



Nature Notes

May/June 2012

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Drip, Drip, Drip...

story by Connie Blakley

photo by Calvin Blakley

You might think these leaves are dripping wet after a heavy rain, but in fact they are not. How can you tell? Look closely at the leaf surface and you'll see it is dry; the drops only appear around the edges of the leaves. This phenomenon of nature is called guttation, from the Latin *gutta*, a drop.

Guttation occurs when fluid is exuded from leaves as a result of root pressure when more water is absorbed by the roots than is evaporated by the leaves. It is often seen during early morning hours in a humid atmosphere on young sprouts or new growth. The above photo was taken early in the morning and the humidity was high following

a day of rain. If you look into the drops, you can see nearby trees through the fluid. This presents a challenge for all you nature photographers — try a close-up photo of a nearby subject through the fluid and see how many different effects you can achieve.

Sometimes we are so intent on our destination that we don't take time to observe our surroundings. I would have missed these glimmering drops had one of my fellow hikers not stopped to observe. Next time you take a walk in the woods, be sure to pause occasionally and look around; you might be surprised by what you find.

Outdoor Nature Club Upcoming Activities

ONC Contacts

ONC General Information

Sergio Henao, 713-729-2385

Botany/Entomology Group

See our website

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

Aaron Stoley, 713-781-1372

Ornithology Group (OG)

Marcy Brown, 713-664-5206

Meeting Place, Bayland Community Center

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at Bayland Community Center, 5400 Bissonnet at Hillcroft.



Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary Events

All LTNS events are held at the sanctuary, 2001 FM 945, Cleveland, TX (map is available on our website).



May 2012

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



LTNS ACTIVITIES

- 19-20 Visitors Weekend and Camping (weather permitting)**
- 19 Dally Days at LTNS, 10:00 am Snake Identification** with Orry Martin, self-dubbed "Texas Snake Hunter." Orry is a teacher in Conroe who loves to research snakes and record their activities for educational purposes. He will give us a short presentation about snakes and then lead us on a snake hunt.

Study Group Activities

- 07 Ornithology (OG) Meeting**
6:30 pm—Learning Corner
7:00 pm—Program
 See *The Spoonbill* for details
- 08 Botany-Entomology Meeting, 7:30 pm**
 Dr. Larry Brown will give a presentation on the Euphorbiaceae family. Don't miss this great opportunity to learn more about this family of plants.
- 19 OG Field Trip — Katy Prairie**
 See *The Spoonbill* for details

June 2012

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	



LTNS ACTIVITIES

- 16 Adopt-A-Road Trash Pickup, 8:30 am**
 Saturday is our quarterly trash pickup along FM 945. Bring gloves, hat, water; the state provides trash bags. This will take about one hour, then we will join the field trip listed below.
- 16 Field Trip — Flowers & Fungi, 10:00 am**
 We will visit Cullinan and Big Meadows in search of summer wildflowers; Texas Bluebells (*Eustoma grandiflorum*) should be in full bloom on Cullinan Meadow. David & Pat Lewis will join us in search of fungi in the wet, forested areas surrounding Mill Creek. Bring lunch and the usual accoutrements for a summer outing in East Texas.



Other Notes of Interest

ONC Appreciates Your Donations

Donations to ONC are always appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. Thanks, everyone, for your generosity.

in memory of Jane Rowland

*Calvin/Connie Blakley
Leland Day
Aaron/Karen Stoley
Edith Waxman*

for LTNS in honor of Aaron Stoley

Eric/Shelley Stoley

for LTNS Sanctuary Fund

*Imogene Cummings
Jean Hackney
Ann Jones
Charles/Joanne Peterson
Mary Helen Pritchett
Milton Reim
Lucie Wray Todd
Norman Young*

for Ornithology Group

*Sue Schwaller
Jim/Betsy Winn
Norman Young*

for ONC General Fund

Norman Young

New Bluebird Houses

We have recently erected two new bluebird houses at LTNS on Martin Flat. One of the nest boxes was donated by Charles Peterson, who purchased the box from Texas Bluebird Society. It was erected in March.

The other box was built by a boy scout as a project toward earning a badge. This box was also erected on Martin Flat in November when the scout troop came to LTNS for a camping weekend.

Thanks to both for the nest boxes and for helping the bluebirds. We'll keep an eye on them for activity.

Activities at LTNS

March Trash Pickup

March 24 was our quarterly highway trash pickup along FM 945 adjacent to the sanctuary. It was a beautiful spring day and we had a good turnout of volunteers. Thanks to the following for helping: Calvin & Connie Blakley, Leland Day, Mark Day and daughter Marlee, Kellene Jarratt, Bobby & Mary Jane Nelson, Charles Smith, Aaron, Karen, and Kristin Stoley.

The amount of trash seemed to be less than normal. We can only hope that our efforts set an example for folks in the area and they've become more conscientious about "pitching" stuff out their car windows!

More Donations

After trash pickup, Mark Day helped with some repairs to our aging tractor. With the help of Calvin Blakley and Aaron Stoley, Mark worked most of the morning adjusting the steering and brakes. "It drives like new," said Aaron after the job was completed. Also thanks to Mark Day for donating a set of two-way radios. These will be helpful to folks hiking the wilderness

trails and allow them to communicate with other members.

Dally Days

In the afternoon, Charles Peterson led a botany walk on Dillo Wallow Trail in search of early blooming wildflowers. The best finds were caterpillars, which seem to be everywhere this year. Photos of one of the species can be found on the back page of this issue.

April Feast Day

On April 21, ONC's annual Feast Day was held at LTNS. There was lots of good food and about 15 members and guests in attendance on another beautiful spring day. After lunch, we divided into three teams for a nature scavenger hunt organized by Charles Smith. Each team was given the task of finding a plant or animal for every letter of the alphabet. As expected, the most difficult letters were X and Z and only the botanists who speak Latin were able to fill in those blanks! Questionable answers included Animal Kingdom for K and Uprooted Tree for U. A good time was had by all and we're still discussing who won the event!



Aaron Stoley and Charles Peterson erect new bluebird nest box at LTNS on Martin Flat during March visitors day. [photo by Calvin Blakley]



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 Sanctuaries VP(acting)..... Aaron Stoley
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 Botany·Entomology Rep..... Leland Day
 Ornithology Rep Marcy Brown

our charter...

A nonprofit educational and scientific organization established in 1923 to protect and conserve natural resources by fostering an interest in nature study.

our sanctuary...

ONC owns a 700-acre nature preserve, Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary (LTNS), 11 miles northwest of Cleveland, TX. All members and guests are invited to attend monthly open houses.

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary Sightings

Each time we visit the sanctuary we encounter something new, whether it be an insect, a plant, a snake, a bird, or even new people visiting LTNS for the first time. This back page is usually devoted to highlighting our encounters. If you find an interesting species at LTNS and would like to share, please send your photo with a brief description to the editor. We hope you will learn something here and also be encouraged to visit the Little Thicket!



📍 Larva of the Ilia Underwing Moth (*Catocala ilia*)

This larva was found along Dillo Wallow Trail in March. It was wriggling and flopping about, evidently preparing to pupate underground. The underside is quite distinctive with rose/lavender coloring between dark vertical bands. If not for the “flopping” we would have walked right past this lovely caterpillar.



📍 Ilia Underwing Moth (*Catocala ilia*)

The adult Ilia Underwing moth is just as striking as its larva, albeit with different coloring. This moth came to our lighted sheet in April ... hmmm, I wonder if it emerged from the pupa of the above caterpillar!