

**ARLINGTON
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**

POSTOAK

WORKING TO CONSERVE ARLINGTON'S NATURAL RESOURCES
VOLUME 9, NUMBER 8

SEPTEMBER 2008

www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org

September Meeting An Electric Car Experience

David Murray

David will tell us how he built an electric car, how long it took, the cost, the difficulty, and the payoff.

Wednesday, September 10, 7:00 pm
Fielder Museum
1616 W. Abram St
(corner of Fielder and Abram)

**Remember to bring
something for the raffle**

Bits & Pieces

Down and Dirty

The political season is heating up, so why not think for a moment about dung beetles? We've got a beauty, the rainbow scarab, right here in town. But you must be in Africa to really be impressed: Up to 16,000 dung beetles have been found in one 3-pound pile of elephant dung. You've got to wonder who got stuck with counting them.



Today's Inspirational Moment

There is no unemployment force in Nature. All decomposition is recomposition.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Fairy Ring at UTA



The other day there was an incomplete circle of mushrooms on a UTA lawn — a fairy ring. Turns out that this one is a piker. The largest known ring is said to be over 2600 feet in diameter and more than 700 years old.

Thomas Friedman Speaks at UTA

September 11, 8:00 pm, Texas Hall, UTA.
Thomas L. Friedman, "Hot, Flat and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution and How It Can Revive America" Lecture followed by book signing. Admission is FREE, but tickets required as space is limited. To receive your free ticket, visit www.utatickets.com or call 817.272.2963.

We're Doomed, Really

Some trash cans are a lot more depressing than others. This one sits outside the driver's license place, so after the thrill of renewing your license, you can admire our recycling progress.



From the President John Darling



It's shocking, but there hasn't been a single complaint about the absence of pithy prose and penetrating insights in this space last month.

Seems to me like a vote for fewer words and more randomly selected photographs, but *She Who Must Be Obeyed* assures me that it just wouldn't be Presidential.

Okay, here's a serious question as I prepare to sink back into obscurity: How can we be a lot better? That is, how can we be a much more effective bunch of environmentalists in a city where our views are those of a tiny minority?

Maybe the simplest answer is that we could do more if there were more of us. Imagine twice as many of us at a city council meeting, working at the Wildscape or a school garden, picking up litter, or doing something we haven't

even thought of yet. More members would mean more new ideas and more hands at work.

Greenness almost looks like it's in danger of becoming a fad. Fads fade away of course, so we have to hope that sustainability outlasts the short attention span of the trendy set. Even so, this looks like a great time for each of us to try to get more people involved. Not just because we want ACC to be big, but because there's so much to do.

This will be hard for many of us. (I'm thinking of me, of course.) I'm going to try anyway. It's possible that our members constitute less than one tenth of 1% of Arlington's adult population, and that's just not enough tree huggers by any measure.

Are our views really so unusual in this town? I'm staring in disbelief at the photo of a rather ordinary bit of horrible landscape that caught my eye the other day, and the radio newsreader is telling

me about someplace in Arizona where xeriscaping is mandatory and native plants are all the rage. So popular, in fact, that theft is a major problem. In the latest development, people caught digging up other people's natives can spend up to four years in prison. That's hard to imagine in Arlington. Here it seems like that creation below is the well-watered norm. Things are changing, though, and with your help they'll get better.



THE POST OAK

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

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New York Avenue Blackland Prairie Park Jan Miller



The Second Wave at NYABP

As Jim Varnum noted in his recent newsletter, “the second wave is underway”. That’s the colorful fall surge

of prairie wildflowers. After a brief lull for the heat of summer, the swell started last month at NYABP, with the distinctive blooms of snow-on-the-prairie, royal purple ironweed, sky-blue pitcher sage, and the lovely but unexpected bluebells. This month we’ll see vibrant yellow goldenrods and Maximilian sunflowers, then white asters and still later, frost will bring the final bronzed hues of the tall grasses. Riding this wave of blooms are the bees, butterflies, hummingbirds,

Prairie. As that site will soon become a freeway, their ‘Flat Out Wonderful’ volunteers have staged a series of workdays to dig rare coastal prairie plants. They are also raising funds to



Revolution and How It Can Revive America”
Lecture followed by book signing. Admission is FREE, but tickets required as space is limited. To receive your free ticket, visit www.utatickets.com or call 817.272.2963.

Sept 13 Trinity Trash Bash

Sept 20 TCEA Workshop on gas production issues. Contact Bonnie Bowman, chelseamolli@tx.rr.com.

Sept 27 Wildscape plant sale

Oct 11 NPSOT plant sale

Nov 13 Jason Singhurst, *Rare Plants of Texas* (see above)



Miss those prairie workdays? Watch this space next month.

other critters eager for the nectar and seeds that will sustain them through fall and winter. It’s a busy, colorful time. Hope you can visit the prairie and watch the action.

Speaking of action, watch next month’s newsletter for workdays to resume in October. Or, contact jgmiller5594@sbcglobal.net for an e-mail notice.

For some volunteer inspiration, take a look at the video on the Katy Prairie Preserve Conservancy website www.katyprairie.org to see their amazing rescue project at the Saums Road

continue rescue efforts on a large scale, using tree spades and industrial sod cutting equipment to remove huge chunks of intact prairie sod.

ACC has a special invitation from Eileen Porter (she organized the May fieldtrip to the Fort Worth Prairie Park) and Weatherford’s Cross Timbers Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT): Come hear about *Rare Plants of Texas* from co-author Jason Singhurst on Thursday, November 13 at 6:30 pm at Harberger Hill Community Building 701 Narrow Street, Weatherford. (If interested in carpooling, contact jgmiller5594@sbcglobal.net.)

Jason will review his book, tell us who funded the work, and why Texas Parks and Wildlife initiated the project. He will discuss several rare plants in North Texas, their biology and habitat restrictions, and what we can do to help conserve rare plants and the biodiversity of Texas flora.

CALENDAR

Sept 11 8:00 pm, Texas Hall, UTA Thomas L. Friedman, “Hot, Flat and Crowded: Why We Need a Green

Downwinders at Risk to Meet in Arlington

Editor’s note: Here’s important news from Jim Schermbeck:

The fall general meeting of Downwinders at Risk will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Arlington East Sector Police Service and Community Center, 2001 New York Avenue.

We’ve scheduled the meeting to coincide with TCEQ’s “hearing” on the recently “approved” clean air plan for DFW. While TCEQ and some officials will gather in Dallas to pat themselves on the back and say they’ve authored a plan that will solve DFW’s air pollution problems, our meeting will be aimed at demonstrating why this plan won’t work and gearing up for a push toward green cement in the state legislature.

Showing up is an act of disapproval toward TCEQ and its weak plan.

continued on page 6

Wildscape Update *John Dycus*



Let's hear it for the hummingbirds and butterflies, diminished in number though they may be, flitting about in their late-summer diaphanous cavort.

Soon the wonderful fall weather will kick in with its colorful blooms and bird calls, completing the magic of autumnn.

In this glorious setting, the wildscape plant sale is straight ahead — Sept. 27, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm at the Arlington Parks and Rec greenhouse in Randol Mill Park. A kiosk at the wildscape and handouts will provide more information. A list of the plants for sale and directions to the greenhouse are at *thewildscape.org*.

Spading these native plants into your backyard is a big step toward enticing the aforementioned hummingbirds and butterflies to visit. Every Wednesday morning, plant sale manager Josephine Keeney is at the greenhouse to propagate plants with wildscape volunteers. She also checks a couple of times a week to be sure everything's getting watered adequately.

Indigenous plants accustomed to the area's temperature swings and fickle rainfall can be difficult to find. Thousands of plants are needed to restore the four-acre wildscape to a natural habitat after being overrun by the awful invasive privet. Income from these sales provide the wildscape's share of matching grants, tools and other essentials.



Molly wants YOU at the plant sale. Your eyes are getting heavy. Your wallet is getting lighter. But you're okay with it because Molly wants YOU at the plant sale.

Don't Forget the Wildscape Mini-Classes (tentative schedule)

Month	Subject	Speaker
Sept	Attracting Butterflies	Josephine Keeney
Oct	Native Landscape Maintenance	Lucy Harrell
Nov	Water Conservation	Greg Schadt
Dec	Native Trees & Their Care	Heather Dowell
Jan	Propagating Native Plants	Pat Lovejoy
Feb	Good Critters in Our Soil	Ann Mayo



Native Plant Sale

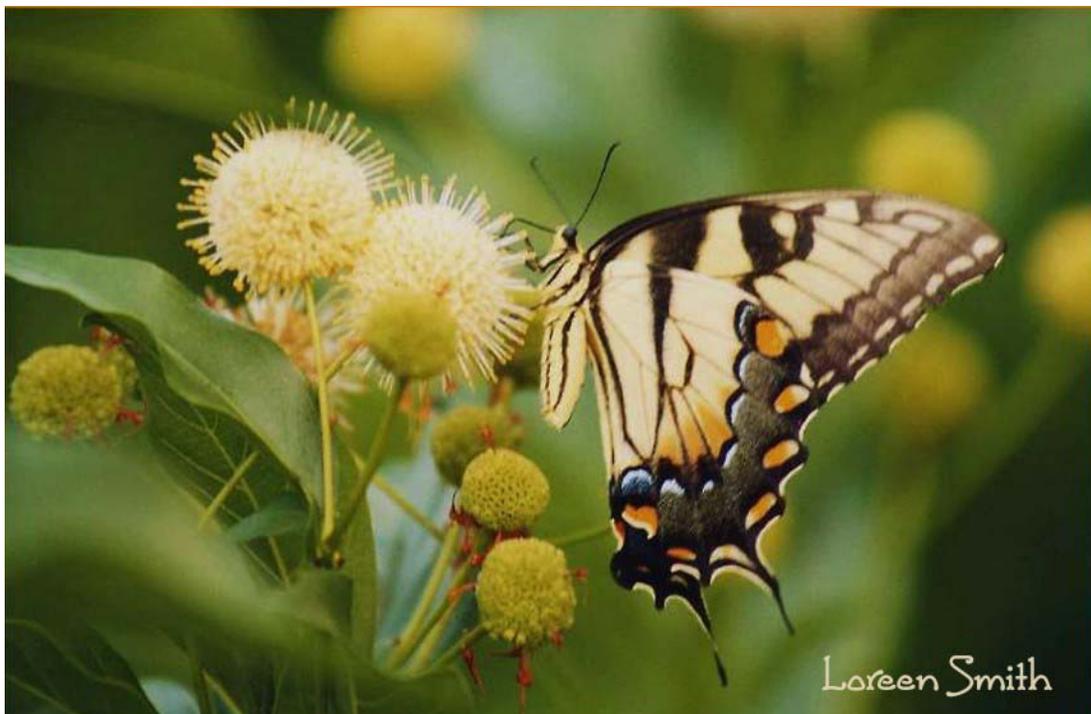
at Randol Mill Park Greenhouse
Benefitting the Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park

Saturday, September 27, 2008
9:00 - 1:00

Organically grown native plants
Most from local seed and cuttings
Plants better adapted to our local climate

Check www.thewildscape.org for plant list

Quarts	\$4.00
Gallons	\$7.00
Trees	\$15.00 and up



Uninvited Guests Marian Hiler

Just as day was breaking one Saturday morning I heard something scurrying across my roof. It sounded bigger than a squirrel so of course I had to investigate. With flashlight in hand I found my rooftop visitor sitting under the eaves just inside my attic. An opossum's snout was peeking through an opening that wasn't supposed to be there. Happy to share my yard but not my house, I called 911 Wildlife for a free inspection and on-site consultation.

Gary arrived on time the following Monday. He inspected the outside of my house for other possible access points. He found one greasy spot on the siding that indicated mice or rats may have tried to work their way in. Simply stuffing brass pads in the gap would keep the critters out he said. Though he didn't see the opossum during the inspection, I opted to hire 911 Wildlife's services to make sure I didn't have any uninvited house guests remaining in my attic before the opening was closed. As he installed a one-way door, Gary told me that it was probably a raccoon that easily pulled away part of the vinyl siding and the

opossum took advantage of it. We would be able to tell if a creature left through the door because a tab would be flipped as it departed. Gary said based on his experience about 60% of the time nobody was still inside, which turned out to be the case here. He came back a couple of days later to remove the door and cover the hole with heavy-gauge, rustproof wire mesh.

911 Wildlife doesn't trap animals because that doesn't solve the problem and it's not the most humane method. Plenty of squirrels, raccoons, opossums and skunks are around to take the place of the removed animal. Relocated animals can't compete well with the existing population in the new area. Often it's a lactating female that leaves behind young that will starve to death. Certainly unfortunate for them and if they were left in the attic or under the house, bad for your nose.



Calling a professional has its advantages. One 911 Wildlife service call was to help a home owner who tried to remove a skunk that had been visiting his wine cellar — obviously not one of my neighbors. The owner was able to trap the skunk but didn't think ahead. He had set the trap in the cellar and now had to figure out how to get it up his stairs without upsetting the skunk. All ended well. The technician covered the trap and slowly and successfully removed the skunk from the house. Another happy customer just like me.

Downwinders at Risk continued from page 3

Meet Tommy, one of the youngest victims of the state's failure to clean our air.

Dr. Al Armendariz, Engineering Professor at SMU, will be there to walk you through the reasons why the state plan is doomed to failure. Dr. Armendariz is a passionate advocate of clean air who's used his position to become a real burr in the TCEQ's saddle.

Dr. Armendariz and Downwinders at Risk Field Organizer Jim Schermbeck will then share the results of a new UNT report on the accumulated pollution

burden of the cement plants and local steel mill, totaling up the last 16 years worth of pollution for the first time and

PLEASE COME AND PLUG IN TO ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CITIZEN CAMPAIGNS FOR CLEAN AIR IN DFW HISTORY!

revealing truly amazing facts. Here's a preview: Midlothian industry has released enough airborne mercury to

contaminate 133,000,000 20- acre lakes and all the fish in them.

Finally, Jim will be showing an updated version of our presentation on the Campaign for Green Cement, then discussing plans for the legislature and how you can help us keep the momentum going in light of TXI's announcement that it's "indefinitely" shutting down its four wet kilns in Midlothian.

In only 13 months, the Campaign is responsible for approximately 5000 tons of air pollution being cut from the Midlothian wet kilns. We believe we're at an important tipping point and that the next 6 to 8 months could prove decisive.

Environmental Activities at the Parks Department **Heather Dowell**

(Editor's note: Our guest contributor is the Forester with Arlington Parks & Recreation Department. She's often helped Molly and ACC, and she gave us a marvellous talk at last February's meeting.)

The city is working on many new environmental initiatives. We have the Green Policy Council and the Green Policy Steering Committee that are citywide. These committees are working on initiatives from idling policies, integrated pest management, eliminating the use of bottled water and using reusable containers and city tap water, and have just successfully completed a pilot single-stream recycling program at City Hall and the Municipal Office Tower. This pilot program was so successful that many of our other city facilities will be installing some single-stream commercial dumpsters for recycling.

The Parks Department has its own environmental committee that is continuing the city effort and with emphasis on our parks. We are working diligently on retrofitting many of our landscape beds with drip irrigation and removing the spray heads to help with water conservation. We are changing some of our large rotor heads to low trajectory sprinkler heads to reduce evaporation and overspray.

We are almost finished with an approved plant list with photo gallery and

information about the plants. This list will be what the Parks Department staff will be allowed to plant and will be passed on to the citywide group to use at new city buildings. This will happen after review by several departments and adoption by the Green Policy Council. We are working to greatly reduce and in many areas eliminate the use of annuals for annual color changes. Most of the new landscape designs do not have any annuals in the plan.

We designed and installed a demonstration garden at the South Water Service Center on Green Oaks and Cooper to help educate the public on water conservation and the benefits of using native plants. We are in the process of creating a Web site for this design that will allow people to download the plant material we used in the design so they can walk the landscape and look at the plants in use or just view it from home.

We are finishing a landscape design at Lake Arlington Golf Course around the clubhouse that implements drip irrigation and native plants. I welcome everyone to come out and look at this design and play a round of golf when the course reopens around the middle to end of September.

We are working to increase our use of organic pesticides and fertilizer. Evonne Sandas has set the tone for this at Tierra

Verde, with the golf courses leading the way.

We are looking into many other water conservation methods with rain water harvesting and using ET clocks to irrigate as efficiently as possible.

The L.E.A.F. program is approaching its third round. L.E.A.F. allows residents, HOA common areas, businesses and public spaces to receive free trees. We gave out 470 trees in March '08 and were able to increase the residential tree size to 10 gallon instead of 5 gallon, which made a huge impact on our urban forest. We have distributed over 700 trees since the program started in 2007. That is over 700 trees planted in Arlington to increase our canopy cover, reduce heat islands, shade and cool buildings to reduce energy consumption, help with storm water runoff and beautify the city. We are hoping to pass the one thousand mark this year. Very exciting!

We have implemented the No Child Left Inside initiatives and have had several Naturally Fun Neighborhoods events this year. This program encourages families to come out to the parks and play outside, just to enjoy nature. Our recreation centers are very involved with this program. It has been very successful so far and another event is coming up at Don Misenhimer Park on September 13 from 10:00 am until noon.



Thanks to Our August Speaker — and Farewell

Gwen Harper, Recycling Coordinator for the Arlington Independent School District, gave us a wonderful presentation on recycling programs at AISD last month.

We didn't know it then, but she would soon have to leave her position because of visa problems. This is a serious loss for our schools and for all the children she's influenced.

We'll miss her great work but hope that somewhere she finds another position worthy of her talents.



Landscape Needs a Little Work

If you can help on Saturday, September 13, at this Mission Arlington building at 400 W. Abram, please contact John Darling. We'll need experienced planters to supervise a lot of volunteers. Thanks.

Arlington Conservation Council Membership Application

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

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Don't Forget!

Wednesday, September 10
 7:00 pm

David Murray
An Electric Car Experience

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