

# HABITAT HERALD

Wildlife Austin's monthly Newsletter



VOL 2 . ISSUE 5

## July 2013



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#### Wildlife Austin

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#### UPCOMING EVENTS

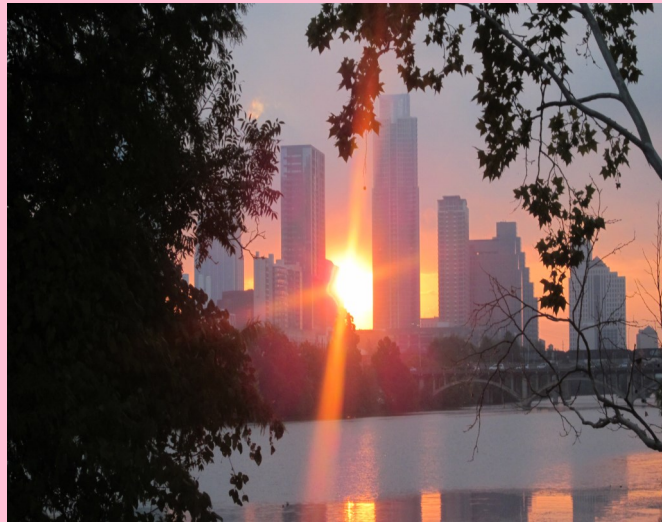
July 10, Blues on the Green,  
 Zilker Park, 7:30PM-10:00PM  
<http://www.kgsr.com/bluesonthegreen/>

July 11, Movies in the Park  
 Republic Square, "A League of  
 Their Own", 8:30PM-10:30PM  
<http://austinparks.org>

July 17, Movies on the Long Cen-  
 ter Lawn "Back to the Future"  
 8:00PM  
<http://thelongcenter.org/event/sounds-cinema/>

July 24, Blues on the Green,  
 Zilker Park, 7:30PM-10:00PM  
<http://www.kgsr.com/bluesonthegreen/>

July 31, Movies on the Long Cen-  
 ter Lawn, "School of Rock",  
 8:00PM <http://thelongcenter.org/event/sounds-cinema/>

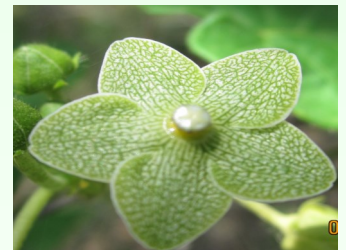


Happy July Everyone! I hope you are all doing well and enjoying the summer so far. I invite you all to come check out the Fourth of July celebration on Auditorium Shores starting at 8:30pm. The Austin Symphony Orchestra will be present to play some festive music including the Overture of 1812. After the symphony's performance there will be fireworks starting at 9:30pm.

Also, please check out the Austin Water Water-Wise Rebate program on page 7. This program encourages homeowners to reduce their lawn thus reducing their water usage. Do your part to help conserve our most precious resource!

### Quiz of the Month

## Who Am I?



# The Price of Invasives



If you take a stroll through Austin's parks, you may notice some familiar plants and trees that are often seen in landscaped neighborhoods. Many trees and plants which are popular landscaping species can become problematic invasives on park land, including Golden Bamboo, Giant Cane, Ligustrum (Privet), Nandina (Heavenly/Sacred Bamboo), and Chinaberry. While these and other exotic species can be quite attractive, they can

spread uncontrollably when their seeds are dispersed by wind, birds, and even humans- seeds are frequently carried on shoes.

These plants can restrict recreational opportunities and alter natural habitats when they spread within the parks and cost the United States over 137 billion dollars annually. The City of Austin Park Rangers are making an effort to control the spread of these invasive species by removing and chipping them, and planting native species in their place. You can



help by choosing native species for your garden and yard at home. For more information on native and invasive

plants in Texas, visit the Austin chapter of the Native Plant Society website at <http://npsot.org/wp/austin/>, and the Texas Invasives website at <http://www.texasinvasives.org/>.



# Garden of the Month



Our Garden of the Month for July comes from Habitat Stewards Mark Wilson and Dana Kuykendall. Their yard is a certified wildlife habitat through the National Wildlife Federation and does not include any invasive plants. They have also included a chimney swift tower as well as two bird baths to encourage migrant bird species. This is a great example of how you can incorporate native plants in to a more structured traditional-style garden while still supporting native species.

**Would you like to share your yard with other gardeners? If so please write to [wildlife@austintexas.gov](mailto:wildlife@austintexas.gov) for more details!**





# Schoolyard Habitat Update



## Webb Middle School Schoolyard Habitat

Austin ISD is proud to partner with the National Wildlife Federation on installing schoolyard habitats. Webb MS received a grant in 2011 from the National Wildlife Federation. With it, they were able to turn a barren and dusty courtyard into a lush and vibrant garden. In a recent visit with Science teacher Bob Barnett and Webb, he mentioned that teachers not only use the habitat for classroom learning but for stress relief. It is not uncommon to look out and see teachers walking through the garden during their off periods! This summer, Webb is focusing on incorporating the garden into their 6<sup>th</sup> grade Science curriculum. What a success story!

Before



After



**AISD and CINCA have collaborated to create an online toolkit for educators on greening their schoolyards. Check it out!**

**[www.greeningyourschoolyard.com](http://www.greeningyourschoolyard.com)**



# Schoolyard Habitat Update



Volunteer Bob Barnett



After

## Donations Needed!

Campuses are looking for donations of the following materials for spring and summer workdays:

- Compost and/or soil
- Native seeds, plants, shrubs and trees
- Tools
- 4 inch pots
- Limestone blocks
- Cedar logs
- Decomposed Granite
- Bird Feeders and/or bird seed

## Schoolyard Habitat Success Depends on Volunteers Like You!

Contact Anne Muller AISD Outdoor Learning Specialist  
amuller@austinisd.org or 512-841-5070

For an up to date list of work days and volunteer opportunities



# Living in a WUI without all the Hooey

## Fire Mitigation in the Parks



The rain over Memorial Day weekend in Austin was a welcome sight for those concerned about wildfires in the area, but as we approach the hot, dry summer months, drought conditions and the associated wildfire risks may persist. City of Austin Park Rangers have been doing their part to mitigate wildfire risks in some city parks by creating shaded fuel breaks along park/private property boundaries, and by removing and chipping dead wood. Shaded fuel breaks are created by removing dead unshed branches and other potential wildfire fuels within a pre-determined buffer area along park boundaries. The purpose of these fuel breaks is to reduce the risk of fire movement between park land and private property. While these efforts on city park land are important measures to prevent and mitigate wildfire in the city, the best way for homeowners to protect their homes in the event of a wildfire is to properly manage and landscape the area immediately surrounding their homes.

### What you can do:

- \* If you have a fireplace in your home, keep firewood stacked at least 30 feet away from your home, and keep tree branches trimmed away from your chimney.
- \* Choose stone and cement instead of wood as building materials for patios or garden retaining walls.
- \* If you have a wooden deck, make sure that leaf litter, dead grass, and other potential fire fuels do not accumulate under it.
- \* Keep gutters free of leaves and debris- these can ignite easily if embers from a wildfire land in your gutters.



## WaterWise Rebate Program

Want to help the environment and save some green? Then a WaterWise Landscape may be just what you need! WaterWise Landscape refers to landscaping and gardening that reduces or eliminates the need for supplemental water from irrigation. Major water savings can be made by converting your healthy turf grass to native plant beds and permeable hardscape. Residential properties may receive \$25 for every 100 sq.ft. converted from healthy turf grass to native plant bed and permeable hardscape with a maximum rebate amount of \$1,250.

Applications are accepted twice per year, December 1 – March 31 for spring installations and June 1 – September 30 for fall installations. Participants may enter the program more than once if they have another eligible area of turf that can be converted to a WaterWise landscape. Only one application per acceptance period will be accepted. This program is available to residential customers of Austin Water or a qualifying water provider.

Please visit the Austin Water website for more details and to print an application: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/waterwise-landscape-rebate>

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

E-mail us at [wildlife@austintexas.gov](mailto:wildlife@austintexas.gov)

## FREE LECTURES & TRIPS

### Ecological Literacy Days July 27, 2013 from 9 am - 1 pm

Combining volunteer work with learning about local ecology, the Ecological Literacy Day at Hornsby Bend begins with several hours of outdoor work and ends with at least an hour of learning about local ecology. Wear boots and work clothing, and be sure to bring your binoculars. For more information contact Kevin Anderson at [coordinator@hornsbybend.org](mailto:coordinator@hornsbybend.org) or 512-972-1960

### Monthly Bird Survey July 13, 2013 at 7:00 am and 4:00pm

Starting in 1999, the monthly Bird Survey has taken place at 7am and 4pm on the 2nd Saturday of the month. We meet at Hornsby Bend in the Center for Environmental Research at 7am for the morning survey [Coffee and donuts at 6:30am] and 4pm for the afternoon survey. All levels of birders are welcome - the survey is a great way to improve your skills since we form teams matching experienced and novice birders.

### Birding Fieldtrip July 20, 2013 at 7:30am to 11am

Interested in birds? Join other birders at Hornsby Bend at 7:30am for a fieldtrip around the center. You are guaranteed to see at least 50 species. For more information contact Kevin Anderson at [coordinator@hornsbybend.org](mailto:coordinator@hornsbybend.org) or call 512-972-1960.



“Like”

[Austin Parks and Recreation-Parks in Nature](#)

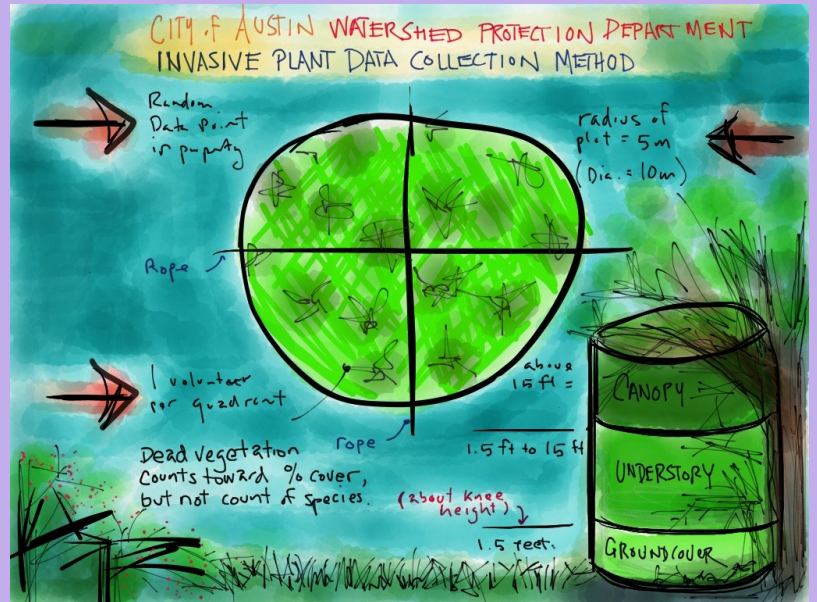
on Facebook and look for the Wildlife Austin posts!



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.

# Invasive Plant Monitoring Update

This summer more than 100 volunteers are playing a huge game of Marco Polo, except the invasive plants don't talk back. These Citizen Scientists were trained, thanks to a Cities of Service grant that supported hosting six trainings with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, to learn to identify the top 24 invasive plants in Austin and how to document them. Over the course of the summer volunteers are documenting which invasive plants are on 35 city-managed properties and if they're in the groundcover, understory, or canopy layer.



This data will help the City refine the list of top 24 invasive plants and determine sustainable land management techniques.

If you didn't attend the trainings but would still like to document invasive plants there is also a self-led technique. Visit <http://www.texasinvasives.org/training/index.php> to take the online training.

Learn more about Austin's Invasive Species Management Plan at [www.austintexas.gov/invasive](http://www.austintexas.gov/invasive). Special thanks to Marc Opperman and Park Ranger Nick Hirsch and his Park Ranger Cadets for all their hard work!

