As you stroll along the trails at Riverside Nature Center you may have noticed a change; a gradual shift from the profuse Monet-like spring setting to a more Van Gogh-esque summer backdrop. Gone are the fiery wheels of Indian Blanket, replaced by bulging straw colored seed heads. Some visitors find the gardens less appealing this time of year. But as the saying goes, “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” If you asked any of the visitors of the cardinal or finch variety which they preferred, bright flashy petals or dull prickly globes filled with nourishing seeds, how do you suppose they would reply?

It is our responsibility as environmental educators to help shift the public’s perception of what is beautiful. Oftentimes encouraging someone to simply take a closer look and truly “see” what is around them will allow him/her to gain a new and more holistic attitude. Our newest exhibit, “What’s in YOUR Yard?” was planned with this goal in mind. At first glance, it may appeal more to children, but, as an adult, I hope you will extrapolate the concept of “your yard” to “our yard” to the “global yard.” Perhaps you will come away with a broader sense of nature’s beauty.

Speaking of beauty and education, I am excited to announce that artist, Russ Cushman, will be on site to paint a mural on the Riverscape wall. It will depict a rain storm providing the essential element for our “river’s” base flow recharge.

You may also want to check out one or more of the free summer programs we are featuring every Thursday evening from 6:30-7:30 pm. For more details visit http://riversidenaturecenter.org/index/awesome-activities/. The first three programs were well attended by adults and kids alike. This is a wonderful opportunity for anyone to share their found treasures and to ask questions of local experts.

RNC is extremely fortunate to have available to them such human resources willing to volunteer their time and expertise. Unfortunately, not all our programs can be produced, nor all our needs fulfilled at zero expense. Summer falls midway in our fiscal year. Now is a good time to make a generous donation or to renew that lapsed membership.

Every dollar RNC receives counts as a win in our efforts toward championing the treasure we call the Hill Country.

Until next time.....
July 2016 RNC Events Calendar

**Check our Summer Fun & Nature Nights**

Thursday, July 7, 2016 Family Nature Night 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. What’s the buzz with Bees? Debra Windham Bees & Beekeeping

Friday, July 8, 2016 6 – 7:30 p.m. Wine share *See special music below

Tuesday, July 12, 2016 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Shucks the Corn Snake

Thursday, July 14, 2016 Family Nature Night 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Dazzly Dragonflies & Beautiful Bugs! Bill Morgenstern, outdoors writer & photographer

Saturday, July 16, 2016 8 – 9:30 a.m. Bird Walks & Talks with Paul & Deloris Sellin

Thursday, July 21, 2016 Family Nature Night 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. What lives underground? Morgan Williams

Saturday, July 23, 2016 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. UGRA Annual River Clean Up & Town Creek Clean Up

Tuesday, July 25, 2016 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Shucks the Corn Snake

Thursday, July 28, 2016 Family Nature Night 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Bugs! Snakes! Judy Ferguson & Karen Millikan

For more information and upcoming events, check our website www.riversidenaturecenter.org

*Playing at Wine Share, Ric LeMon & Menagerie Band, combining elements of Blues, Pop, Rock, R&B, Gospel and Funk into smooth Jazz that makes their genre "Jazz Fusion ."

Introducing the new 2016 logo for our second annual Run 4 Riverside 5K! It is going to be on the t-shirts, so keep training for Saturday, September 10, 2016.
by Susan Sander, RNC naturalist

I definitely have the best job – being a naturalist allows me to explore, but also has trained me to be on the look-out for creatures small and often overlooked, so every day is a bit like being on a scavenger hunt!

Now YOU get a chance to be the naturalist with our new exhibit ready for exploring! It’s really an inside “out” exhibit due to the 8’x12’ photo mural of our backyard - it’s like looking through the building out into the meadow.

A big round of hearty thanks for the incredible talent that our members have shared through the use of their photographs. Bill Morgenstern’s photo of our backyard captured a great spring of green and wildflowers.

I’m amazed at how much our yard has been transformed since we purchased it in July of 1992. We garden about two acres, but in it we have a lot of diversity. Those tree saplings planted in 1993 are now green giants, providing multi-layers of shelter and food for a host of wildlife, big and small that have been seen here. We’re at 160 species of birds, 90 species of butterflies, 38 species of dragonflies & damselflies, plus reptiles and amphibians, mammals and other bugs. It proves that if you plant it – they will come!

On the big screen is yet another fabulous video by Robert Carpenter, a local dentist who captured at least 48 species of wildlife in his yard along Camp Meeting Creek and some from RNC. The birdsongs are the best background music for the display!

Sandra and Scott Magee have created a power point of the wide variety of wildlife that they have seen on their property on Bandera. Sandra has also been keeping visitors informed with her displays in the outdoor kiosks.

Sometimes we don’t expect to see wildlife, particularly in the city environment, but life at the Nature Center proves that it can get wild in the city.

So this summer you have the option to still explore nature but in the AC! We have put together a scavenger hunt that you can do here and then compare what you find in your own yard. And stop by on Thursday Nature Nights to meet some of our other talented folks who will be on hand to share their passion for nature. Then take a hike on the River Trail to the library and check on books to learn more.

Happy summer!

Ginger Morrow’s 5 year old great granddaughter finds a “bumblebee” during a scavenger hunt of RNC’s What’s in YOUR yard? exhibit.
RNC at recent community events

Get Outdoors! Event in Louise Hayes Park, Susan Sander was able to talk to three generations at once with this family.

The Hill Country Archeological Association Rendezvous by the River in Ingram: RNC members Mike & Karen Burkett were able to share all kinds of historical information about plants with lots of new folks.

Interested in representing Riverside Nature Center occasionally at events? Please contact Lydia to sign up.

The gift shop has a lot of items that you might want to check into this summer. Looking for a magnifying glass, binoculars, telescope, field guides or bug box for your budding junior naturalist? These items await purchase for adventure.

We would like to introduce Riva Johnson, custom jewelry designer and Joy Fisher Hein, artist, designer and illustrator, as other new consignors in our gift shop. Sandra White, Dottie Patterson & Lee Hyde are still offering their crafts for you, too.
What you may see this month at RNC
July 2016  By Martha Miesch

PURPLE BEAUTIES

Faithful volunteers have worked hard to eliminate undesirable native plants that threatened to take over so visitors, both human and wildlife like nectar seeking butterflies, can enjoy beautiful bloomers. If you focus on one color like purple, you’ll see some eye-popping natives this summer after spring rains gave them a boost.

Take a look at *Centaurea americana*, or American basketflower. It has a distinctive basket-weave under the light pinkish purple bloom that is a wonder to behold. It can grow 2-5 ft. tall in the Hill Country in colonies along the roadside. The flower heads can be 2-3 inches in diameter with disk flowers and simple leaves along the tall stem.

*Gregg’s mist flower* (*Conoclinium (Eupatorium) Greggii*) is another favorite bluish purple bloomer you can see in the butterfly garden covered with nectaring butterflies.

*Maurandella antirrhiniflora*, or Snapdragon vine seems to love to creep our over the tops of other natives competing to show off beautiful purple blooms. The lobes of the bloom reveal a center creamy yellow center capsule 1/4 inch in diameter. Some folks yank this vine from their gardens, but the RNC favors allowing some specimens to do their spreading to a degree.

*Expect to see blooms throughout the summer.*

*Solanum elaeagnifolium*, or Silver-leaf nightshade is another common dry soil bushy leafed native that is showing its purple star shaped bloom with a yellow center at different RNC places. Clusters of yellow berries is the fruit of this native bloomer.

*Glandularia bipinnatifida* or *Prairie verbena* is a favorite purple bloomer. Its attractive cluster of tiny individual flowers begins to bloom in the spring and can be seen in the early fall when few natives are blooming. If you are fond of seeing color, you will be happy to see these purple areas of blooms which choose to move around from year to year.

Check out *Callirhoe pedata*, or Standing winecup that has multiplied at RNC this summer. The tall stems of this native give a glimpse of the vivid purple bloomer over the heads of other plants.

Purple blooms are not the only color you see, but it certainly catches your attention. Their are a couple of other prominent purple bloomers you can see as you drive into the Nature Center and close to the drive by the entrance of the visitor’s center, but you can spot them on your own. Enjoy.

*Photos by Marilyn Knight*
Nature in Print

Ansel Adams was one of the 20th century's great nature photographers. Through his camera and outspoken conservation efforts, Ansel Adams brought the plight of national parks to the consciousness of the U.S.

Ansel Adams' art and his urgent concern was to preserve the wilderness for a future held "in a delicate and precarious grasp." The grandeur and subtlety of his photographs communicate, in a voice that is both intimate and profound, Adams' summons to share and protect the beauty of the natural world.

What you might find in your yard is "inspiration." For pyrographic artist Kathleen Marie Wilson, it was a pair of Inca doves seen in her yard in Johnson City, that inspired her "Inca Dove Love" on wood.

Frank Dunlap has finished the paving bricks stonework in the reflections patio. Next phases are the water feature, bench and native shade plants! We will all be reflecting in beauty soon!
THANK YOU

Donors: May 25-June 20
(Does not include renewals)

Barbara Lowenthal
Olen Whitescarver
Virginia de Wolf
Covella Murdoch
Steve & Linda Sheets
George Turner
Helen Ridgway
Mike & Karen Burkett
Jennifer Rotter
Cheryl Mansour
Cynthia Keller

Barbara Fishel
Ginger Collins
Clint & Janet Smyers
Edna Platte
Janet Robinson
Donna Schloss
Linore Cleveland
Cindy Anderson
Al & Linda Riner
Steve & Betty Clyburn
Mimi McMillen

MEMBERS JOINING  May 25 - June 20

Susan Brennan - Chana Johnson

Support RNC
http://riversidenaturecenter.org/index/about-nc/

DONATE NOW!
donate/general-donation-form/
What is a Riverside Nature Center?

Located at the confluence of the Guadalupe River and Town Creek in the Hill Country town of Kerrville —2010 population, 22,347— Riverside Nature Center is a 501[c][3] nonprofit organization, owned by its members and primarily operated by volunteers.

Our mission is to foster greater public awareness and appreciation of the Texas Hill Country’s natural resources through education, information, and by example. We provide quality educational experiences for the community’s children, adults and families; and we serve as a resource center for the community on native plants and nature related information.