

HABITAT HERALD

Wildlife Austin's monthly Newsletter



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Wildlife Austin

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- Oct 3rd-5th:** SXSWEco Conference - registration still open:
www.sxsweco.com
- Oct 6th:** Gardening for Birds Talk at Mueller
www.KeepAustinBeautiful.org/node/1946
- Oct 6th & 7th:** Water Wise PermaBlitz Workshop
www.facebook.com/events/520620694619451
- Oct 10th:** Austin Beyond Coal Evening of Action and Family Fun (Sierra Club)
www.sierraclub.org/coal/austin/
- Oct 14th:** Native Plant Week Tree of the Year Celebration
treefolks.org/calendar/
- Oct 20:** Clean Lady Bird Lake with KAB
www.KeepAustinBeautiful.org/LBOctober2012
- Oct 28th:** 14th Annual Eat Locally Cook Globally Fall Festival benefiting Green Corn Project
www.greencornproject.org/2012-Fall-Festival
- Oct 31st:** Trick or Tree!
Come by the Triangle Farmers Market for a free sapling!
treefolks.org/calendar/

October 2012



Texas Native Plant Week is Upon Us!



It's that time of year again! Get ready to celebrate Native Plant Week from October 14th to the 20th!

Why Native Plants?

Native plants are acclimated to local climate conditions and soils, provide habitat for wildlife, typically require less water and maintenance once established, and do not rely on chemical fertilizers and pesticides to thrive. These homegrown plants also give us a sense of place and help maintain the region's wide variety of flora and fauna. Not only do they provide all of these wonderful benefits, but

they are beautiful, too! Here are some of the events to check out:

Wildflower Center Native Plant Sale - October 12th - 14th

At the Wildflower Center's Fall Plant Sale and Gardening Festival you can choose from nearly 300 species of hardy Texas natives bred to deal with our Central Texas climate. www.wildflower.org/plantsale/

Hike the BCP Wildlands - October 13th

Celebrate Native Plant week by taking a walk through a preserve! The location of Travis County along several natural regions results in a diversity of more than 1,500 species of plants. This will be a guided hike that explores the diversity of native plants in a preserve setting.
www.ci.austin.tx.us/water/wildland/online/registration/registeractivity.cfm

Butterfly Gardening Workshop - October 16th

The Wildflower Center is celebrating the 10 year anniversary of the Ann and O.J. Weber Butterfly Garden with a special workshop taught by the designer, Judy Walther of Environmental Survey Consulting! Learn about the seasonal food, shelter and breeding needs of Central Texas butterflies as you first walk through the various habitat niches within the garden and then return to a classroom to discuss the concepts behind the garden design.
www.wildflower.org/gonativeu/

Austin Arbor Day Festival! - Saturday October 20th

Join the City of Austin to celebrate Arbor Day! This year the festivities will include tree planting and maintenance volunteer opportunities, exciting activities like a bucket truck ride and a free sapling giveaway, and an appearance by the mayor. treefolks.org/calendar/

For a complete list of events visit austintexas.gov/NativePlantWeek

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Notes from Erin



This September we conducted the Fall 2012 National Wildlife Federation Habitat Stewards class. We had a wonderful class this year, full of intelligent & inquisitive students. I feel truly lucky to be a part of this program, and I just wanted to take a minute to thank some of the people involved including:

Travis Audubon (particularly Nancy Manning and Megan Taylor), Habitat Steward Hosts Jane Tillman & Meredith O'Reilly, the Austin Nature and Science Center & staff, Hornsby Bend (particularly Kevin Anderson), the Lamar Senior Activity Center & staff, the Old Quarry Library Branch & staff, and all of our amazing speakers and contributors.

Focus on Austin Natives

The Amazing Monarch Migration!

By Erin Cord

The Monarch butterfly (*Danus plexippus*) is one of our most charismatic and well-known insects. You probably know what they look like, and may have even seen one or two monarch caterpillars in your yard or garden. Fall is an exciting time for monarch-enthusiasts because it is migration season. During the summer monarch butterflies only live a few weeks. Their main focus is reproduction, and this pattern continues for several generations throughout the summer. In the fall however, something remarkable happens. The last generation of monarch butterflies born in the early fall months have a different mission. No time to waste attracting a mate, this tenacious cohort of monarch's only care about eating. They are bulking up, and getting ready for one heck of a migration.

Monarch's as far north as Maine will travel all the way South to the mountains of Central Mexico. Although they have never been there before, they somehow know where to go. It's an amazing thing, and something scientists don't really understand. If a migrating monarch is lucky enough to reach the oyamel fir forest in central Mexico, the conditions are superb for a sort of insect hibernation known as "overwintering". The temperatures in the mountains are cold, but not freezing. The mountain serves as a sort of refrigerator for these arriving monarchs, and the conditions allow them to live much longer than their summer counterparts. Monarchs stay in the Mexican mountains for the entire winter, and in early spring they make their way back up to the United States and hungrily looking for nectar and breeding before they die. Each generation moves a little farther north until the next fall when the whole cycle begins again. It is truly wondrous!



These amazing migrants should be moving through Austin in the next few weeks, and if you see them be sure to give them a salute! It's also very important to provide native plants that have nectar-rich flowers that provide easy-to-access food. Although monarch adults feed on a variety of nectar sources, their larvae (caterpillars) feed only on milkweed. So plant as much milkweed in your garden as you can, and you are certain to have these astounding insects for the majority of the year! To learn more about the monarch journey and how you can create a monarch way station, visit:

www.monarchwatch.org.

Focus on Keeping Austin Beautiful

Keeping Austin Beautiful Blooming with Native Flora

By Monica Lopez-Magee

I'm very excited as we begin my favorite season of Central Texas gardening. Cooler weather and a lil' rain bring many opportunities for us to sow new seeds. When you're gardening in the coming weeks, show your pride in Austin by planting native.

Planting natives simply means selecting the right plants for our local landscape. Over thousands of years, native plants have adapted to the climate, soil and water conditions of the Austin area. Being well adapted to the area has its advantages! Native plants tend to need less water and fertilizers that means less maintenance for you in the long run and more time to enjoy what is in bloom. Natives are so critical to the natural ecosystem that in 2009 the Texas Legislator dedicated an entire week to native plant awareness. This year Native Plant Week will be recognized on October 14-20.

During Native Plant Week there are events happening all around town to become better informed about natives and the value they add to our local wildlife and protecting our creeks. For the day time goer you can join the [Native Plant Garden Tour](#) on Monday, October 15, from 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Zilker Botanical Garden. Midweek (10/17 at 5:30 p.m.) catch a [Native Plants of Central Texas Walk & Talk](#) at the Wildflower Center. The very next day, on Thursday, October 18, from 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. meet the experts at the [Grow Green Homeowner Training](#) to be held at One Texas Center. For a full listing of Native Plant Week events visit austintexas.gov/NativePlantWeek. Involve your children in the learning process with KAB's Native Seedball Activity Kit, a free resource available for checkout - www.keeptexasbeautiful.org/activitykits.

If you still aren't sure if a plant is native then check www.wildflower.org/explore to make sure you're planting something that will thrive here. Better yet, visit the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center [Fall Plant Sale and Gardening Festival](#) on Saturday and Sunday, October 13 and 14 from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. to select from a wide variety of natives.

As you set out to beautify the city with all your knew knowledge take advantage of KAB's Seed Savers, community seed bank program, where you can request seeds for public garden and landscape projects. The seed bank is a collection of seeds that have been donated by volunteers from their own gardens and are re-distributed by KAB back to the community. Thank you for keeping Austin native!

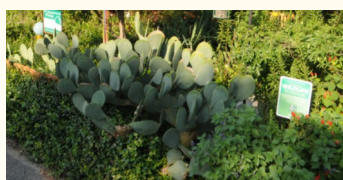
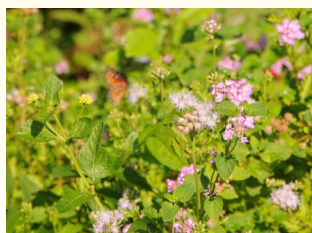
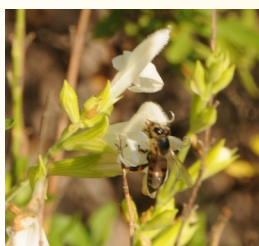
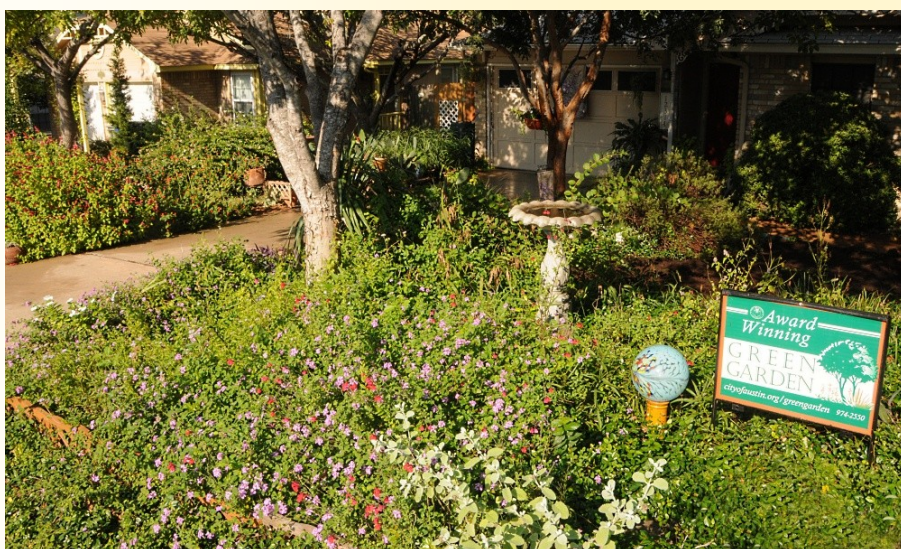
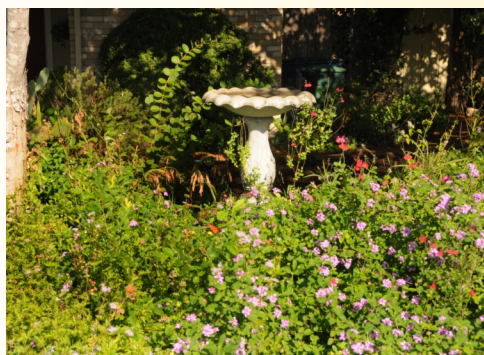
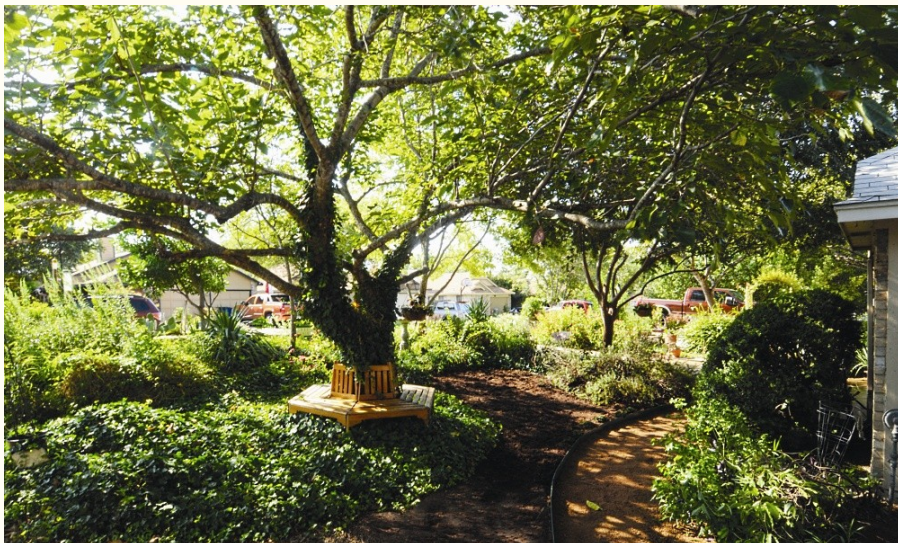


Monica Lopez Magee is the Dir. of Development & Communications
for Keep Austin Beautiful



Garden of the Month

This month we feature the lovely and certified garden of Habitat Steward Joan Ivy. Joan is all about water conservation and native plants, and her yard is an award winning Green Garden:



③

Questions for the Gardener...



Question: What is the story of your garden?
Joan: When I bought the house on 1999, there was nothing in the front yard but a fruitless Mulberry tree, a shrub and dead St. Augustine lawn. The grass was especially fried near the curb as that area got sun all day. So I started with the areas bordering the street and began planting native, sun tolerant plants and a few trees, including a transplanted lace bark elm, a pecan and a Texas mountain laurel. I add plants and mulch every year; it's a work in progress that's always changing.

Q: What is your favorite thing about your garden?

J: It's relaxing to sit in the the shade and watch the wildlife. There are always bird, butterflies, squirrels and lizards to watch. Nature is very entertaining! Some of my neighbors have gardens, but they don't always plant native...so the butterflies always come to my yard.

Q: What is the most interesting wildlife visitor you've had?

J: A spotted towhee, two kinds of woodpeckers and a red-tailed hawk that flew right over my head with a rat in its claws! Glad he didn't drop it on me...

Q: What have been the challenges of your garden?

A: It's a small lot, so I always want to plant more than I have space for. The soil quality was bad, so I usually have to introduce some additives to make it more rich.

Q: What is your favorite plant and why?

J: It's a tie between Turk's Cap because of the hummingbirds it attracts and Passion Vine because of the Gulf Fritillary caterpillars and butterflies.

Q: How long have you been interested in gardening with native plants?

J: I've always enjoyed wildlife and learned that the more native plants you have, the more wildlife you will attract. I like providing a small haven for migrating birds and butterflies; they are such a pleasure to watch. I also like using the least amount of water and no pesticides. Natives are the way to go!





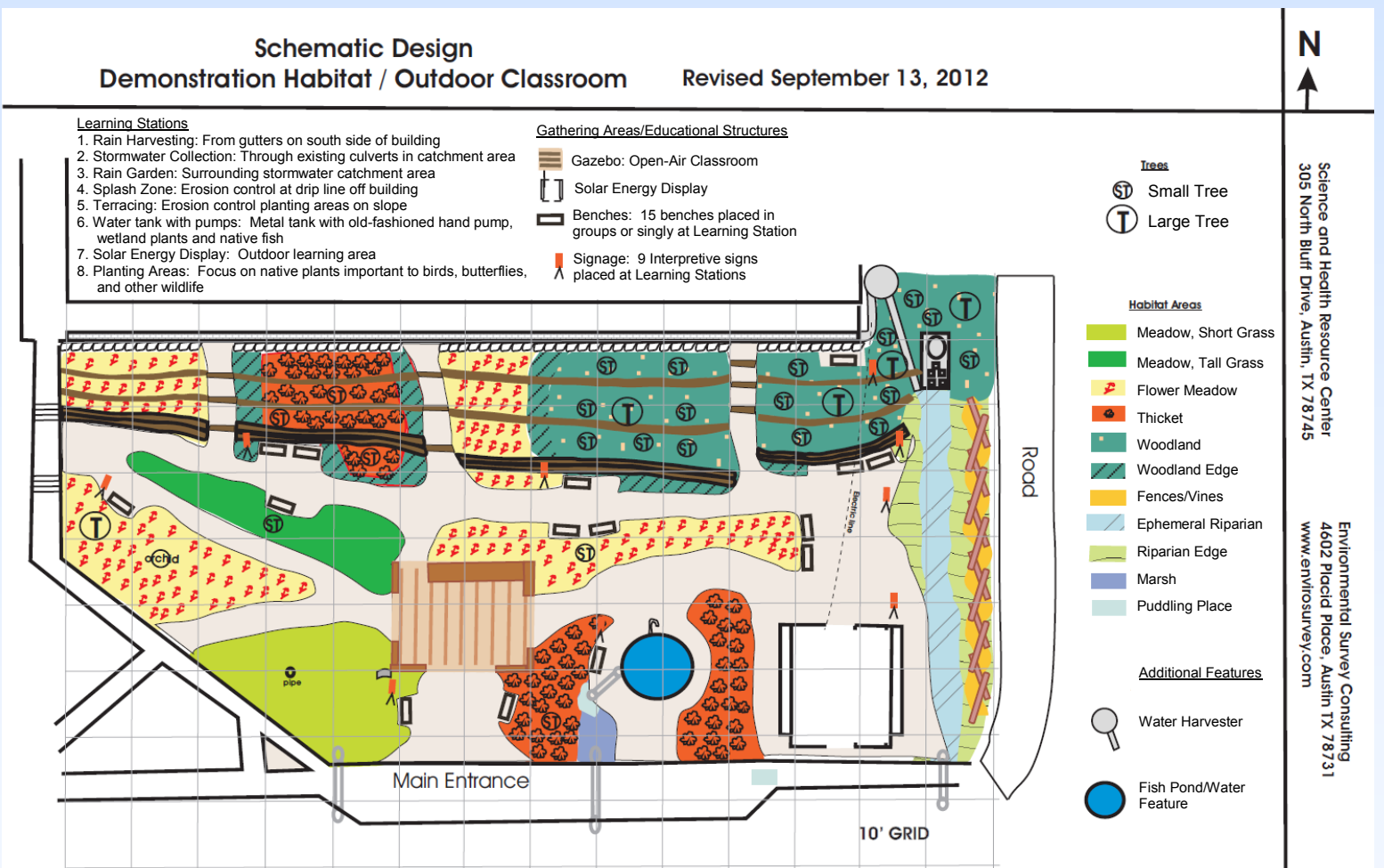
Schoolyard Habitat Update



AISD Model Habitat Begins Construction!

AISD is partnering with the National Wildlife Federation to install a district model habitat. The model habitat will be located at the Science and Health Research Center. Uses will include teacher trainings on outdoor curriculum, trainings on how to install habitats on your own campus, training maintenance crews on upkeep of native plants, and field trips for students. Construction is to begin in October 2012.

AISD Model Habitat Design: Working Draft:



Schoolyard Habitat Success Depends on Volunteers Like You!

Contact Anne Muller AISD Outdoor Learning Specialist
 amuller@austinisd.org or 841-5070
 For an up to date list of work days and volunteer opportunities



Would YOU like to receive the the Wildlife Austin newsletter electronically?

Simply e-mail us at [wildlife@austintexas.gov!](mailto:wildlife@austintexas.gov)



www.sxsweco.com

SXSW Eco will feature sessions from experts in the public, private and academic sectors committed to finding solutions for a sustainable world.

Hosting an international audience of on-the-ground innovators and executive level decision makers from the public and private sectors as well as thought leaders from academia, this event will drive the conversation of sustainability beyond rhetoric and towards solutions. SXSW Eco is for professionals at the forefront of the post-recognition discussion who are dedicated to making progress towards solving these challenges.

Tips for Living Green: What Can You Do To Reduce Global Climate Change?

If you are one of those people that care about the climate and would like to do something, here is a suggestion you can do today and perhaps save some money in the future while lowering your carbon footprint. Austin Energy has a Green Choice program available to all of its customers. By signing up, all of your electricity will come from non-fossil fuel sources such as wind and solar. You will pay a bit more per kilowatt-hour but your fuel costs will be locked in until 2021. So you will have no increase in that portion of your bill for nearly 10 years. In 2000, we signed up for the first Green Choice package which locked our fuel cost for 10 years. We did pay a bit more at the beginning but at the end of our contract, we were paying less than everyone else.

Since the city is getting ready to put new rates in to effect in October with further prices increases to come, now might be a great time to switch to 100% renewal energy for your home. Sure it is a small thing but if everyone does their part, we collectively will make a difference. If you are not one of the many Austin residents who have solar PV already on your roof, this is a much easier alternative.



For more information call 512-974-7827 or go to www.austinenergy.com/energy%20efficiency/Programs/Green%20Choice/



By Dale Bulla

“Like”

[Austin Parks and Recreation](#) on Facebook and look for the Wildlife Austin posts!



The City of Austin is proud to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you require assistance for participation in our programs or use of our facilities, please call (512) 974-6700.