



Tree NOTES

CROSS TIMBERS URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL ♦ 4200 SOUTH FREEWAY, SUITE 2200 ♦ FORT WORTH ♦ TEXAS ♦ 761 15-1499

MISSION: TO PROMOTE PROGRAMS IN THE REGION TO INCREASE INTEREST IN URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY

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KEEPERS OF THE TREES



TREE CITY USA®

Four standards must be met to qualify for Tree City USA status: 1) A tree board or department, 2) A tree care ordinance, 3) A community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita, and 4) An Arbor Day observance and proclamation. For more information, visit: www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA.cfm

In honor of National Arbor Day, occurring last month on April 27, 2007, the Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council congratulates the following Tree City USA towns and cities in the Cross Timbers region:

Arlington	Keller
Burleson	Lewisville
Colleyville	Mansfield
Denton	Muenster
Eules	NAS JRB Fort Worth
Flower Mound	Sheppard AFB
Fort Worth	Southlake
Granbury	Sunset Valley
Grand Prairie	Trophy Club
Grapevine	Weatherford
Highland Village	Westlake



CTUFC

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An Oldie, But Goodie...

If you're going to be anywhere near the Decatur area and haven't already seen the petrified wood gas station, be sure to stop by for a visit.

Now closed for business, the station was part of the Texas Tourist Camp Complex that provided food, lodging and other services to the traveling public. The station was built in 1927 and covered with petrified wood in 1935.

Within an hour's drive from Weatherford, the gas station is located at 904 South Business 81/287 near the intersection of Hale Ave. and S Bus 81/287 in Decatur.

For another interesting destination in the 17-county Cross Timbers UFC region, check out "diversions and excursions..." on page 11.

~ Photo by Steve Chaney



Around The Region!

Mansfield Opens Walnut Creek Linear Park

After more than three years of planning and construction, the 1.5-mile, Phase 1 of Mansfield's Walnut Creek Linear Park was completed this January, with the trail between Town Park and McKnight Park East ready for runners, walkers and moms with strollers. The grand opening marked the debut of the Walnut Creek Linear Park Winter Walk, a special event not only to inaugurate the trail but also focus on the park's role in promoting exercise and healthy living.

"The linear park is not only a perfect way to highlight the natural beauty of Walnut Creek but to provide Mansfield residents with a great tool for recreation and exercise," said Shelly Lanners, Director of Parks and Community Services. The linear park has been the vision of Mansfield residents since the early 1990s, when voters approved a ½-cent sales tax for parks and the Mansfield Park Facilities Development Corporation was formed. Land and easement acquisition began in the 1990s, but it wasn't until adoption of the 2002 Mansfield Parks, Open Space and Trails Master Plan that the concept design was developed and funding options explored.

The complete concept has the linear park stretching the 10-mile width of the city, from its western city limits to Joe Pool Lake. This first phase was built at a cost of \$3.3



Phase 1 of Mansfield's Walnut Creek Linear Park features a tree-lined walking trail and was completed in January.

million with a \$500,000 matching grant from Texas Parks & Wildlife and a \$300,000 in-kind contribution from Tarrant County, which provided grading work at the Town Park site.

Phase 2 of the project is a 2.8-mile section from Matlock Road to Joe Pool Lake. The city has purchased 60 acres of land along Walnut Creek at Matlock Road, which will become Oliver-Williams Park, a regional park and nature center. Plans call for construction to begin in 2011 and the park to open in 2013. Phase 3 of the linear park includes the area east of McKnight West Park. Phase 4 is from Town Park to the western city limits.

~ Submitted by Stevon Smith, Landscape Administrator, City of Mansfield

Flower Mound's "The Mound" Enters A Literary Land

What happens when there are almost as many legends, interpretations, and stories, often contradictory, concerning "The Mound" as there are bluebonnets in Texas?

Award-winning author Alton Bowman will answer these questions and more in *The Flower Mound, Flower Mound, Texas: A History And Field Guide To The Flowers And Grasses* (112 pp., \$20.00), a collection of photos of native Texas wildflower species that include the plant's scientific and common names, a description of its appearance, and its range, habitat, and blooming season. Bowman received the Texas Association of Museums' Quality of Publications Award for his book.

The books are on sale at the Flower

Mound Public Library. All proceeds will be donated for preservation of The Flower Mound by The Mound Foundation.

The Mound Foundation was incorporated in August 1983 and is governed by nine trustees. Its purpose is to keep the original character of "The Mound" site and to promote and encourage educational, scientific, and historical interests, and to maintain and secure "The Mound." Funds to accomplish this come from donations and from the Town's Community Support Program. Visit www.flower-mound.com/comm_info/brochure.php for more information about "The Mound."

~ Submitted by The Mound Foundation, 2121 Cross Timbers Rd., Flower Mound, TX 75028

North TX Urban Forestry Conference: One to Remember!

Maybe rain, or sleet, or snow can't stop the mailman or Superman, but it can certainly stop headline speakers stranded at an airport in Ohio!

The night before this annual conference was to begin, we learned that Dr. Gilman's plane was grounded in Columbus and he would not be able to make it to Dallas for his full day of presentations. A bit of a problem? You might say that, or so we thought.

I did mention that rain, sleet or snow couldn't stop Superman and turns out our "other" speaker filled in for the entire day and was an enormous success. Our own Superman, Dr. Todd Watson, battling the flu and an upper respiratory infection, extended his original two hours to fill the entire day with four fantastic presentations. Starting with Safety Practices, he never let up as he continued with Trees and Drought Stress, Mistletoe and Ball Moss Control and finally, Trees and Construction. The talks were highly entertaining and even the mundane sounding Safety Practices kept the audience in stitches.

"Maybe rain, or sleet, or snow can't stop the mailman or Superman, but it can certainly stop headline speakers stranded at an airport in Ohio!"

Numerous outstanding projects and individuals were

recognized by both local urban forestry councils (UFC) during the awards luncheon. Receiving top honors for Cross Timbers UFC were Terry Dodson, Lifetime Achievement Award for 35 years of service to Fort Worth's urban forestry program, and Keep Denton Beautiful, Outstanding Project for its post oak preservation project. Outstanding Individual awards were also presented to Melanie Migura for work on the Citizen Forester program, Michelle Villafranca for developing the Cross Timbers UFC website, and Bob Riley for his leadership provided to the City of Fort Worth in developing the new tree preservation ordinance.



Denton city officials and members of Keep Denton Beautiful accept the 2006 Outstanding Project of the Year Award given by the Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council at the 2007 North Central Texas Urban Forestry Workshop.

About 250 people attended from all over the state and received ISAT, SAF, TNLA and TDA CEU hours.
 ~ *Article by Courtney Blevins, Regional Urban Forester, Texas Forest Service*

SNEAK PEAK AT L.E.A.F. ARLINGTON

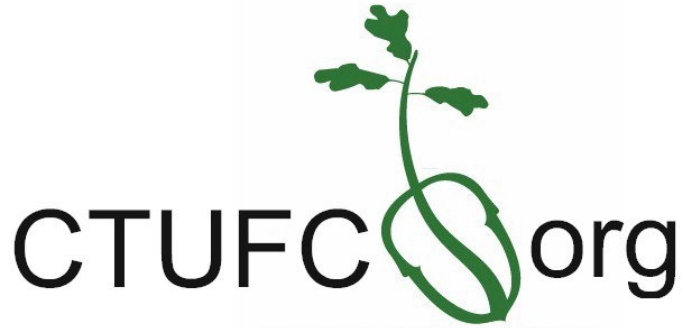
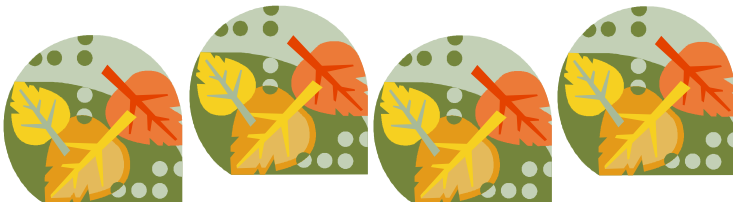
The City of Arlington launched the City's first urban forestry program on May 12th at its Arbor Day Celebration.

Aptly named, the program is called L.E.A.F. Arlington - Let's Enhance Arlington's Forest.

L.E.A.F. Arlington has three components to the program: residential, commercial and public space, and is similar to many Neighborhoods programs around the country.

Arlington citizens will be able to apply for free trees through this program. The first call for trees will be September 1st.

~ *Submitted by Stacy Baldwin, Urban Forestry and Land Manager, City of Arlington*



A Special Thanks To Our Newsletter Contributors...

Carrie Atchison, Stacy Baldwin, Courtney Blevins, Steve Chaney, Claire Curry, Jan Davis, Linda Gray, The Mound Foundation, Melanie Migura, Jack Murphy, Marilyn Sallee, Stevon Smith, Lindsay Bond Totten, Dr. Dotty Woodson and Michelle Villafranca

This Issue Of TreeNOTES Isn't Possible Without Them!

Raves About Redbuds

Editor's Note: This has turned out to be a fantastic year for enjoying the spectacular floral display of many of our small ornamental trees. While Redbud remains a perennial favorite, be sure to visit the Texas Forest Service's online Texas Tree Planting Guide at <http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu> for recommendations of other trees to plant in your landscape.

What to do when you're hopelessly in love with a seriously flawed plant?

I've tried making new plant friends. Burying myself in my work. I've even taken up several worthy causes (volunteering is great for the soul). But nothing has helped; I'm still smitten.

My latest strategy is focused on proselytizing. I figure if more gardeners shared my passion, fewer would disparage it. In the hands of a skilled spin-meister, "flawed" could become "quirky." The next thing you know, my love is on the cover of *Horticulture* magazine. So...

Redbuds, anyone?

I find nearly everything about this wonderful, small tree seductive. Tiny blooms emerge before the leaf buds break in spring. The effect, a rosy-pink haze against bare winter twigs, is diaphanous.



The rosy-pink flowers of redbud delight the eye in early spring.

The silhouette, a perfect vase, is distinctive even in winter. Summer branches support a canopy of big, beautiful, heart-shaped leaves.

In the woods, or tucked next to a wall or patio—easy to do with such a slim waist—redbuds whisper "spring," sharing a brief interlude with flowering quince, Mexican plum, and another harbinger of spring: daffodils.

Native to Texas, redbud trees are everywhere

throughout the landscape. Soft clouds of color punctuate woodland's edge in spring.

Now, about that flaw.

(Dang, I wish I could omit this part, but that

would be deceptive advertising.) It's *Botryosphaeria* canker, a fungus disease that, at a fairly young age, starts to kill off branches one by one, until, eventually, there's nothing left. By the time most redbuds are 20 years old, they're on the decline; by 30, they're dead.

Stress, such as poor drainage or drought, hastens the onset of canker, but good cultural practices hold it at bay. Fungicide treatments cannot contain it.

Since *Botryosphaeria* won't spread to other plants, I see no reason to avoid redbuds. My philosophy—"it's better to have loved and lost"—encourages gardeners to experience the joys of this remarkable genus without succumbing to its faults.

If you lose a redbud, plant another. Perhaps one of these superior varieties may tempt you to love again:

Cercis canadensis alba. A white-flowering form that is especially nice when intermingled in a small grove with the pink-flowering form.

***Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy'**. 'Forest Pansy' has become a sweetheart in the nursery trade, partly because maroon foliage sells plants. It's a relatively new variety and warrants every bit of the attention it's garnering.

As the rosy pink flowers of 'Forest Pansy' fade in spring, young leaves emerge a vibrant red. If the tree is planted in full sun, the color settles into a rich shade of claret for the rest of the season. (In shade, the color is more subdued.) Exquisite form and handsome foliage inspire love at first sight for many gardeners.

***Cercis canadensis* 'Oklahoma'**. 'Oklahoma' has deep purple flowers, very lustrous, shining leaves and is less susceptible to leaf rollers, due to the leaf structure and surface texture. It is also slightly more drought resistant.

***Cercis chinensis* 'Don Egolf'**. Here's the breakthrough redbud lovers have been hoping for: disease resistance to *Botryosphaeria* canker. More compact in habit than our



Illustration of the leaves, flowers and seed pods of Eastern Redbud, *Cercis canadensis*.

(continued on page 6)

BIRDS AND BEYOND: Wise County Woodpeckers

Wise County is home to eight woodpecker species. Of these, six can be found here year-round and the other two are winter residents. Their beautiful plumages and fascinating habits make them fun birds to watch.

The Downy Woodpecker is our smallest woodpecker at about seven inches long. It is boldly marked in black and white. It has a thick, white, vertical stripe down the back (distinguishing it from all but the Hairy Woodpecker). The male Downy Woodpecker has a red spot on the back of the head that females lack. A Downy will feed anywhere from tree limbs to thin but sturdy plants such as Giant Ragweed. It commonly visits bird feeders for suet and seeds.

The Downy's rarer cousin, the Hairy Woodpecker, is larger. It has a proportionally longer beak than the Downy's stubby, little nose and has a much different call note. Whereas the Downy says "pik!", the Hairy has a higher-pitched, almost squeaky "peek!" note. It actually sounds somewhat like one of the American Robin's many call notes. Hairy Woodpeckers are quite scarce in Wise County.

Also uncommon, but much more distinctive than the Hairy Woodpecker, is the stunning Red-headed Woodpecker. True to its name, its head is completely red. A solid, black back and wings with white secondaries will clinch the identification. The secondaries are the flight feathers closest to the body and appear as a white triangle on the wings. In my experience, this species often seems to like open, orchard-like areas with large trees.

The Red-bellied Woodpecker is sometimes confused with the Red-headed. Unlike the

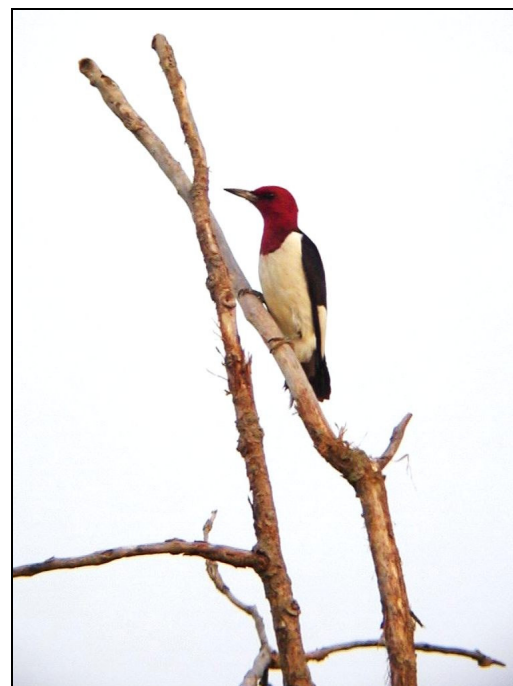
Red-headed, this species has a horizontally barred, black-and-white back. The red on its head does not enter the throat and cheek areas. In addition, female Red-bellies lack red on top of the head. Underneath, Red-bellies are a light tan color. The namesake red belly can be quite hard to see and is really just a blush of orange-red color near the legs. Like the Downy Woodpecker, this is a rather common species.

A brown-barred bird that often hops on the ground eating ants doesn't sound much like a woodpecker, does it? The Northern Flicker is a strange fellow among its mainly tree-clinging relatives, but it is a woodpecker, nonetheless (and does visit trees some, too). It comes in two forms: "Yellow-shafted" and "Red-shafted." These names refer to the color of the feather shafts, which give a brilliant burst of red or yellow in the wings and tail as the bird flies.

Flickers have a polka-dotted belly, black crescent on the breast (reminiscent of a meadowlark), and are brown-barred above. Males also have, appropriately, a mustache! On the "Yellow-shafted" it is black and on the "Red-shafted" it is red. Flickers only stay for the winter here.

One of my favorite woodpeckers is the Ladder-backed Woodpecker. I enjoyed watching them nest in our woods a year or two ago. The young 'peckers stuck their heads out of the nest hole and looked like they really wanted to come out and fly. After several days of fanfare, hemming and hawing, and indecision, one flew off quickly and disappeared in the trees.

The Ladder-backed is similar to a Downy Woodpecker but does not have a vertical white stripe down the back. *(continued on page 10)*



The stunning Red-headed woodpecker is one of eight species that makes its home in Wise County.

...In Action!

Citizen Foresters...



Courtney Blevins, Texas Forest Service, teaches the Citizen Forester 2007 participants how to measure the circumference, height and crown spread of trees. ~ Photo by Michelle Villafranca, Forester, City of Fort Worth



Citizen Forester volunteers represent the Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council at the 2007 Clean Air Fair in Fort Worth. ~ Photo by Melanie Migura, Forester, City of Fort Worth



Citizen Forester volunteers take a break from weeding at the City of Fort Worth's tree farm to smile for the camera. Citizen Foresters have logged over 160 volunteer hours at the tree farm since July 2006. ~ Photo by Linda Gray, Citizen Forester

MADE IN THE SHADE

How One City Does It



You have to have a sense of humor to live on the prairie. Flatness and no trees for shade caused some pioneers to go crazy from lack of sensory stimulation. Well, we now have both a good sense of humor and trees, thousands of them, to help make living on the prairie a complete turn-around from conditions of early settlement. How did we do this in a growing environment for trees somewhat less than ideal? The following is a condensed view of what has been accomplished and how it is maintained.



Top view of the tree transport trailer, developed by the City of Wichita Falls to increase staff productivity and efficiency.

In 1979, a huge tornado descended upon Wichita Falls and destroyed approximately 25% of housing. Following the tremendous cleanup effort, City leaders decided, along with building reconstruction, to make the City more attractive than before. Greening up the City became a focus of attention.

Because street and highway medians are the most visible public areas seen every day by most of the population, they became the target of interest for tree planting. In the beginning, trees were purchased by a variety of means, including local nurseries, tree service companies and competitive bidding. We eventually settled on creating our own tree nurseries.

After several years experience of nursery production of approximately 1,000 trees per year using the balled and burlap method, conditions grew to exceed our available manpower. This resulted in our need to invent the tree transport trailer to supplement our 28" diameter tree spade transplanting system. The smaller diameter tree spades have been determined by our experience to be the ideal size for effective transplanting, as shown by a survival rate of over 96%. We have observed that most species of smaller size, transplanted trees grow faster, overcome larger transplanted trees in a few years, and develop fewer problems. For this invention we were able to reduce manpower by 70% and, subsequently, won several state awards. In the end we have planted over 25,000 trees in medians, parks, and public building grounds.

(continued on page 7)



Pine trees are loaded onto Wichita Falls' ingenious tree transport trailer for planting in parks and medians.

RAVES ABOUT REDBUDS (continued from page 4)

native redbuds, this Asian variety holds the genetic key needed by plant breeders here to correct the flaw in our own.

'Don Egolf' is new, so it probably won't be readily available in local nurseries for a couple of years. But when it arrives, it should have more gardeners proposing to redbuds, with the hope of establishing long-term relationships.

~ Reprint of a June 16, 2002, article written by Lindsay Bond Totten for the Scripps Howard News Service. Submitted by Steve Chaney, County Extension Agent—Horticulture, Tarrant County, and edited for regional differences and space constraints. Original article at: www.hgtv.com/hgtv/gl_trees_shrubs_flowering/article0,1785,HGTV_3646_1397776,00.html

MADE IN THE SHADE: How One City Does It *(continued from page 6)*

All trees are irrigated, mostly using a drip system on timers, and surrounded with wood chip mulch.

Not only were trees planted. The City initiated the flower program for medians, parks, and public building grounds. Today there are 208 flower beds that present brilliant color every month of the year. We have found we can push the limit of having winter color with the planting of several varieties of pansy that are best adapted to our area.



Across Wichita Falls, a dozen different ornamental structures hide the bright, stainless steel, traffic signal control boxes and help create a friendly environment for people as they travel through the city.

Flower purchase remains by contract growing and delivery. Our experience has found the advantage of growing our own trees has not been replicated by growing our own flowers.

Additionally, a dozen, high traffic intersections are now graced with a triangle of unique landscape art. Ornamental structures have been designed and built by Park employees to cover the metal traffic control cabinets located in these triangles. The structures are all different and follow traditional designs in order to have the widest appeal. The grounds surrounding the structures are landscaped with shrubs, ornamental grasses, rocks, and turf.

Our “greening” effort begun over twenty years ago has matured into an urban landscape for which our citizens are justly proud.

~ Article and photos submitted by Jack Murphy, Director, Parks and Recreation Department, City of Wichita Falls. For more information, visit the City’s website at: www.cwftx.net/index.asp. On the Departments link, scroll down to Parks and Recreation.



Above: The Cross Timbers region’s winning 2007 National Arbor Day Poster Contest entry submitted by Savannah Wagner.

Right: CTUFC President, Stevon Smith, congratulates regional poster contest winner, Savannah Wagner (accompanied by her mother, grandmother and teacher, Mrs. Upchurch) with a \$100 prize.

5th Grader Cashes In On Talent!

Each year, fifth grade students from across the nation display their artistic talent when they submit their original artwork in the National Arbor Day Poster Contest. This year, over 75,000 fifth grade classrooms and home schools nationwide participated in the “Trees Are Terrific...and forests are too!” themed contest sponsored by Toyota and the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Savannah Wagner’s poster was selected as the winning entry for the 17-county Cross Timbers region, as well as for the City of Fort Worth. Her entire fifth grade class from Remington Point Elementary visited Bobo Woods park in Fort Worth for a picnic. Stevon Smith, CTUFC President, presented a \$100 check to Savannah, a \$100 check to her teacher, Mrs. Upchurch, and a \$100 check to Savannah’s class for a pizza party. Afterwards, the students went to Log Cabin Village for the City of Fort Worth’s Arbor Day celebration. ~ Submitted by Michelle Villafranca, Forester, City of Fort Worth



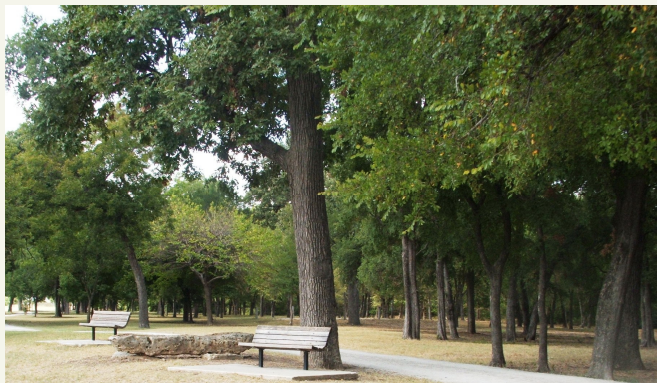
Above: 5th grade students from Remington Point Elementary enjoy an Arbor Day picnic lunch at Fort Worth’s Bobo Woods.



NATIVE TREES: ONE ANSWER FOR WATER THIRSTY NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS

The environmental issues of water conservation and water quality are not going away. Researchers predict the population of the Metroplex will double by 2060. According to the Texas Water Development Board, 3.3 million acre feet of water will be required to meet the needs for this population projection. At present, only 1.7 million acre feet of water is available for this area.

Runoff from rain and irrigation water carries fertilizer, pesticides and soil particles into the storm drain. This pollution from home and commercial landscapes is the largest, non-point source of contamination in Tarrant County, according to water samples taken during storm events by the City of Fort Worth Environmental Department. Runoff runs unfiltered into the storm drains, then into creeks and streams, then into the Trinity River system, and then into area lakes which are the water reservoirs that water utilities use to provide us with safe drinking water. The pollution and soil particles settle to the bottom of the lakes. This sediment holds the pollution and prevents the lakes from storing the capacity of water the lakes were built to store.



Even when the lakes are full, there is still not enough water in the area to keep up with the damage. Growth/population increase, recharge not keeping up with damage, and lakes filling up with sediments are factors that will influence landscape water conservation strategies in the future.

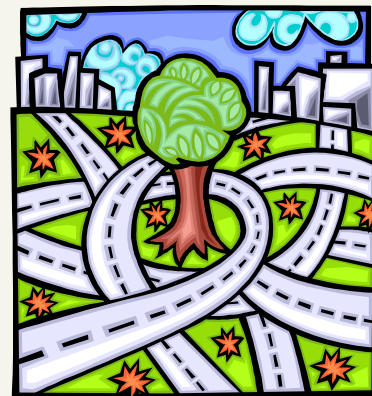
Where will the water come from?

Water will have to come from water conservation both indoor and outdoor, efficient irrigation and other water conservation landscape practices. More lakes are being planned and existing lakes will have to be dredged.

Does landscape water conservation practices really help reduce water used in a landscape?

During last summer's heat and drought, with only the following water restriction in place: only water landscapes after 6:00 p.m. and before 10:00 a.m., there was a savings of 15% in projected water usage, according to the Tarrant Regional Water District.

So the answer is YES, landscape water conservation practices can make a difference.



Recommendations of native and adapted trees are essential for water conservation and water quality. According to researchers at the Texas A&M Extension and Research Center in north Dallas County, native or adapted plants not only use less water and fertilizer, but also require little or no pesticides.

This knowledge can guide sustainable tree planting strategies to promote a healthy urban forest. Trees are the most valuable investment for any landscape because trees moderate both the outdoor and indoor environment by providing shade and helping control air pollution.

A good source for plant recommendations and landscape water conservation practices for north central Texas is the North Central Government's Texas SmartScape web site, <http://www.txsmartscape.com>.

~ Article by Doty Woodson, Ed. D., County Extension Agent—Horticulture, Tarrant County.
For lawn, landscape and water conservation questions, call the Extension office at 817-884-1944.

When Spring is in the Air... So are the Nitidulids

What is a Nitidulid? The Nitidulid is a beetle that is generally considered a beneficial insect. However, this sap-feeding insect can also carry the tree disease Oak Wilt from one oak tree to another. It looks like a very skinny, 1/4" long, brown, June bug and is commonly found on the underside of rotting fruit. The insect is numerous in the springtime, which coincides with



An adult Nitidulid beetle, shown greatly enlarged.

the time that the fungal spores of the Oak Wilt fungus are being produced on red oaks (Shumard, Spanish and Blackjack). Nitidulids are attracted

to the "sweet smell" of fruit, fungal spores, and wounds on trees. This makes them ideal vectors of Oak Wilt.

The Oak Wilt fungus is a tree disease that affects Live Oaks and oaks in the red oak group. It does not normally kill trees in the white oak group (Bur Oak and Chinquapin Oak) in Texas. Once symptoms are noticed on a tree, the tree can die within 4 weeks to 6 months. The fungus spreads two ways. Once a Red Oak or Live Oak tree is infected, if it has root grafts connecting it to other oak trees, the fungus will move through these root grafts from tree to tree. If a tree in the red oak group has Oak Wilt, the disease can also spread from a fungal spore "mat" under the bark. The Nitidulid beetle feeds on the mat, flies to other wounds on trees, and transfers Oak Wilt

from tree to tree. This second form of transmission allows the disease to spread long distances.

This relationship between the fungal spores and the beetle is the "weakest link" in the Oak Wilt disease cycle and is therefore, your best opportunity to prevent the disease from occurring in your neighborhood. Between February 1 and June 1, limit the wounds on your oak trees. If pruning is necessary on susceptible oaks, use a pruning paint to cover the "fresh smell" of the wound as soon as the cut is made. Bark chips and firewood from infected trees are safe to use only if they are "seasoned" or dried out.

For more information about the Oak Wilt disease, feel free to contact catchison@tfs.tamu.edu or look at www.texasoakwilt.org or <http://txforestservice.tamu.edu>.

~ Article and photos submitted by Carrie Atchison, Texas Forest Service. Reprint of an article by Jan Davis, Texas Forest Service.



These leaves exhibit the classic symptoms of a Live Oak tree infected with oak wilt.

TREENOTES wants to hear from you!

e-mail your favorite personal encounter with a tree by **Monday, June 4**, to: melanie.migura@fortworthgov.org (Selected entries will be printed in the summer issue of TreeNOTES.)

1 participant will **win!**

a free copy of *Tree Stories: A Collection of Extraordinary Encounters* by Warren Jacobs and Karen Shragg.



The Cross Timbers:

A Natural Wonder



The Cross Timbers: A Natural Wonder traveling exhibit is available at no cost to municipalities, schools, libraries, town halls and other venues to educate citizens about the importance of the Cross Timbers ecosystem and to promote urban forestry.

For more information or to schedule the exhibit for your area, contact

Emily Galpin at: galpin@charter.net

got empties?

Recycle your used print cartridges by donating them to the CTUFC

For more information, contact Melinda Adams, 817-871-5705



In Their Destruction Lies Their Salvation

It started with a heart-breaker. A friend gave me five Texas Mountain Laurel seeds to plant last October. She did this to test my patience, I think. Coddled through the fall, winter and spring, three of the seeds finally sprouted six months later in May. Two leaves, four leaves, finally little branches formed. After hardening them off, I placed the 3-inch tall trees outside to grow.

That's when the grasshopper discovered what a tasty morsel little trees can be. By the time I caught it, all I had of that Mountain Laurel was a wisp of a stem with no leaves or top growth. Disheartened, I just left the pot outside in an unvisited corner of the yard. What worse fate could befall it?

A few weeks later, I was reading an article about the Mesquite and how much the Texas ranchers hated this native. Their thorns tore up the cattle and the small, twisted trunks were good for nothing but burning. Texans had not yet developed the taste for Mesquite Smoked BBQ. For each Mesquite they cut down, ten more would spring up to replace it.

It took a while to realize the very act of cutting down the Mesquite is what caused more to sprout. This tough Texas native actually counted on being burned, trampled and broken. Cut the main trunk and all the dormant buds in the root ends get the message to send up sprouts to make more trees.

Now, Mountain Laurel is not Mesquite, but they sure do look like cousins. They are indeed from the same bean family, Fabaceae, so they share many traits in common. One of those family traits is the ability to sprout from roots if the main trunk is cut. Could that trait apply to my poor Mountain Laurel seedling?

I eagerly checked the corner of the yard where I had abandoned the hapless Laurel. In the center of the pot still stood a naked twig, now brown and stiff. But at the very edge of the pot, a bright green treelet grew, with a dozen oval leaflets on slender branches. This new small tree grew so fast, it was actually larger than the two untouched pod mates.

In true Texas fashion, the worse you treat these trees, the hardier and more prolific they become. Moreover, never assume a Texas native is dead; they have deep roots.

~ Story written by Marilyn Sallee



Texas Mountain Laurel seed pods and seeds.
Image courtesy of Texas Toxic Plant Database,
Texas A&M University.

"She did this to test my patience, I think...Two leaves, four leaves, finally little branches formed."

WISE COUNTY WOODPECKERS (continued from page 5)

Its back is barred horizontally like a Red-bellied. The male Ladder-backed has a red crown; the female's crown is black. Ladder-backeds usually seem "dirtier" than the crisply marked Downies, probably due to an off-white front marked with specks and streaks on the side. Its call is similar to the Downy's notes.

Now for another oddball – the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Aside from having a simply delightful name, you can tell where this woodpecker has been without even seeing it. It drills neat rows of holes in tree trunks and later feeds on the sap. The sap wells are also a source of food for other birds and insects.

Sapsuckers are dirty brown with a white stripe on the side of each wing. Males have red on top of the head and on the throat, and usually have plenty of light yellow on the belly. Females have a pale throat and those in juvenile plumage have no red at all. Although I mention juveniles, sapsuckers do not nest in Wise County. They just keep that plumage for at least part of the fall and winter.

The last of our eight species is the Pileated Woodpecker. This is the woodpecker to end all woodpeckers! The crow-sized Pileated is a Woody Woodpecker type, with a red crest and wild call. Even if you don't see this big guy, its jungle-bird "wokwokWOKWOKWOK wok wok, wok" will surely catch your attention. It needs plenty of large trees and is overall quite rare in our area. However, in certain spots such as Rucker's Pond on the Lyndon B. Johnson National Grasslands, it is very regular and can often be heard or seen with a little patience.

How can you bring woodpeckers to your place? Some, particularly Downy and Red-bellied, can be attracted to bird feeders. They usually seem to prefer suet, but also will eat sunflower seeds. Also, all of our resident woodpecker species need dead trees. They feed on them and also nest in them. Plus, woodpeckers' nest holes are reused by other cavity-nesting species such as bluebirds, chickadees, and titmice. If the dead tree isn't a hazard, leave it standing for the woodpeckers.

From the petite Downy to the humungous Pileated, woodpeckers are a wonderful part of Wise County's avifauna. Keep an eye out for them and their holes, and keep an ear out for their industrious tapping!

~ Article and photo by Claire Curry



diversions and excursions...

The Legend of the Wee-chi-tah

Home to Midwestern State University, and well known for Sheppard Air Force Base's NATO pilot training program, and the legendary Hotter'N Hell Hundred, one of the oldest and



largest cycling events in the nation, Wichita Falls is often overlooked for some of its other interesting highlights as a city.

The next time your travels take you to Wichita Falls and the northwest boundaries of the Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council, be sure to check out the life-sized, bronze Wee-Chi-Tah Sculpture by local artist Jack Stevens.

Located at Berend's Landing along the banks of the Wichita River and the site of the city's original natural falls,

the sculpture features a Comanche family crossing the Wichita River and vividly portrays the popular legend of how the city was named.

Riding through the heat of the day, the Comanche woman left her horse and entered the river in search of a safe passage for her family. "Wee-Chi-Tah" (or "waist deep"), she might have said in Comanche to her companions waiting on the riverbank as she tested the river's depth and gave both the



river and city its names.

The Wee-chi-tah Sculpture is near the old Front Street Bridge in the 500 block of Wichita Street, directly across from Texoma Cycling Center. From the sculpture, you can also see the Elevator Rock Climbing Gym, an indoor climbing gym in a 100-year-old wood grain elevator.

To get to the Wee-chi-tah Sculpture while traveling on US-287 N, take the 6th Street exit toward MPEC. Turn left on Scott Ave., right on Lincoln St., right on Burkburnett and right on Wichita St.

Streams and Valley Inc. of Wichita Falls, a volunteer, non-profit organization, dedicated the Wee-chi-tah Sculpture in 2003 as a complement to its 54-foot, man-made Wichita Falls Waterfall project, more affectionately known as the "Falls." Located on the south bank of the Wichita River and adjacent to I-44 South as you approach Wichita Falls from the North, the "Falls" was built in 1986 to replace the original falls that washed away in a flood over 100 years ago.

Related Links:

Elevator Rock Climbing Gym: www.elevatorrock.com

Hotter'N Hell Hundred: www.hh100.org

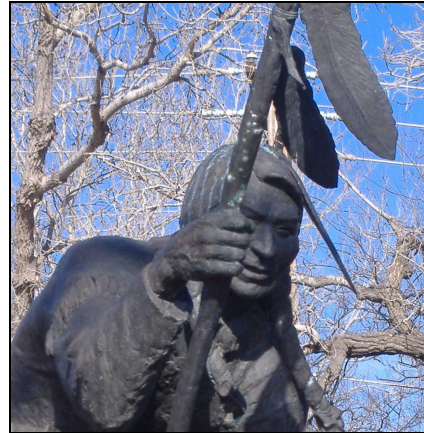
Midwestern State University: www.mwsu.edu

Sheppard Air Force Base: www.sheppard.af.mil

Wee-chi-tah Sculpture: www.weechita.org/sculpture.asp

~ Article and photos by Melanie Migura, Forester, City of Fort Worth.

E-mail your submissions for future "diversions and excursions..." to Melanie at Melanie.Migura@fortworthgov.org



COME GROW WITH US!

CROSS TIMBERS URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone #: _____ e-mail: _____

How did you hear about us? Website/internet search Newsletter Public display/event
 Word of mouth, referred by: _____ Other: _____

Type of Membership:

Individual _____ \$ 10.00 Family _____ \$ 25.00 Business/City _____ \$ 50.00

Patron _____ \$100.00 Sustaining _____ \$200.00 Sponsor _____ \$500.00

Please return this form with your check or money order to:



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