones to complete the entire journey from the north to Mexico.



Photo by Rebecca Stapleton

There are two main flyways that take Monarch butterflies through Texas. The Central Flyway goes from Wichita Falls to Eagle Pass and the Coastal flyway along the Texas coast. The pathway of these flyways is only about 300 miles wide, and given good weather conditions, the Monarchs can cover up to 100 miles a day.

In spite of the dangers along their route, we can do things to help them along the way. One is to create native pollinator gardens planting nectar plants and milkweeds. Milkweeds are essential to the survival of the Monarchs, since it is the only host plant on which they will lay their eggs. Nectar plants provide them with a source of energy and nourishment. Creating watering stations in the garden provides safe access to water. A shallow saucer containing pebbles or sea shells provides a safe landing surface for a drink. The water evaporates quickly ensuring that mosquitoes can't breed, and filling it frequently ensures fresh water for butterflies. Limiting or eliminating the use of pesticides and herbicides on our property and advocating with climate change organizations are also of great benefit to help ensure the return of these beautiful jewels of nature to our garden year after year.



**“Horned Lizard sightings are often considered good luck signs. In today’s world, if you see one, you are in fact lucky.”**

**Anonymous**

## **Horned Toads—the Return of a Beloved Species**



On September 21st, FFNC workshop participants were treated to a presentation by **Nathan Rains, TPWD Regional Wildlife Diversity Biologist**, on a joint program by TPWD & the Fort Worth Zoo to propagate juvenile lizards for a return to the wild at Mason Mountain WMA. It is a costly & low probability process, but we are rooting for the beloved lizards!

### **Facts about Horny Toads**

- **Texas state reptile**
- **Three species in Texas**
- **80% mortality rate for hatchlings in the wild**
- **Causes for species decline are unproven but predation is high along with habitat loss**
- **They can emit blood from their eyes targeted at eyes or mouth of canid predators who find the chemicals repulsive**



**Texas Horned Lizard aka “Horny Toad”  
*Phrynosoma cornutum***

**Photos by Lonnie Childs**



"If the bee disappears from the surface of the earth, man would have no more than four years to live."

Albert Einstein

## At the Pollinator Garten



Photo by  
Phil Stapleton

**Black Bee Killer**  
Aka Beelzebub Bee Killer  
*Mallophora leschenaultia*  
lives up to his name & appetite.



Photo by  
Phil Stapleton

**Southern Dogface**  
*Colias cesonia*  
on *Lantana urticoides*



Photo by  
Lonnie Childs

**Sonoran Bumblebee**  
*Bombus sonorus*  
on  
Maximilian Sunflower  
*Helianthus maximillianii*



*"As long as autumn lasts, I shall not have hands, canvas and colors enough to paint the beautiful things I see."*

Vincent van Gogh

## Fall Blumen Masses at the Pollinator Garten



**Purple or Fall Aster**  
*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*

As the name implies, a great fall bloomer.

**White Heath Aster**  
*Symphyotrichum ericoides*

Another late bloomer that is currently swarming with bees & butterflies.



**Goldenrod**  
*Solidago sp.*

Can you find the wasp?





***"No natural resource has greater significance for the future of Texas than water."***

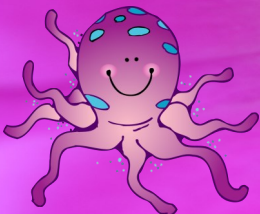
**Andrew Sansom**

## **The Blessing of Live Oak Creek**



Live Oak Creek from the dam. The small mound in the left foreground is a Wetland micro-habitat serving to filter the water. This area of the creek represents great habitat for Dragonflies & Damselflies. We are blessed to have an all-season stream to enjoy. Photo by Phil Stapleton

## **Nature's News of the Weird**



***Octopi are smarter than we know!!***

***Right Click [HERE](#) & Open Link***





**"The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit."**

**Nelson Henderson**

## **Native Trees for Sale**

FFNC volunteer and certified arborist, Johnathan Watt, has grown native tree saplings for sale at a low cost to you and with all proceeds benefitting FFNC. Check out these hard to find tree species. It's tree planting time!

### **AVAILABLE TREES**

Right Click on the links to find out more about each species.

Orange Osage, Bois d'Arc, or Horse Apple *Maclura pomifera*  
1 gal or 2 gal

[https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=mapo](https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=mapo)

Burr Oak *Quercus macrocarpa* 2 gal

[https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=quma2](https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=quma2)

Chinkapin Oak *Quercus muhlenbergia* 2 gal

[https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=QUMU](https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=QUMU)

Wafer Ash aka Common Hoptree *Ptelea trifoliata* 1 gal or 2 gal

[https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=PTTR](https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=PTTR)

Mexican Buckeye *Ungnadia speciosa* 2 gal

[https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=UNSP](https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=UNSP)

Arroyo Sweetwood *Myrospermum sousanum* 2 gal

<https://www.gardenstylesanantonio.com/plants/arroyo-sweetwood/>

**Suggested Donation: 1 gal = \$10 2 gal = \$20**  
**Limited quantities, so buy them now!**

**For more information or to purchase these trees,  
Contact Johnathan Watt at  
jdwatt56@gmail.com or call 520 342-9980**

**All proceeds will benefit the FFNC operations account.  
A huge thanks to Johnathan!!**



**Mexican Buckeye**  
Photo by RW Smith



**Arroyo Sweetwood**



**Wafer Ash**  
Photo by Lonnie Childs



*"The garden suggests there might be a place where we can meet nature halfway."*  
**Michael Pollan**

## **Spotlight on the Pollinator Garden by Patti Guin**

Historically, the groundwork for establishing a nature center in Fredericksburg was laid in 2000 when well-known naturalist Bill Lindemann and friends formed the Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center (FFNC) and asked the City about the availability of an unused portion of Lady Bird Johnson Park in which to develop the nature center. The City agreed and early volunteer work consisted of the building of trails, inventorying and creating lists of the flora and fauna at the nature center, initiating a program to educate third graders about the natural world, and creating a handicapped accessibility trail with adjacent parking lot, just to name a few. In 2005, Fredericksburg Nature Center became an approved project of the Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter, and many of the current volunteers are certified Master Naturalists.

Moving forward to 2012, the Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center accepted an offer from the City of Fredericksburg to take over an abandoned rose garden at the park. However, instead of planting roses, they converted the garden into a picturesque native pollinator garden complete with walking paths, entrance arbors, two garden arbors for seating, and a dry creek with a bridge that leads to the entrance of the garden. The many hours spent creating the garden were a labor of love for FFNC volunteers, whose goal was not only to create a beautiful native landscape for the public to enjoy, but to also showcase the value of pollinators in sustaining a vigorous plant community. Since the creation of the pollinator garden in 2012, thousands of visitors from throughout the country have passed through its gates to walk through the spectacular array of colorful native plants that are visited each year by hundreds of butterflies, bees, and other pollinators.



**2012 Construction of Bridge to Pollinator Garden**  
**Photo by Gracie Waggenner**



**Tom Hynes with his "Little Nature Library"**  
**Photo by Mary Ellen Terrell**

Over the past three years, FFNC has made some significant improvements to the pollinator garden. In 2022, volunteers installed two new entrance gates in both the front and back of the garden, along with a rear entrance arbor. In 2023, new deer-proof fencing was installed around the perimeter of the garden and a new entrance path was built.

In March of this year, Tom's Little Nature Library was added to the garden. The book-lending library was built by long-time FFNC volunteer and former Board member Tom Hynes, who turned 90 on August 31 of this year. The library contains nature books for both adults and children. The adult section includes field guidebooks on butterflies, bugs and





***"It was the bumble bee and the butterfly who survived, not the dinosaur"***  
**Meridel Le Sueur**

## **Spotlight on the Pollinator Garden by Patti Guin**

flowers that are intended to be used while visiting the pollinator garden. The children's section contains nature-related stories, including some classics, that can be read in the garden or borrowed and returned.

The newest addition to the pollinator garden is a beautifully illustrated and educational flip-page VarroBook, which tells the story of how the garden is designed to attract, feed and shelter various pollinators, and how pollinators play a crucial role in plant reproduction. In addition to the colorful photos, descriptions, and information about the various pollinators that visit the garden and how pollination occurs, it also serves to educate the public about what we as individuals can do to help pollinators achieve their plant reproductive roles.

The pollinator garden is just one of the many areas that make up the Fredericksburg Nature Center. In addition to the nature trails, you will find a bird blind for viewing over 190 species of native and migrating birds, a butterfly garden, and a cactus/hummingbird garden that is located along one of the nature trails. All these areas were created and are continuously maintained by FFNC volunteers, many of whom are Texas Master Naturalists, who meet at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park each Tuesday morning at 8:30 a.m. and work for as long as each individual volunteer is able (usually two to three hours). The Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center is a 501c(3) organization and an approved project of the Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter. For more information about the organization, how you can become a member, and the volunteer opportunities that are available, go to <https://fredericksburgnaturecenter.com>.



**Pollinator Garden Volunteers (left to right):  
Gracie Waggener, Nancy Person, Deb  
Youngblood, and Sandi Kennedy  
Photo by Lonnie Childs**

**Pollinator Garden in Bloom  
Photo by Lonnie Childs**





*"Nature is the source of all true knowledge."*

Leonardo da Vinci



Black-rested Titmice  
Photo by Phil Stapleton

## Support FNC in 2024!

Please consider becoming a  
Member of FFNC.

Our operations are funded by  
membership fees & donations.

Donate to the  
A Vision Worth Growing Campaign  
(Bill Lindemann Capital Fund)  
which will fund our future  
Interpretive Center project.

Go to [https://  
fredericksburgnaturecenter.com/](https://fredericksburgnaturecenter.com/)

### Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center Board of Directors

Lonnie Childs—President	Paul Person—Vice-president	Carl Luckenbach - Treasurer
Gracie Waggener—Secretary	Jane Crone	Trudy Eberhardt
Laura Grant	Billy Guin	Sandi Kennedy
Mary Ellen Terell	Andrea Schmidt, Dir. Fbg. Parks & Recreation, ex officio	

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Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center!

A 501(c)(3) corporation

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

Comments, questions, or future newsletter submissions can be sent to  
Lonnie Childs, Newsletter Editor, at [lonniechilds@utexas.edu](mailto:lonniechilds@utexas.edu)