



# Fredericksburg Nature Notes

Newsletter of the Friends of the  
Fredericksburg Nature Center

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## From the President - by Lonnie Childs

Although it has been a while since we communicated progress on our A Vision Worth Growing Interpretive Center project, the Advisory Committee and sub-committees have been steadily working on its various components in advancement toward our goal. The detailed design of the building has been completed and approved since the first of the year, while the design of the landscape continues and nears completion, with exhibits to follow.

In the Spring, we made a major decision to phase the implementation of the project to better take advantage of our funds availability and allow for a quicker route to breaking ground. Phase 1, as we have designated it, will encompass installing much of the "learning landscape," the children's learning pavilion, and natural playscape along with a parking area and restrooms to support it. These features will be fully functional while we continue to raise funds to construct the building. I will offer this teaser of what is to come as we finish up our plans. Look for a full roll-out of the detailed plans in the coming months as our vision grows.

On an educational note, we have two upcoming opportunities to improve your nature IQ. In September, you can gain important insights into protecting our Pedernales watershed, which is timely given our recent history with flood events. In November, the ever-popular Inglets will deliver an informative workshop on the Raptors of Texas which is also sure to be fun-filled. Don't miss out. "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself."

***Happy Nature Trails,  
Lonnie***

**[Fredericksburg Nature Center](#)**

**[FNC Facebook](#)**



# Fredericksburg Nature Center Events



Photo by Alexander Neal, Texas Rivers  
Protection Association Member

## Protecting the Pedernales River Program to Highlight Conservation & Stewardship

By: Patti Guin

In the wake of the recent July flooding, protecting the Pedernales River is more important than ever. It requires an area-wide commitment to clean water, responsible growth, and thoughtful stewardship to the surrounding land. On **Saturday, September 19, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.** Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center invites the public to a one-hour presentation *Protecting the Pedernales – Lessons in Conservation and Stewardship*, to be held at the Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Office, 38 Business Court in Fredericksburg. The program will provide residents, landowners, business representatives and community leaders practical guidance on water conservation, preserving native streambank vegetation, reducing polluted runoff, protecting springs and recharge areas, and supporting development that respects floodplains and the river's natural flow.

Guest speaker for the event is Lauro Martinez, Landowner Outreach and Stewardship Manager for the Hill Country Alliance. Martinez earned a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and Policy from St. Edward's University and began his career conducting erosion and stormwater inspections at construction sites across Central Texas. Before joining the Hill Country Alliance, he served as an Outreach Coordinator with the Rio Grande International Study Center in South Texas, helping landowners and community members protect the region's natural resources.

**A few facts about the Pedernales River:** Fed by springs and streams in western Gillespie County, the Pedernales River flows more than 100 miles before joining the Colorado River at Lake Travis. The spring-fed river supplies nearly 25% of Lake Travis's inflow and contributes significantly to the Austin metropolitan area's drinking water. Its nearly 1,300-square-mile watershed spans six Central Texas counties, including Kimble, Kerr, Gillespie, Blanco, and Hays. The river's tributary network includes more than 3,000 miles of creeks and streams, and nearly 9,000 acres of public parkland and recreational areas. The river also fosters a sensitive ecological system, including dozens of rare plants, fish, and salamander species.

There is a saying that those who fail to understand nature are destined to deplete it - a pattern visible throughout the Texas Hill Country, especially along its rivers and streams. By contrast, understanding nature can inspire responsible care. Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center invites the public to learn how responsible conservation and stewardship can benefit the Pedernales, protect wildlife habitat, preserve the character of the counties it flows through, and ensure the river remains a healthy, treasured, and vital part of the Texas Hill Country for generations to come. The presentation is free and open to the public (donations are appreciated). **Please RSVP to Gracie Waggener at [gwaggener@flow-apps.com](mailto:gwaggener@flow-apps.com).** The program is also approved for one hour of Texas Master Naturalist Hill Country Chapter advanced training credit.



# NEON NIGHTS

HOSTED BY THE CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

NOVEMBER 6 - 6:00 - 8:00 PM  
LADY BIRD JOHNSON MUNICIPAL PARK

FREDERICKSBURG NATURE CENTER WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THIS NEW FAMILY FRIENDLY COMMUNITY EVENT WHICH OFFERS A FUN EXPERIENCE FOR ALL AGES. MARK YOUR

Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center Invites You to Discover the Amazing World of

COMING SOON

## RAPTORS

**BIRDS OF PREY OF THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY**

Saturday - November 14, 2026 - 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

John Wm. Klein Room, Marketplatz, 115 N. Crockett, Fredericksburg

*Guest Presenters - Patsy & Tom Inglet*

From soaring hawks to silent-winged owls, discover the remarkable raptors that call the Texas Hill Country home. Join FFNC and Patsy and Tom Inglet in exploring how to identify these magnificent birds, understand their behavior, and appreciate the vital role they play in our ecosystem. Be sure and **SAVE THE DATE** and look for additional details coming soon.





# Nature Journaling

## Evening Visitor

by Rebecca Stapleton, TMN

I named her Mrs. Pease, after the formidable, old lady who reigned supreme for fifty years in the 1936 house that I used to live in.

She would glide in at dusk on silent wings to perch on the storm battered weathervane, looking like a part of the weathervane herself. She sat surveying her domain before flying off to hunt into the night hours. She did, after all, have two very hungry owlets to provide for in the old squirrel nest high in an oak tree, now a nest for her brood. Great Horned Owls don't build their own nest, choosing instead to reuse nests built by squirrels, hawks, or other large birds.

Her vision sharp and her hearing so keen, she missed nothing stirring around in the dark. With a deadly grip of 28 pounds of force, she would hunt for rats and small urban wildlife in the neighborhood. This would include an occasional cat roaming outside after dark.

She was larger than her mate, but I could hear him calling to her in a deep, resonant "hooting," with her answering calls in a higher pitch.

Sometimes she would "gift" me with a pellet of undigested, grey and brown fur and small bones just to let me know that she was keeping the neighborhood rodent population under control. Yep, owl throw up! Other times I would find one of her beautiful, soft feathers in the grass under the large, old oak tree. The soft edges made her flight almost soundless.

Although Great Horned Owls aren't globally threatened, there has been a decline in some of the US populations. Along with loss of habitat, the use of poisons for rodent control, collisions with windows and motor vehicles, and illegal shooting contribute to the decline.

Great Horned Owls do not use traditional nest boxes. They prefer open platforms with drainage holes or wire mesh cones lined with landscape fabric, natural sticks, and vegetation mimicking natural nests built by other raptors or squirrels. The platform or cone should be placed 15 to 45 feet up in a large, living hardwood tree in the autumn before breeding season around January.

*Sources - US Fish and Wildlife, National Audubon Society, Owl Research Institute*





**Art by: Rebecca Stapleton**



# Interesting Plants of the Hill Country



**Linden Tree**  
**Van der Berk Nursery**

## *The Linden Tree*

By Lonnie Childs

If you have hiked the Live Oak Wilderness Trail along the creek, you have likely walked past one of our most special tree species at FNC obscured by the sylvan thicket. The **Linden Tree (*Tilia americana*), aka Basswood, Bee or Lime Tree**, resides just opposite the Beaver marked trees (QR stop #7). Look across the trail from the Beaver trees and then skyward to recognize a tall stately tree with large, lime-tinged leaves in a heart shape. This tree species is better known in the eastern US than Texas which represents its western geographic range. Linden trees can be found throughout east Texas east of IH45, but we are fortunate to enjoy a disjunct population in central Texas, which explains our sentinel at FNC.

**Taxonomy.** The taxonomy of Linden trees has followed a convoluted path over recent years and seems to lack total consensus today. The *Tilia* genus spans the globe represented by numerous species that are either classified in the *Malvaceae* (*Mallow*) family or its own *Tiliaceae* family. Several previously noted American species have now been grouped as variants of the *americana* species, and you may

also encounter European species in the nursery trade.

The common name of Linden derives from the Swedish name for the species, *lind*, while Basswood originates from the term *bastwood*, in reference to the tough inner bark (*bast*) which has been used to make rope and mats. In a somewhat magical connection to our founder, Bill Lindemann, his Germanic surname translates to “dweller near the linden tree.”

**Characteristics.** Linden trees make for specimen trees to be featured with their stately, widely spreading crown that can grow up to 60-80 feet tall. The large, colorful leaves add to the attractiveness. Sprouting at the base of the trunk is typical for this deciduous tree, producing a community of tall trees around what was the original tree or creating multi-trunked specimens.



A mature tree can produce millions of tiny, creamy-yellow blossoms in May-June that are highly fragrant and easily attract bees who prize the high sugar nectar and protein rich pollen. I can personally testify to the sweet but light taste of Basswood honey, which is highly valued in the honey world. Speaking of insects, Linden trees also serve as host plants for Red-spotted Purple and Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterflies.

**Habitat.** Linden trees demonstrate some versatility in the habitats that they occupy ranging from dry upland areas to moist, low woods. They tolerate shade to sunny open environs but prefer the latter. Our riparian specimen is forced to compete for sunlight and has leaned into an open space overhead. They prefer moist, rich, well-drained, loamy soils but can also tolerate more gravelly soils.



**Linden Tree Flowers**  
**James L. Reveal**



**Linden Tree Leaves**  
**Lonnie Childs**

**Cultural uses.** Linden trees have long provided ecological services to humans. As previously noted, the bast harvested from Lindens can be transformed into cordage for use in other products. Its light but strong wood is used to make items such as furniture, shipping crates, boxes, veneer and carving products.

Lindens have a long history as a source for herbal remedies to promote relaxation, ease cold symptoms, and soothe digestion. Tea made from its leaves is employed as a relaxant, expectorant, cough suppressant, and fever reducer.

On your next hike, slow down and pay attention to the Linden tree. Make a moment. Give homage to this locally unique species gracing our nature preserve which also honors Bill Lindemann and his legacy.

**O Linden Tree**

O Linden Tree  
Were I a bee  
I'd buzz around you endlessly.  
Your perfume's key,  
On street or lea,  
To lure with much intensity...

**Ilene Bauer**



## Nature News

### *Fall Travelers in Fredericksburg*

Fall migration is underway in Gillespie County, although much of it may pass unnoticed. Many small birds travel at night and stop during the day to rest and replenish their energy. A bird that appears briefly in a tree or at a feeder may have traveled hundreds of miles—and may be gone again by the following morning.

Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park offers an excellent place to watch for these seasonal travelers. The park's mixture of creekside woodland, open meadow, native plants and water provides food and shelter for a variety of birds. Visitors can watch from the bird blind and feeding area or walk the nature trails along Live Oak Creek.

Some familiar summer residents are also preparing to leave. Painted Buntings and Summer Tanagers nest in the area before traveling south for the winter. Black-chinned Hummingbirds, which are common around Fredericksburg throughout the summer, also begin their southward journey in late summer and early fall.

At the same time, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds may pass through from areas farther north and east. They can stop briefly at hummingbird feeders and nectar-producing flowers before continuing toward Mexico and Central America.

Warblers are smaller and can be more difficult to notice. Yellow and Wilson's Warblers may pass through during fall migration, while Orange-crowned Warblers become more likely as the season progresses. Rather than looking for them at the seed feeders, watch for quick movements among the leaves and branches near the creek and along the wooded trails.

Migration varies with weather, available food and the timing of cold fronts, so no particular species is guaranteed on any visit. The best approach is simply to slow down, look beyond the feeders and listen. An unfamiliar little bird may be one of the many fall travelers stopping briefly in Fredericksburg before continuing south.



**Next time you visit Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park, keep an eye out for some of these fall travelers. (All photos credited to Bill Lindemann p. 9 - 10)**



**Painted Bunting — Watch near seed feeders and in brushy areas along the trail.**



**Summer Tanager — Look high in the leafy trees along Live Oak Creek.**



**Orange-crowned Warbler — Look in low shrubs and small trees along Live Oak Creek.**



**Wilson's Warbler — Look low in dense vegetation near Live Oak Creek.**



**Yellow Warbler — Look in leafy shrubs and small trees along Live Oak Creek.**



**Black-chinned Hummingbird — Watch near hummingbird feeders, flowers and nearby perches.**



**Ruby-throated Hummingbird — Watch near hummingbird feeders and nectar-rich flowers.**

## **Lights Out Gillespie County!!**

**The fall bird migration has started, so it's time to implement measures to reduce mortality in the billions of migratory birds that fly over Texas annually.**

*Full Fall Migration Period: August 15 – November 30*

*Peak Fall Migration Period: September 5 – October 29*

### **Following are some actions that you can take.**

- Turn off all non-essential lights from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. each night during migration season.
- Do not use landscape lighting to light up trees or gardens where birds may be resting.
- For essential lights (security & safety lighting), use the following dark skies friendly lighting practices:
  - > Aim lights down;
  - > Use lighting shields to direct light downwards and avoid light shining into the sky or trees;
  - > Use motion detectors and sensors so lights are only on when you need them;
  - > Close blinds at night to reduce the amount of light being emitted from windows.

**For more information and a short video - [Audubon - Lights Out Texas!](#)**

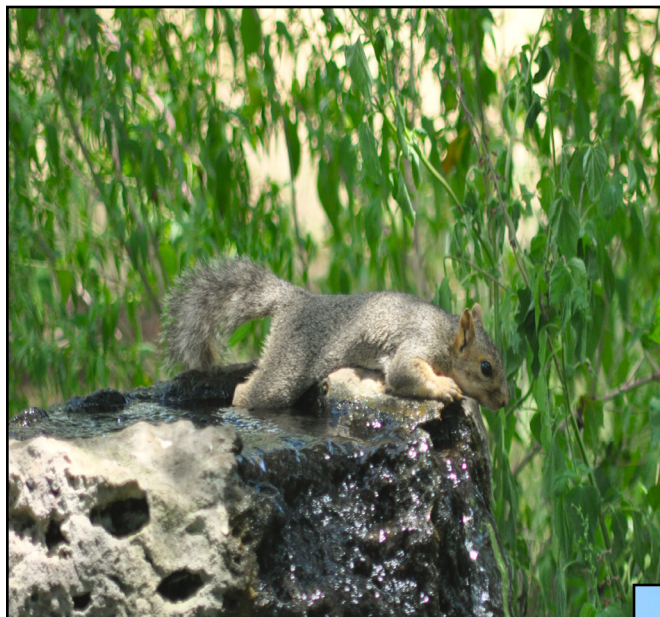




## Pictures in the Garden

### ***Mother Nature's Heat Tactics***

"Tired of sweating? Be thankful for that evolutionary adaptation, because most species do not have sweat glands. So how do other species deal with the heat?"



**Eastern Gray Squirrel "splooting"**

**Photo: Lonnie Childs**

**Black-chinned Hummingbird  
"panting"**

**Photo: Dot Maginot**





**Black-chinned Hummingbird taking a cool shower**

**Photo: Dot Maginot**



**Red-tailed Pennant “obelisking”**

**Photo: Bill Lindemann**



**Salvia coccinea - close the stomata, curl up, gray side up**

**Photo: Lonnie Childs**



**Engelmann Daisy closing its bloom**

**Photo: Lonnie Childs**



## *Blooms in the Garden*



**Rock Rose**  
**(*Pavonia lasiopetala*)**  
**Lonnie Childs**



**Sonoran Bumble bee**  
**(*Bombus sonorus*)**  
**on a Mealy Sage**  
**(*Salvia far***  
***inacea*)**  
**Lonnie Childs**



**Texas Lantana**  
**(*Lantana Urticoides*)**  
**Lonnie Childs**



**Corona de Cristo**  
**(*Passiflora foetida*)**  
**Also known as Fetid Passionflower or**  
**Stinking Passionflower**  
**Lonnie Childs**



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## Volunteer Corner

**Fun Tuesdays - Consider Volunteering with the Fredericksburg Nature Center.**

**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!



**Other Volunteer Opportunities that don't require physical labor.**

- **Social Media** - Assist with maintaining & posting content on Facebook & other media.
- **Newsletter** write articles, editing and production.
- **Website** - content management website and support.
- **Membership management** - recruitment and support.
- **Programs** - Assist with planning and organizing workshops and children's activities.

Contact [Gracie Waggener](#) to receive a weekly email notification about scheduled work tasks for the coming week.



For newsletter information, contact [Lonnie Childs](#) or [Barbara Shirley](#)

<http://fredericksburgnaturecenter.com>

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





## A Vision Worth Growing

### Consider Supporting Fredericksburg Nature Center in 2026

**Please consider becoming a Member of FFNC. Our operations are funded by membership fees & donations.**

[\*Click here to become a member.\*](#)

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

[\*Click here to donate.\*](#)

### Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center Board of Directors

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**Thanks to our supporters and the City of Fredericksburg  
for your continued support of the  
Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center!  
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