

# Hays County Master Naturalists NEWSLETTER



-- right here at home -- in the Hill Country

November, 2011

## Chapter Events

### *Chapter Board Meeting*

The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the Camp Jacob Watershed Education Center at the Jacob's Well Natural Area, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. A map is available [here](#). The meeting is open to members and the public.

If you have any questions or items for the agenda, please contact Jeff Vasgaard, [pres@haysmn.org](mailto:pres@haysmn.org), by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

### *Chapter Meeting*

**There is no chapter meeting this month.**

If you have announcements you would like to have presented at the chapter meeting or suggestions for topics/speakers, please contact Brad Krimmel, [vp@haysmn.org](mailto:vp@haysmn.org).

### *Board of Directors*

<b>President</b>	Jeff Vasgaard
<b>Vice President</b>	Brad Krimmel
<b>Secretary</b>	Becky Northcut
<b>Treasurer</b>	Larry Calvert
<b>Past-President</b>	Dixie Camp
<b>State Representative</b>	Tom Watson
<b>Training Committee</b>	Jean McMeans
<b>Advanced Training Comm.</b>	Mary Arizpe
<b>Membership Committee</b>	Beth Ramey
<b>Web Master</b>	Herb Smith
<b>Newsletter Committee &amp; Editor</b>	Art Arizpe <a href="mailto:news@haysmn.org">news@haysmn.org</a>
<b>Outreach Committee</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>Host Committee</b>	<b>Vacant</b>
<b>Historian</b>	Dale Shively
<b>Volunteer Service</b>	Art Arizpe
<b>AgriLife Agent</b>	Richard Parrish
<b>TP&amp;WD Rep</b>	Lee Ann Linam



## A Naturalist's View

*Anne Child was in the Class of 2010, the Prickly Pears. She enjoys working at Jacob's Well, Charro Ranch Park, and the EmilyAnn Theatre Butterfly Festival.*

### *Texas Barberry - Mahonia swaseyi*

Before Garry & I entered the Master Naturalists classroom in 2010, we had never heard of Texas Barberry. We had lived in Central Texas for 30 years, in northwest Austin before moving to Dripping Springs in 2009. We knew the basics...Agarita, Yaupon, Ashe Juniper, Live Oak...those plants common throughout the Hill Country. But the beautiful little Barberry had escaped our attention. According to Robert Harms, who has done extensive study, the Barberry is known only in seven counties along a narrow strip of the Edwards Plateau immediately west and north of the southeast edge of the Balcones Escarpment. What a treat it was to find out our little piece of Hays County is home to not only Agarita but Barberry and hybrids of the two!

The Lady Bird Wildflower Center has good entries for both the [Agarita](#) (Mahonia Trifoliolata or Berberis Trifoliolata) and the [Texas Barberry](#) (Mahonia Swaseyi or Berberis Swaseyi). How much are they alike? How do they differ? The Agarita tend to be taller (3-6 ft) than the Barberry (3-4 ft. - ours are probably more easily measured in inches). Both have yellow wood.

The Agarita leaves are actually 3 gray-green leaflets coming together at a single point (palmate). In other words, the terminal leaflet is sessile (has no stalk between it and the next leaflets). Each leaflet is sharply lobed and stiff, like a holly. The Barberry has a much softer, wider and greener leaf. It too is a compound leaf with 5-9 less deeply lobed leaflets. The leaflet at the tip is separated from the next two opposite leaflets with a bit of stalk (not sessile).

Both have pretty, fragrant, yellow flowers. The Agarita is an early bloomer first appearing in February through March. The Barberry has slightly smaller, less dense, flowers that bloom 2-3 weeks later, starting in late February and going until April. Similarly, they both have red berries that appear from the May to July with the Barberry fruiting a bit later than the Agarita.

So what does the hybrid look like? That seems to vary. But typically you're looking for a bush that has a 5-9 leaflet leaf (like a Barberry) but the key is that the terminating 3 leaflets should all come together at one point (like the Agarita). Now then the leaflets themselves could look like either Agarita or Barberry leaflets or something halfway in between. And then there are plants that look more like Agarita on the lower end and more like Barberry higher up (with the new growth)... or visa versa. So are these just immature leaflets or is it a hybrid? Experts with microscope or magnifying glass might find minor differences in the hybrids' flowers. In general the timing of flowering and fruiting is in between the Agarita and the Barberry.

Last year I noticed that some specimens of both plants turned reddish in the Fall/Winter. I don't think they actually dropped their leaves. This year, with the drought, some are turning earlier. Hopefully they will recover when Spring and/or rain returns to the Hill Country.



Agarita leaves



Agarita leaves



Agarita bush & Garry



Barberry bush



Barberry leaves



Hybrid

- Anne Child



## Featured Project

The "Featured Project" is taking a brief hiatus and will resume at the start of next year.

Here's a list of the projects covered this year:

- January - #603 *Jacob's Well Natural Area*
- February - #801 *Blanco Watershed Water Quality Monitoring*
- March - #426 *Onion Creek WQPL*
- April - #602 *EmilyAnn Theatre*
- May - #911 *Texas H2Oasis Bird and Butterfly Sanctuary*
- June - #803 *Rainfall Monitoring*
- July - #424 *San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance*
- August - #604 *Wimberley Parks & Recreation Blue Hole Regional Park*

- September - #1010 *Charro Ranch Park*
- October - #1104 *Bunton Branch Restoration*

You may find the articles in our [archives](#).

If you participate in or know of a project that you think we should feature, please contact me.

- Art Arizpe, [news@haysmn.org](mailto:news@haysmn.org)



## Chapter News

### *Graduation and Gala*

Please mark your calendars for the 2011 Graduation and Gala which will be held on Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at the San Marcos Activity Center.

We look forward to recognizing and honoring our 2011 graduates and our Chapter's accomplishments.

### *Call for Graduation and Gala Committee Volunteers!*

Since we have a vacant Host Committee Chair, we are calling for volunteers for the Graduation/Gala Committee to help develop the program and decorate the room. Please contact Jeff Vasgaard, [pres@haysmn.org](mailto:pres@haysmn.org).

### *2011 Chapter Awards Nominations*

We are currently seeking nominations for the 2011 Chapter awards. Please see the procedure for nominations and a description of each award in the [Chapter Operating Handbook](#), Section F.3, on our web page.

Please submit your nominations to Beth Ramey, Chair of the Membership Committee, [membership@haysmn.org](mailto:membership@haysmn.org). Beth is also serving as the Chair of the Ad Hoc Awards Committee.

### *It's Officer Election Time!*

The Nominations Committee will entertain nominations and volunteer offers to serve as an officer of the chapter as it develops the slate for the election at the Annual Graduation and Gala to be held on Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at the San Marcos Activity Center.

Please send your nominations or your offer to serve to Dixie Camp, [pastpres@haysmn.org](mailto:pastpres@haysmn.org) or [dixie\\_camp@yahoo.com](mailto:dixie_camp@yahoo.com), our Past President and Chair of the 2011 Nominations Committee, for consideration by the committee.

The Chapter Officer positions are:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

You may find descriptions of these positions in the [Chapter Operating Handbook](#), Section C, on our web page.

### *Chapter Committees*

Perhaps you would be interested in serving on or chairing a committee. Please contact Jeff Vasgaard, [pres@haysmn.org](mailto:pres@haysmn.org).

You may find descriptions of these committees in the [Chapter Operating Handbook](#), Section B, on our web page.

- Membership Committee
- Volunteer Service Projects Committee
- Advanced Training Committee
- Newsletter Committee
- Outreach Committee
- Host Committee
- Historical Committee

### *Training Committee 2012*

Please welcome the 2012 Training Committee!

Coordinator – **Lin Weber**

Assistant Coordinator – **Jean Ohm**

Secretary - **Helene Kennard**

Speaker Contact - **Steve Janda**

Attendance & Registration - **Judy McBride & Jean Richmond**

Videography - **Dick McBride**

Nature Watch - **David Womer**

Site Visits - **Donna Browning, Don Wallace**

Food - **Lindsay Calvert & Tracy Mock**

Many thanks to these members for supporting the chapter in such an important task!

### *Chapter Meeting*

Dr. D. Clark Wernecke presented "Pre Clovis and the Peopling of the Americas". He is the Executive Director of the Gault School of Archeological Research, located in Bell and Williamson counties. He reviewed the on-going paradigm shift taking place in the understanding of the arrival of humans in the Americas. He explained the history of several hypotheses and the upheaval caused by new discoveries.

The Bering land bridge theory, which most of us were taught, is now largely discredited. There is evidence for settling by sea along the Pacific coast and also evidence that there were settlements from Europe.

The Gault site accounts for 60% of all the Clovis material we have and now totals 2.6M artifacts.

## *Bunton Branch Restoration Project #1104*

The Bunton Branch Restoration Project held a workday on Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Project leader Kimberly Pankratz was joined by Tom Watson, Linda Land, Dick and Judy McBride, and Art and Mary Arizpe. The group worked to identify, tag and record the GPS locations of trees, and trash pickup.

It was nice to see a bit of water in the creek and several of us observed how different the soil and plants are east of I-35. The most common tree along the creek was the Bois D'Arc (*Maclura pomifera*) and many still had fruit on them. The Bois D'Arc are relatively rare in the rockier soils of western Hays County. Also common were cedar elms.

Kimberly also gave the group a tour and overview of the park and the work ahead.

- Art Arizpe

## *TMN State Meeting*

Randy Garst, and his wife Debby, and my wife Emily, and I attended the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual State meeting.



*Examining an invasive Chinese Lantern. Photo by Art Arizpe.*



*Debby, Randy, Emily, and Tom. Photo provided by Tom Hausler.*



*River Critters Workshop. Photo by Tom Hausler.*

There were about 265 attendees this year. We attended the following AT meetings: River Critters Workshop with field lab with Gordon Linam; Texas Mussel Watch with Marsha May; The Camera as a MN Tool (2 sessions) one with Ruth Hoyt; Stars of the TX Night Sky;

Tracking Hummingbirds across Texas with Mark Klym (2 sessions); and Advanced Rainwater Harvesting for Wildlife.

The high-light was the keynote presentation "Conserving Texas" presented by Laura Huffman, The Nature Conservancy of Texas.

- Tom Hausler

## *On the Trail*

### **Hats Off to the 2011 MN Training Committee!**

**Dick McBride's** role as videographer for each of the MN trainee classes inspired me to write this article. It wasn't until I missed my first class and faced the dreaded task of making up a class that I recognized the significance of Dick's work. I had expected a grainy homemade video with garbled voices and a lot of yawns before the end of my makeup session. Instead I checked out a DVD of professional quality and watched three hours of class as if I were there. The trainees are appreciative of the way Dick maneuvered about the classroom in a very quiet unassuming manner and emerged out of the shadows with a very useable video. So Dick, thank you very much for your expertise and hours that you contributed on behalf of the trainees.

Dick's wife **Judy McBride** worked on the committee along with **Mimi Boelter** as registration and attendance specialists. Here's what they say, first Judy:

*The two most rewarding aspects of being on the Training Committee were getting to know the new class and getting to spend more time with the TC. Both groups have some really fascinating people. Dick and I will both be returning next year. It's taken us all year just to get our jobs figured out.*

Mimi has served faithfully on the training committee for five years since she graduated from the program in 2005 and loved every minute. While she will be taking a break next year, Mimi tells us:

*The most rewarding aspect of being on the HCMN Training Committee has been watching the faces of the trainees light up when they receive new information; get a new perspective on Hays County issues, and especially when they find their passion in a volunteer project.*

When food committee members **Charles** and **Vicki Maxcy** completed mealtime, Nature Watch facilitator **Leah Laszewski** led class discussions about observations in the community.....a first bud in the spring, the arrival of hummingbirds, what was surviving in the drought. Leah tells us about her rewarding moments:

*Beyond question, the most rewarding part of being a member of the training committee has been the opportunity to get to know new members as they begin their journey as Master Naturalists. The program attracts a wide range of multi-talented people with very different backgrounds and yet all of them have a common interest in their love of nature and desire to learn more. Being new to Texas (5 years), it is wonderful to have found so many friends to share so many activities with. Without the MN program, it*

*would have taken me much longer to feel at home. If you don't grow up in a place, it can be very hard to "catch up" to all the stuff in your environment that you would have absorbed as a youngster just from hanging out outside. It was great fun hearing Texans talk about their childhood experiences with Spear Grass, Tickle Tongue, and Ant lions for example. I have served for 4 years, as registrar and as Nature Watch facilitator and will be moving to the Outreach committee next year to let someone else take a stab at training.*

**Donna Browning, Deb Bradshaw** and **Mark Chonko** served as site visit contacts. Donna enjoys mixing and mingling with people who share common interests and a mutual love of learning. She will definitely be back in 2012. Deb states enthusiastically:

*The TC has evolved into a wonderful, dedicated circle. Next year's coordinator, Lin Weber, will run the show with ease, humor, and efficiency. She has gathered a great group of people and I look forward to seeing the new class blossom under her leadership. I'm passing the torch after my 2nd year on the site visit team. I joined so I could repeat the classes and no one would question why... years of remedial training and there's always something new! Learning from the other MNs on the TC was the best reward and always fun. I loved getting to know the Prickly Pears and the Painted Buntings, especially all the trainees who offered their properties for site visits.*

**Helane Kennard** served in the role of trainee mentor when the classes first met but spent a more significant amount of time as committee secretary taking minutes of meetings. Another behind-the-scenes role was played by speaker contact **Jean Richmond** who publicly made things look easy. In reality she was doing a balancing act until the right speaker showed up at the right moment. Speakers are never paid for their presentations. Jean indicates that working with a wonderful group of people was her biggest reward. She will return to the committee in 2012 working with registration and attendance.

The most recognizable face of the 2011 committee is the affable **Jean McMeans** who served as coordinator, announcer, and facilitator for all of the classes. Jean is Ms. Kool in my book because each class glided like a flock of birds in flight. She leaves the committee this year with these thoughts:

*The best reward for my six years of service on the Training Committee is the opportunity to meet and to interact with so many people who share my love of and concern for the natural environment here in the Hill Country. With common interests and desires to learn more, these people represent varied backgrounds and experiences. As we go through the curriculum together, we learn valuable information that we can use in our own environmental situations and also share with others to encourage them make wiser choices dealing with their interactions with the environment. To be part of this dynamic group has been an honor and a privilege.*

**Lin Weber** was Jean's very capable sidekick in 2011 serving as co-coordinator. They were a great team that set the stage for ten very enjoyable classroom sessions. And Lin has some very good news for us:



*The best part of being involved in the training program is seeing how inspired and enthusiastic the trainees are after a good speaker or a great site visit, and knowing that they will use the knowledge they gained in the program to take better care of our world. I will be on the TC again next year, but this time as Training Coordinator. Jean McMeans is a very tough act to follow. Wish me luck!*

Benjamin Franklin once said that diligence is the mother of good luck. If that's true, the 2012 trainees will be as fortunate as the current group. With Lin Weber at the helm, our hats are off to the next group of very lucky Hays County residents.

- Lucille Trail Kirkham

### *HaysMN Forum*

The forum is a great learning resource. Be sure to check it out. To join the HaysMN Forum, simply go to the [haysmn.org](http://haysmn.org) web site and look for the Forum application in the menu.

Please let Herb Smith, [web@haysmn.org](mailto:web@haysmn.org), know if you have any questions or suggestions. Better yet, use the Forum to discuss the Forum.

### *Reporting Reminder*

Reports for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter are due by November 5<sup>th</sup>. Please submit your reports of Volunteer and Advanced Training hours by using the friendly report forms at [www.haysmn.org](http://www.haysmn.org).

As a reminder, 8 hours of Advanced Training and 40 hours of Volunteer work are required each year to recertify. You have until the end of the year to complete these hours.

If you are uncertain about your status, please contact Beth Ramey, [hourshaysmn@gmail.com](mailto:hourshaysmn@gmail.com), and she can send you a report.

### *Newsletter Items*

Have you read a good book lately? Submit a short review and share with the chapter! Have some neat photos of a volunteer or training activity? Let us see them! Do you have news about yourself or another HCMN? Send it in!

Please send your comments, news items, and photos to [news@haysmn.org](mailto:news@haysmn.org).

### **Members News**

#### *Tom Hausler*

Tom shares his latest water trough photos.



*A white-tailed buck gets curious. Photo by Tom Hausler.*



*And curiouser. Photo by Tom Hausler.*

*This section is your opportunity to update the chapter about what you've been doing. Perhaps you went on an interesting field trip and took some nice photos; basically, anything you'd like to share.*

*Please send your news items to [news@haysmn.org](mailto:news@haysmn.org).*



## **Advanced Training Opportunities**

*Please watch your emails for upcoming Advanced Training Opportunities.*



## **Volunteer Opportunities**

***Earn Volunteer Hours and Eradicate Invasives!**  
**Texas H2Oasis Bird & Butterfly Sanctuary, Project #911***

Volunteer at the Hays County Master Naturalists' **Volunteer Project #911** to help develop and improve the bird and butterfly sanctuary at *Horse Feathers*, Texas H<sub>2</sub>Oasis' Driftwood facility. The overall purpose is to increase native bird and butterfly populations by adding "friendly" flora and removing invasive species from this sanctuary / wildlife habitat. The specific purpose of volunteering on **Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>** is to remove as many Chinese Tallow trees and saplings as possible. So you know what you're working for, following, please find the bird list from *Horse Feathers* [http://illus.com/PDF/Texas\\_H2Oasis\\_Bird\\_Species.pdf](http://illus.com/PDF/Texas_H2Oasis_Bird_Species.pdf)

According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Chinese Tallow plants have tremendous reproductive potential. They may reach reproductive age in as little as three years and remain productive for 100 years (Duke 1983). In greenhouse experiments, some trees grown from seed flowered in their first year of growth (Grace 1997). A mature tree may annually produce an average of 100,000 seeds that are spread mainly by birds and water (Duke 1983; Jubinsky & Anderson 1996).

I can personally testify to the truth of stumps resprouting and roots developing shoots. Despite the removal of dozens of saplings and 5 trees last year, the Chinese Tallow spread rapidly during last summer's drought. Now that it's no longer hot (and still not cold), it is the ideal time to rid the bird sanctuary of this invasive species. Earn Volunteer Hours while helping eradicate these invasive trees from Driftwood.

Meet in the parking lot of the Red Barn at La Ventana. From Wimberley, go north on RR12 to the Driftwood Winery. Turn right onto CR 170, AKA Elder Hill Road. Follow CR 170 until you see two large stone lampposts. Between the lampposts, turn right onto La Ventana Parkway. Just before the gate, you'll see a driveway on the right leading up to the Red Barn. Gather in the parking lot on Saturday, November 5, at 9:00 and work until noon. Following, please find a map: <http://maps.google.com/maps?q=la%20ventura%20driftwood%20texas&ie=UTF-8&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a&um=1&sa=N&tab=w/>

Bring loppers, chain saws, heavy gloves, and water.

For more information, email Karen Hulene Bartell at [hulene1@austin.rr.com](mailto:hulene1@austin.rr.com).  
*Please watch your emails for upcoming Volunteer Opportunities.*



## **State and National News**

### ***TCEQ Hosts First Central Texas Environmental Summit: "Collaboration Along the Corridor"***

Texans living and working along the Austin/San Antonio I-35 corridor are invited to attend the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's first Central Texas Environmental Summit on Thursday, Nov. 3, at the Schertz Civic Center in Schertz.

Under the theme of "Collaboration Along the Corridor," the summit's mission is to give stakeholders the opportunity to work together on seeking solutions to environmental challenges in the community. TCEQ commissioners will participate in presentations on environmental topics that affect Central Texas, such as water availability and air quality. In addition, attendees will have an opportunity to discuss environmental concerns with their local legislative leaders at town hall meetings and to visit exhibits from various state and local agencies.

Nov. 3, 2011, 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.  
Schertz Civic Center  
1400 Schertz Parkway, Schertz 78154

Beginning at 9 a.m., the summit is free and open to the public, however, it requires registration. To register online, or for more information, please visit:  
[www.TexasEnviroHelp.org](http://www.TexasEnviroHelp.org).



## Local News

### *SMGA FundRaiser Rescheduled*

FUNdRaiser: New Date 11/12, Poem by Bridgett Phillips

Our rained-out FUNdraiser will take place on Saturday evening, Nov 12 (times TBA). So mark your calendars and enjoy this wonderful poem contributed by SMGA supporter and volunteer Bridgett Phillips:

*I do party in the park,  
I do party when it's dark!  
I party with the moon and stars,  
I party while I look at Mars.  
I party as the sun goes down,  
I party with my friends around.  
I do celebrate what we do,  
It's SMGA for me and you!*

View other SMGA and community events in [our calendar](#).



## Links to Chapter Sponsors and Partners

### *Sponsors:*

Texas Master Naturalist -- State Website -- [masternaturalist.tamu.edu](http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu)

Texas AgriLife Extension -- [texasextension.tamu.edu](http://texasextension.tamu.edu)

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department -- [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/)

### *Agencies of Interest:*

Bamberger Ranch -- [bambergerranch.org](http://bambergerranch.org)

Native Plant Society of Texas -- [www.npsot.org](http://www.npsot.org)

San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance -- [www.smgreenbelt.org](http://www.smgreenbelt.org)

San Marcos River Foundation -- [www.sanmarcosriver.org](http://www.sanmarcosriver.org)

Texas Outdoor Women's Network -- [www.townsanmarcos.org](http://www.townsanmarcos.org)

Texas Cooperative Extension -- Sea Grant Program -- [texas-sea-grant.tamu.edu](http://texas-sea-grant.tamu.edu)

Texas Forest Service -- [txforestservice.tamu.edu](http://txforestservice.tamu.edu)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers -- [www.usace.army.mil](http://www.usace.army.mil)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service -- [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

U.S.D.A. Natural Resource Conservation Service -- [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority -- [www.gbra.org](http://www.gbra.org)

### *Partners*

Austin Nature Day -- [www.austinnatureday.org](http://www.austinnatureday.org)

LBJ Wildflower Center -- [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org)

San Marcos Nature Center -- [www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us/departments/parks/Nature\\_Center.html](http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us/departments/parks/Nature_Center.html)

Gorge Preservation Society -- [www.canyongorge.org](http://www.canyongorge.org)