

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES

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www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

June Meeting

Permaculture

Elizabeth Anna Samudio,
Elizabeth Anna's Olde World Garden

Wednesday, June 9, 7:00 pm
Fielder Museum
1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)

Permaculture is sustainable land use design, so we know we're going to learn a lot about something we're all committed to. Don't miss this one.



Remember to bring something for the raffle

Bits & Pieces

Arlington Resident?

The American alligator in a Cravens Park pond has so far eluded capture. Seems like it has to be somebody's released pet because the best-known local habitat is the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, which happens to be at the far northwestern tip of this remarkable creature's range.



Today's Inspirational Moment



Capitalism is the astounding belief that the most wickedest of men will do the most wickedest of things for the greatest good of everyone.

John Maynard Keynes

NICE! Plant of the Month

Natives Instead of Common Exotics is a great program from the Native Plant Society of Texas. June's unbeatable selection is Turk's cap, which is happy in the shade or sun and provides food for hummingbirds. You can learn more about NICE! and see local native plant lists at npsot.org.



For the Governor Who Has Everything



Just thinking out loud here, but wouldn't it be something if we had a governor who did things that would bring us a nice, non-violent pair of binoculars bearing his name. You know, like maybe he and his dog came across a particularly cool warbler and he got a great look. Just a thought.

From the President Jo Ann Duman

We're recruiting. Will you help? We need new members on the board for the term that starts January 2011. Can you give one year of your time and ideas to ACC? Nominees will be identified in November. Make plans to attend one board meeting before then to learn what goes on. Meetings are the first Wednesday of each month, 7:00 pm at the Fielder House. Everyone is always welcome to attend.

We are blessed with many faithful members who attend the monthly programs on the second Wednesday of the month. Please bring a friend, neighbor, colleague, or a relative to a meeting with you. It's a way to spread the education and to possibly recruit a new member.

We also appreciate our dues-paying members whose schedules don't let them attend meetings. Your continued support helps ACC take on many activities.

If you haven't renewed your membership, or if you are interested in a lifetime membership, feel free to contact me at jduman@juno.com or 817-516-7453. Be patient. My travel schedule means I may not respond to you for a week or so, but I will get back with you.

Student memberships are free, so please let any high school or college student you know in on the opportunities with ACC. We have people who will provide rides to students without cars, so encourage them to contact me about that.

On another topic, it's not only hard to be an environmentalist in these times, but it's also discouraging to be old and to see the return of things others have forgotten or try to deny ever happened. I remember the oil drilling rig spills off Santa Barbara that killed so much wildlife, and the PemEx spill in the western Gulf that fouled Texas beaches with tar balls for years. They are among the reasons some states like Florida limited drilling near the coast.

What made the people chanting, "Drill, baby, drill," in 2008 think the oil industry had changed? Why did Sarah Palin say, "We don't need any more studies. We know how to do this safely"? The archived news films of the PemEx "sombbrero" are exactly the same as today's "top hat" effort from BP; neither worked and the pollution continued for months.

There hasn't been a nuclear reactor incident recently, either. But if expansions are approved, like the one proposed at Comanche Peak, or if new plants are subsidized by the government (they're too expensive and risky for private investors), we'll see a rerun of the news films from Three Mile Island, too.

Please continue your support for SEED, Environment Texas, the League of Conservation Voters, and others who are reminding the current federal administration and our state legislatures of history and science so we can head off the ghost of disasters past from visiting us again.

THE POST OAK

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Thanks A.C.C. for working to conserve Arlington's natural resources.

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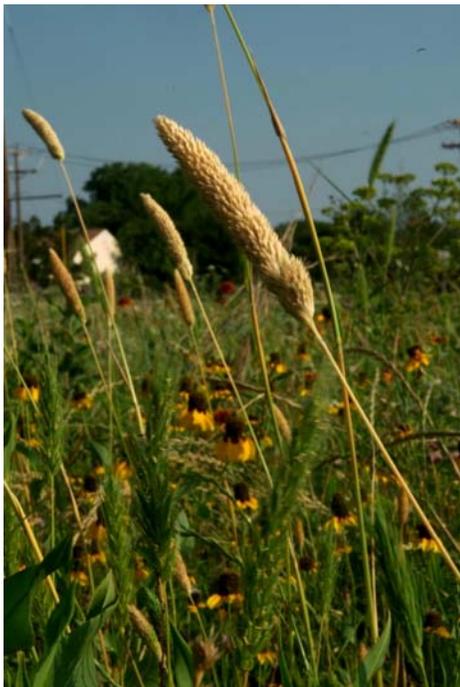
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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park Photos by Wesley Miller

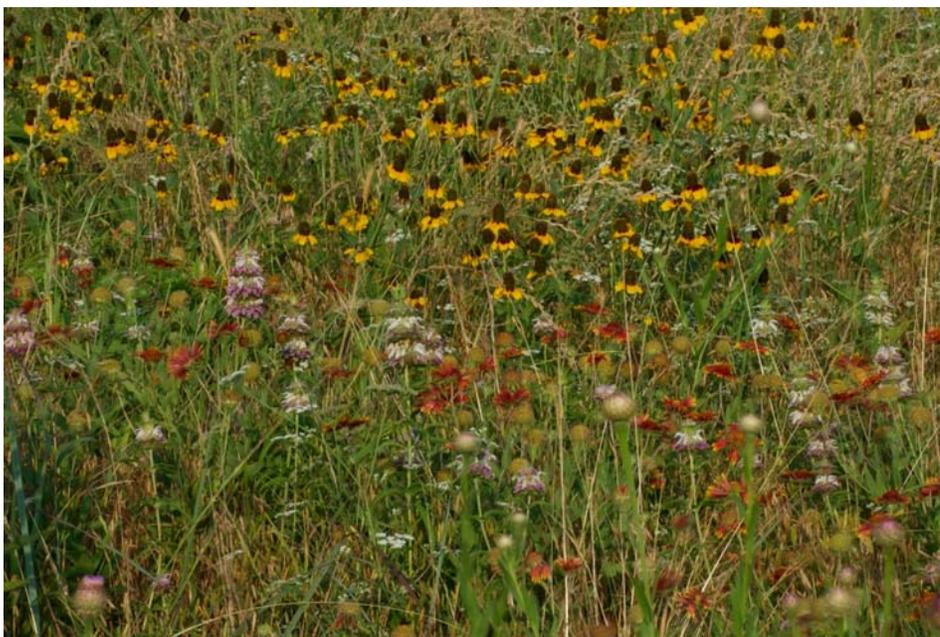
What a thousand acres of compass plant looked like when they tickled the bellies of the buffalo is a question never again to be answered, and perhaps not even asked.

- Aldo Leopold 1949, *A Sand County Almanac*



While I know the standard claim is that Yosemite, Niagara falls, the upper Yellowstone and the like, afford the greatest natural shows, I am not so sure but the Prairies and Plains, while less stunning at first sight, last longer, fill the esthetic sense fuller, precede all the rest, and make North America's characteristic landscape.

- Walt Whitman, 1982, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose*



It seems to be a constant contradiction of itself. It is delicate, yet resilient; it appears to be simple, but closer inspection indicates that it is extremely complex; it may appear monotonous, but it is diverse and ever-changing throughout the seasons.

- James Stubbendieck, 1988, *The Shortgrass Prairie*



Wildscape Update John Dycus



Spring-like weather continued until the middle of May, just long enough for some great high school sophomores from the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership organiza-

tion, HOBY, to contribute a little volunteering. These cream-of-the-crop youngsters learned about the wildscape and its mission by getting their hands dirty preparing beds to plant, digging holes for trees, mulching, and taking a tour. All of this was made possible by the regular, dedicated WS volunteers who showed them wildscape ways.

Haltom City Garden Club members also loaded up the knowledge wheelbarrow when none other than Molly Hollar herself took them on a tour. This is like

Michele Obama showing you around the White House kitchen. Stressing the importance of using native plants to conserve water and save on maintenance chores, Molly had everyone captivated and requesting more info. It made the HCGCers want to plant native groundcovers like frog herb, otherwise known as frog fruit and horseherb. At least they know where to get good information now. Do they ever.

Tours now include new beds along the wildscape perimeter. Boulders were installed some time ago on the west border to divert water and minimize erosion, leaving space between them and the sidewalk. Not missing an opportunity to enhance the property, Molly got the go-ahead to make these into native plantings. These new spots are the last spaces to be added to this four-plus-acre

project, Molly says. What, no more scrub land to be reclaimed? You believe that?

These newly installed plants need supplemental water until they're established, and the Arlington Parks and Recreation Department came to the rescue. Paul Brandon and his crew arrived with the know-how and tools to install the wildscape's first drip irrigation system. A few hours later, Molly and her band of volunteers were jumping for joy. Now these plants will be properly watered with little effort and much more efficiently. Word from Heather Dowell, APRD, is that more improvements are coming in the fall.

And the word from Molly, as anyone who has ever talked plants with her knows, is that the way to save water is to replace that thirsty lawn with native groundcovers.



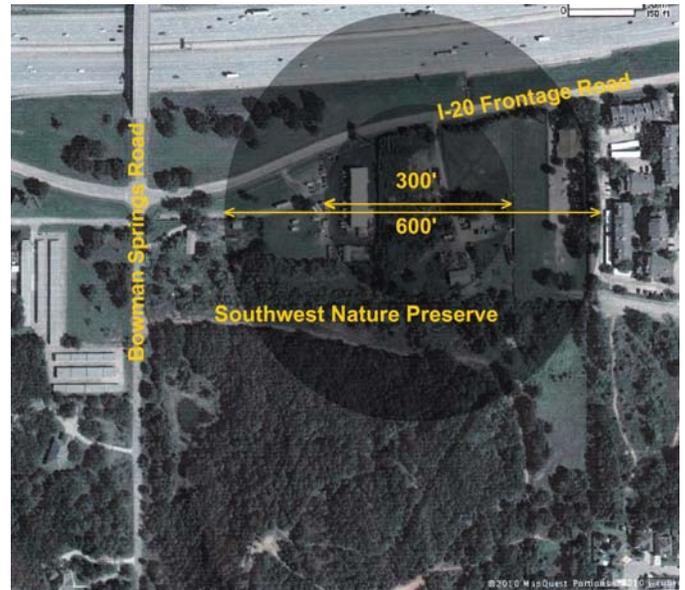
Mini-class schedule: July 10
Preserving the Post Oak Woodland, Steve Chaney, AgriLife Extension Agent



Gas Well Proposed Too Close to Southwest Nature Preserve John Darling

We're hearing that Vantage Energy is proposing a gas well site just north of the Southwest Nature Preserve. If approved, it would be at 7100 Interstate 20 W, which lies along the I-20 frontage road. A plan shows the wells only 300 feet from the park property line. Our ordinance requires a distance of 600 feet from any protected uses, such as parks, but that distance can be changed to 300 feet by City Council. There's been no news since the week of May 24, and the application is still not shown on the city Web site.

A major feature of the Nature Preserve is tranquility, which is already reduced by I-20 traffic noise. If the site is approved there will only be more noise, not to mention all the other negative features of gas wells. And part of the preserve property will be lost if the city continues to pursue its incomprehensible desire to widen Bowman Springs Road. As always, stay tuned.



Thanks to Our Last Speaker



At our May meeting we learned a lot about local water use and conservation from Dustan Compton, Arlington Water Utilities Commercial Recycling Coordinator. And he was a very good sport about answering gallons of questions from a keen audience.

The High Line Transformed Grace Darling

Built in the 1930s to lift dangerous freight train traffic from the streets of Manhattan's industrial district, the High Line rails ran for 13 miles along Tenth Avenue (called Death Avenue then) through the middle of blocks, into factories and warehouses, eliminating 105 street-level crossings. The massive project cost over \$150 million in 1930 dollars – more than \$2 billion today. In the fifties, the growth of interstate trucking and cheap fossil fuels combined to undermine railroads as the nation's preferred method for goods delivery, and a steady decrease in rail traffic heralded the demise of the High Line in 1980. For the next 20+ years, property owners tried to demolish the structure but were stymied by the efforts of local residents, activists, and High Line supporters, who argued for the High Line's preservation and reuse as public open space.

At the turn of the century, a study commissioned by the Friends of the High Line found the project to be economically rational: New tax revenues generated by the public space would be greater than the costs of construction. By 2005, through countless partnerships, interlocal agreements, agency resolutions, compromises, and broad community involvement and fundraising, the Friends had selected a design team consisting of a landscape architecture firm and a second firm with expertise in horticulture, engineering, security, maintenance, public art, historical restoration, and

green space design. Construction began early the next year and the park opened to the public in mid-2009.

The following paragraph about its landscaping is excerpted from *thehighline.org*: The High Line's plantings are inspired by the self-seeded landscape that grew on the out-of-use elevated rail tracks during the 25 years after the trains stopped running. The 210 species of perennials, grasses, shrubs and trees on Section 1 were chosen for their hardiness, sustainability, and textural and color variation, with a focus on native species. Many of the species that originally grew on the High Line's rail bed are incorporated into the park landscape. The landscape also emphasizes a diversity in bloom time, with Section 1 plants blooming from late January to mid-November.

Now reborn as an attractive public park, the High Line is a popular destination with tourists and New Yorkers alike. It is the site of frequent school programs, social events, public art exhibits, demonstration gardens, and community gatherings. It stands as a model for all conservation-minded people on the transformative power of a few determined individuals.



Arlington Conservation Council Membership Application

Memberships are good for one year, renewable each January. Your dues go directly to our public education efforts.

Membership Information

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Please circle membership category.

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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, June 9
7:00 pm

Elizabeth Anna Samudio
Permaculture

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