Dear Members and Friends… by Becky Etzler, Executive Director

Let’s ring in the New Year with much enthusiasm, motivation, and dedication. If resolutions are your “thing” then I hope you are including something nature-oriented in your agenda. Maybe you could include something new like forest-bathing. I know what you’re thinking, “How in the heck can you bathe a forest?” With a really big sponge. Seriously, this is a “thing”.

Forest bathing or shinrin-yoku is a Japanese practice. Shinrin in Japanese means “forest,” and yoku means “bath.” So shinrin-yoku means bathing in the forest atmosphere, or taking in the forest through your senses. It is simply being in nature and connecting with it through your senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch.

You have an open invitation to take a bath right here in the arboretum. What a great way to help us celebrate the 25th anniversary of the planting of the trees. When you have finished exercising your senses outside, continue your forest exploration inside through the atrium exhibit: Hill Country ReLeaf. I hope to see you at the exhibit opening on January 26th.

The arboretum is not the only aspect of the nature center that is aging. A quick glance at the Lawson Store and the Nature Lab will reveal a few wrinkles and age blemishes. Perhaps this is the year for a few cosmetic and structural repairs. Of course, these kinds of procedures are not inexpensive and will prompt us to seek funding.

Perhaps this year you will resolve to boost your support of Riverside Nature Center either financially or through volunteerism. Your contributions are the matrix upon which our foundation is constructed. If there is a crack in the foundation, the whole house becomes unsettled. This then results in too much internal focus and not enough outreach.

With your help, we can keep our eyes and energies onward and upward. We will take a lesson from the trees and reach for the sky.

Until next time...

Becky
Riverside Nature Center Presents: Conversation with a Conservationist

Seasons at Selah
The Legacy of Bamberger Ranch Preserve

January 17th
5:30pm-7:30pm

Book Signing & Presentation by David Bamberger & David Langford

Wine & Cheese Reception to follow

Seasons at Selah: The Legacy of Bamberger Ranch Preserve chronicles Bamberger’s dedication to ethical land stewardship and conservation education through stunning photographs of the land, plants, and wildlife he has devoted his time and resources to protect.

Suggested Donation $20.00
Please RSVP to (830)257-4837 or rnc.kerrville@gmail.com
Tuesday, January 8, 2019
1:30 p.m.
Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas
will feature discussion on gardening for pollinators and
about the new Pollinator Garden Project. See page 6 For details.

Saturday, January 12, 2019
8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
January Cleanup at RNC.
Come join us as we trim back the old to get ready for the new. Bring your favorite gloves and thank you for your help.

Wednesday, January 16, 2019
5:00 p.m.
Annual Membership Meeting
You are invited to attend and see the report of RNC's 2018 review, and the plans for 2019.

Thursday, January 17, 2019
5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
Conversations with Conservationists
David Bamberger and David Langford. Seasons at Selah: The Legacy of Bamberger Ranch Preserve.
This is a rescheduled event. Presentation and book signing with Wine & Cheese. Please RSVP. $20 donation suggestion.

Saturday, January 19, 2019
8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
RNC Bird Walk & Talk
Meet Paul & Deloris Sellin in front of the visitor center to go birding along the Guadalupe River trail. All ages are welcome. No fee.

Monday, January 21, 2019
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Texas Waters Training
Join in the Texas Water Specialist Training "ABCs of Apple Snails and eDNA" webinar with Romi Burks, Biology Professor, Southwestern University.

Thursday, January 24, 2019
8:00 a.m.-5 p.m.

Saturday, January 26, 2019
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Open House and Presentation of RELEAF, our new exhibit
It’s hard to imagine how frequently the great Nature Center minds get on the same wave length. If you’ve been on the grounds recently you probably have said to yourself,” Nothing is blooming” which is for the most part true. There is a beautiful specimen of the Retama tree in front of the visitor’s center parking area that always has something colorful or interesting to look at; seeds, colorful flowers, narrow leaf stems and eye-catching changes.

I admit, I never drive to the Nature Center without noticing it. If you read Cindy Anderson’s article about the NPSOT’s choice for the Natives Instead of Common Exotics (NICE plant) in the Kerrville Daily Times, you will have a lot of appreciation for this month’s choice, the Retama. As Cindy mentions, native plants provide nectar for insects, shelter for birds, and food for wildlife. I bet you’ll find something happening around this small tree that can get up to 30 ft. tall, if you look carefully.

Palo Verde or Retama
*Parkinsonia aculeate* (Fabaceae)

More pictures on next page....
Marilyn Knight has many images in her collection of great photographs taken at the nature center. The **Retama** is hard to miss with its bright green color of stems and bright yellow flowers that cluster in April – September. In tropical America it is believed to have medicinal uses. As a fast-growing, drought tolerant tree, it is a genuine advantage in the Hill Country.

Indulge in a look at the Nature Center’s **Retama** next time you visit. The front desk can always be counted on to point you in the right direction if you are not confident of the exact location.
The Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas
January meeting will feature discussion on **gardening for pollinators** and information about the **new Pollinator Garden** Project.

When: Tuesday, January 8th, at 1:30 P.M.
Where: Riverside Nature Center

The Native Plant Society is featuring presenters:

**Znobia Wooten, presents the ‘WHY’**
**Joyce Studer the ‘HOW’**
**Richard Coleman the ‘WHAT’ of the Pollinator Garden Project.”**

Zenobia Wooten, of Native American Seed in Junction, Texas, will open the program on why one should garden for pollinators, including the role of pollinators in crop production, seed production, and the beauty of the Hill Country.

Joyce Studer, who is both a Master Gardner and a Master Naturalist, will discuss plants which can be used in pollinator gardens and how the Pollinator Garden Project is being implemented in Fredericksburg.

Richard Coleman, Hill Country Master Naturalist, will then wrap-up the program by describing the certification of individual Pollinator Gardens through the Pollinator Garden Project.

The program is free and open to the public. Socializing will be from 1 - 1:30 P.M. The program starts at 1:30 P.M.

*The purpose of the Native Plant Society of Texas is to promote conservation, research, and utilization of native plants in Texas through education, outreach and by example.*

For more information about the Kerrville Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas, please go to our web site: [npsot.org/kerrville](http://npsot.org/kerrville).
Freezing Frogs! Ever wonder how frogs survive the winter weather?

As the weather in some parts of the country remains brutally cold, many people opt to pile on the sweaters, scarves, and coats to keep warm. While this same tactic of adding layers is employed by mammals and birds, you won’t catch a newt growing a winter coat—why not?

Cold-blooded animals do not maintain a constant body temperature the way their warm-blooded counterparts do. Warm-blooded animals generate and maintain their high internal temperatures with the energy they gain from constantly metabolizing food. When the temperature of their environment drops, warm-blooded animals need to protect their warm core against heat loss, so they may grow extra fur, puff out their feathers, or find a hideaway that’s sheltered from the cold.

For amphibians, reptiles, and fish, adding layers won’t help in the winter. These animals need to eat, but external conditions, like heat from the sun and surrounding air, provide the main sources of energy necessary to power their metabolisms and muscle movement. When the surrounding air is warm, the chemical reactions in the muscles of cold-blooded animals proceed more quickly, allowing them greater movement and response from their bodies. As the surrounding temperatures drop, however, the body temperatures of these animals drop as well, limiting their mobility as their energy input decreases.

If a cold-blooded animal were to add layers, these layers would act as a barrier between the animal and its energy source, impeding the warming process. Instead, many cold-blooded animals will hibernate when seasonal temperatures become too low to power the animals’ muscle movement. Aquatic frogs such as the leopard frog and the American bullfrog will hibernate in oxygen-rich waters, while some turtles will burrow into the mud to hibernate, slowing their metabolism to the point that they can survive on the limited oxygen found in the surrounding muck.

One particularly notable hibernator is the wood frog—with a habitat range from Georgia up into the Arctic Circle, this guy has to be prepared for chilly temperatures. The wood frog hibernates in crevices in logs and rocks, and when temperatures drop below freezing, the frog will actually freeze as well. Fluid between the cells that make up this creature’s body solidify into ice crystals, while antifreeze forms inside the cells themselves, keeping the frog alive through the winter. When spring comes with warmer temperatures, the frog can safely thaw and leap away.

Sources:

This article is printed from: https://www.neefusa.org/nature/plants-and-animals/freezing-frogs
January Clean-Up Day

Saturday, January 12
8:30am-12:00pm

Come join us as we trim back the old to get ready for the new.
Please bring gloves.
Winter Wonderland - Trees
by Susan Sander, naturalist

No, this is not about a landscape with trees covered in snow. This year I’m in wonder over what is taking place in the winter landscape that we now see.

The first hard freezes on November 13 & 14th (29° & 24°) shocked the plant world into winter mode 37 days before the official “start” of winter. Many trees didn’t get a chance to slide into “pre-rest phase” before their leaves were flash-frozen. Then came the crazy north-west winds that stripped off the leaves, and suddenly the open canopy reveals the sky, allowing sunlight through bare branches to reach ground level.

Winter changes the scenery as well as the players: wintering birds search for seasonal foods of seeds, berries, and hidden bugs. Butterflies and bees only appear if sunlight lifts temperatures enough to fly and a few flowers to bloom.

Besides some patches of green we’re left with the mundane tans and grays. People busily rake away dead leaves like they are a bad thing when in reality they a vital part of the plants’ nutrient supply – if allowed to be transformed over winter by decomposers and rain into mulch and compost.

Winter is still full of life – albeit at a slower pace. Trees as stick-figures challenge us to take a closer look at their distinctive patterns of shape, branching, and bark. A couple of tree species reveal their dioecious character (meaning “2 houses”) with male and females as separate individual trees, particularly Ashe juniper and the hollies.

And until leaf drop we can’t truly identify a green tree as deciduous or evergreen. But even “evergreen” isn’t absolute. Live oaks have persistent leaves that at some point will drop and be replaced. Even pines and Ashe juniper (AKA cedar) will drop needles, mostly from the densely shaded interior.

Still there is an assemblage of evergreens: the Hill Country has only one native pine (Pinus remota) with relic populations up on the top of the Edwards Plateau (west of Hwy 83), and there’s Ashe juniper (AKA cedar). The plateau live oak, Texas madrone and the western Vasey oak generally hold their leaves until spring. And that’s it for native trees. Thanks to nurseries, local gardens might have southern magnolia (east Texas), Arizona cypress (west Texas), Deodar cedar (Pakistan-Himalayas), Eldarica pine (AKA Afghan/Mondel pine) that were introduced, but over time our weather and limestone soils often thins them out.

The native shrubs include Texas mountain laurel (watch for the flower stalks); Mexican silktassel, agarita, Texas barberry, cenizo (ever-silver/gray), yaupon holly (females have red berries), evergreen sumac, sotol, yuccas and agave. Texas pistache is a west Texas species. All grow at the Riverside Nature Center.

Stop by and walk the Nature Trail. Perhaps pick a tree to watch the swelling leaf buds as they unfold into spring. Before you know it spring will burst forth with tiny leaves and the first flowers. Test your observation skills: compare the bark patterns. During 2019 we are celebrating TREES! Come discover what makes them worthy neighbors.
Urban Wildlife: Habits & Habitats

January 24, 8 am-5 pm *
Sponsored by Riverside Nature Center
150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville, TX 78028
(830) 257-4837 www.riversidenaturecenter.org

Workshop Topics Include:

Urban Wildlife Issues
Ticks & Other Dangerous Insects
Bats- Habits & Habitats
Rabies
Chagas Disease
First Aid in the Field
Wildlife Rescue
Understanding Snakes

Lunch & Snacks Included

8 hours of CEU credits for Animal Control Officers
8 hours of AT for Texas Master Naturalists
*Early-bird registration: $45.00 (deadline is Jan. 18th)
[After January 18, 2019: $50.00]
RNC DONORS
11/27/18 thru 12/26/18

Pamela Laing
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Millikan
Barbara Oates

Harriet Redwine
Dr. Charlene Werner, Vision Therapy Solutions, P.A.

RNC New Members
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Ken Stoepel Ford
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 advance the stewardship of our environment. 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.

RNC OFFICERS

Peter Lewis - President
Rick Ertel - Past President
Barbara Oates - Vice President
Judy Ferguson - Secretary
Jeff Gelsone - Treasurer

Support RNC
DONATE NOW!
http://riversidenaturecenter.org/index/about-rnc/donate/general-donation-form/

We'd love it if you will like us on
Riverside Nature Center Association

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