THE BULLETIN
Belterra Community News

June 2016 Volume 10, Issue 6 News for the Residents of Belterra

NatureWatch
POLLINATORS: A FLOWER'S BEST FRIEND

by Lynne & Jim Weber

With their beautiful colors, interesting shapes, and enticing scents, the main purpose of flowers is to attract pollinators and ensure the reproduction of the flowering plant. A pollinator is the biotic agent that moves pollen from the male parts of a flower (anthers) to the female parts of a flower (stigma) to accomplish fertilization. Why is this so important? Aside from the propagation of native plant species, over 150 grain and fruit food crops depend on this process – without it we would have no almonds, coffee, apples, or chocolate!

While there are some birds, bats, and small mammals (and even a lizard in some parts of the world) that act as pollinators, the vast majority of this job is done by flying insects. The most recognized pollinators are various species of bees, which are clearly adapted to pollination. Their surface is fuzzy and carries an electrostatic charge, and both of these features help pollen grains to adhere to their bodies. Bees often also have structures on their abdomen or legs that have evolved to carry pollen. Honey bees gather both nectar and pollen, using them to nurture their young, inadvertently transferring pollen between flowers as they are working.

Hummingbirds act as pollinators for various species of deep-throated flowers, a perfect example of how plants fall into different categories called "pollination syndromes." Each syndrome is defined by a collection of characteristics that attract a certain type of pollinator. Hummingbirds love to visit red flowers with long narrow tubes and lots of nectar, but are not as strongly attracted to wide flowers with little nectar and copious amounts of pollen. Butterfly-pollinated flowers tend to be showy, pink or lavender in color, frequently have a good landing area, and are usually scented. Among the more important moth pollinators are the hawk moths, whose

(Continued on Page 2)

Bees are the most well-known pollinators.

Hawk moths, like this Snowberry Clearwing, are another type of pollinator.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

EMERGENCY 911
Ambulance / Fire..... 911

SCHOOLS

Dripping Springs ISD 512-858-3000
Dripping Springs Elementary..... 512-858-3700
Walnut Springs Elementary..... 512-858-3800
Rooster Springs Elementary..... 512-465-6200
Dripping Springs Middle School..... 512-858-3400
Dripping Springs High School 512-858-3100

UTILITIES

Water – WCID # 1 & 2 512-246-0498
Trash – Texas Disposal..... 512-246-0498
Gas – Texas Community Propane..... 512-272-5503
Electricity – Pedernales Electric 512-858-5611

OTHER

Oak Hill Post Office 512-892-2794
Animal Control..... 512-393-7896

NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

Peel, Inc. 512-263-9181
Article Submissions .....belterra@peelinc.com
Advertising..... advertising@peelinc.com

NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE

(Continued from Cover)

behavior is similar to hummingbirds except that they are nocturnal or crepuscular (active at dawn & dusk). As such, moth-pollinated flowers tend to be white, night-opening, with large blooms that produce a strong, sweet scent in the evening or early morning.

Today, there is alarming evidence that the pollinator population is in decline, threatened by habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation. When native pollination syndromes are modified by planting non-native and unfamiliar plant species in our yards and public places, pollinator visitation declines. This helps to explain why it is important to the overall health of an ecosystem to not break the natural lifecycle and interrelationships of highly-evolved, coexisting native species by introducing or replacing them with non-native ones.

Thanks to the wonderful work of bees, butterflies, birds, and other animal pollinators, flowering plants are able to reproduce and bear fruit, providing many of the foods we eat, the plant materials we and other organisms use, and the natural beauty we see around us. If you are interested in doing your part to create a pollinator-friendly habitat, plan to use a variety of native plants that bloom from spring to fall, eliminate the use of chemical pesticides, include larval host plants to encourage caterpillars, and construct bee condos or man-made nesting blocks. Encouraging pollinators can "bee" a project the whole family can enjoy!

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. Check out our book, Nature Watch Austin, published by Texas A&M University Press, and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com if you enjoy reading these articles!

Hummingbirds, as they nectar from flower to flower, also assist with pollination.

ASHLEY IS A PROVEN **BELTERRA SPECIALIST** WITH A POWERFUL STRATEGY

Over the past four years Ashley has helped more people buy and sell in Southwest Austin than any other agent*

GETTING YOU THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE PRICE

The person who falls in love with your home will pay more than the person who merely likes it. Ashley will analyze what's special about your house, its location and characteristics and create a profile of a target buyer. Then she will ***provide the specialists*** to prepare, stage, and market the house to appeal to that buyer. Ultimately getting you the ***highest possible price.***

ASHLEY'S HOMES SELL MORE THAN 2 WEEKS FASTER THAN THE AUSTIN AVERAGE

19 DAYS FASTER

ASHLEY STUCKI EDGAR BROKER, REALTOR, CHLMS, CIPS, CRS

ashley@ashleyaustinhomes.com www.ashleyaustinhomes.com

C 512.217.6103 O 512.856.4663

Austin Business Journal Top 3 Producing Agent 2014 – 2015
Texas Monthly Five Star Agent 2013 – 2015
Austin's Platinum Top 50 Award Winner 2015 – 2016
AIOREP Top 10 Agent for Client Satisfaction in Texas 2015

ASHLEY AUSTIN HOMES

**Based on 2014 residential home sales through Austin Board of REALTORS.*

SUMMER FUN WITH YOUR KIDS

Looking for fun things to do with your kids this summer? Check out the following:

Austin Zoo (austinzoo.org)
10807 Rawhide Trail, Austin 78736, 512 -288-1490
Non-profit zoo with over 350 rescued animals - lions, tigers, monkeys, and reptiles. Includes a petting zoo with goats, deer, sheep, and llamas. A 20-minute train ride allows you to see emus, alpacas, and longhorns.

Austin Steam Train Association
(www.austinsteamtrain.org) 401 East Whitestone Blvd, Austin 78613 512-477-8468
Ride a real vintage passenger train. Trip takes about 3 hours. Themed rides offered throughout the year.

Blazer Tag Adventure Center (www.blazertag.com)
1701 W. Ben White Blvd, Austin, 512-462-0202
Suitable for kids 7 and up. Largest lazer tag arena in Texas. Three story, 10,000 square foot, with ramps & ropes, indoor rope course, video game arcade, concession stand.

Chapparral Ice Center (www.chaparralice.com)
2525 Anderson Lane, Austin, 78757 512-451-5012
Indoor ice-skating rink. Skate rental available. Free one-time 30-minute introductory class for beginners age 6 & up on Saturdays at noon.

Dinosaur Park (www.thedinopark.com)
893 Union Chapel Road, Cedar Creek, TX 78612 512-321-6262
Realistic life-size dinosaurs in a park setting. The walk through the park takes about 45 minutes. Bring a picnic, as there is not a concession stand.

Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms (www.pioneerfarms.org)
11418 Sprinkle Cut Off Road, Austin 78754 512-837-1215
Living history museum that shows what farm life was like in the 1800s.

Jump USA Trampoline Park (www.jumpusapark.com)
10601 N. Lamar Blvd, Austin 78753 512-838-6200
40,000 square feet indoor sports and recreation center. Large trampoline, dodge ball court, indoor pool with floating hamster balls, bounce houses, and game arcade.

Kiddie Acres (www.kiddieacres.com)
4800 Howard Lane, Austin 78728 512-255-4131
Old fashioned amusement park on 5 acres. Includes carousel rides, Ferris wheel, pony rides, miniature train, 18-hole miniature golf course. Geared to toddlers and young children.

Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex (www.myec.net)
1156 Hargrave St. Austin 78702 512-472-6932
Owned by City of Austin, 154-seat movie theater, 16 lane glow-in-the-dark bowling alley, video arcade area, food court, 12,500 foot roller skating rink.

Mt. Playmore (mtplaymore.com)
13609 North IH 35, Austin, 78753, 512-989-8886
3000 foot playscape, arcade, restaurant with healthy food choices. Large toddler only area with age appropriate toys, activities, and play elements.

Playland Skating Center (playlandskatecenter.net)
8822 McCann Dr., Austin, 78757 512-452-1901
Largest roller skating rink in Austin. Wooden skating rink with light show, fog machine, disco ball, and sound system. Admission includes skate rental. Includes indoor playground.

Thinkery Austin Children's Museum (thinkeryaustin.org)
1830 Simond Ave., Austin, 78723 512-469-6200
Museum that helps kids learn with hands-on exhibits. Activities to interest kids from infants to 11 years old. Special play areas for infants and toddlers.

Texas Memorial Museum (tmm.utexas.edu)
2400 Trinity St., Austin, 78705 512-471-1604
Natural history museum located close to LBJ Library. Includes dinosaurs and fossils, Texas wildlife, and gems and minerals. It has a gift shop with lots of fun and interesting gifts for kids.

Pruning Dilemma - Part One

I am most frequently asked the question: "When is the best time to prune my trees?". If only you all knew what a complicated question that is! Here comes my long-winded response which is almost never explained this thoroughly to a curious client and even here, it will be a cliff notes version.

We will take a seasonal evaluation of pruning's pros and cons. First, let's start with Spring. During spring, the flow of sap and tree growth is at its highest. On the positive side – the tree's response to the pruning wound/injury is the quickest at forming what's called wound-wood; its purpose is to completely grow over the injury and minimize the amount and extent of dieback, rot, etc. to the tree. Also, new growth is invigorated even more by pruning. On the negative side – sap flow is increased and pathogens, insect pests and the like become a higher threat.

During Summer, the increased heat and lack of soil moisture lowers the amount of sap and so pathogen as well as pest dangers are somewhat less than Spring, and the time for the tree to cure its pruning wood is faster than in the Spring. Unfortunately, due to the greater likelihood of drought, which weakens the tree's immune system, it often can't resist even some minor threats (such as hypoxolon canker). New growth also is spurred in other areas of the tree during the Summer – though not as much as in Spring. If adequate moisture is not present it can actually become a stressor on the tree. Furthermore, the formation of wound-wood from callus tissue is not as good as Springtime.

Fall is, for the most part, a balance between the Spring and Summer months – less woundwood formation than Summer, less pathogens/pests than Summer.

Winter has one of the least amount of pathogen or pest threat, yet it is also the worst time for woundwood growth. The benefit of increasing tree growth is practically non-existent. Also, during severe temperature changes and winter storms, the wood can actually expand and contract on larger cuts opening up cracks that greatly increase the extent of the injury into the parent branch or tree trunk.

My final position on the best season to prune is that "when is not the most important question"! The most important question is "Who should I select to do the pruning?". With that said, Spring is the best time to prune your trees from a woundwood standpoint and to increase the growth of your tree. It is the assumption and practice of pruning experts throughout the world who try to perform most pruning operations during Spring.

It is too much to cover in this article but my Pruning Dilemma Part Two will scrutinize assumptions leading to the premise to not prune oak trees during the best pruning season of the year! Texas Forest Service as well as others often recommend "no pruning". Again, the vital question is "Who" not "When" from my professional view.

Questions or comments this article or previous articles have generated, may be directed to me at: kevin@arborcareandconsulting.com

Cedar Myths Debunked

I am frequently hired to help clients approach development of their raw tract of land they recently purchased. Without exception, I encounter surprise and curiosity when I strongly discourage removal of all the cedar (correctly called Ashe Juniper – it is not in the cedrus family). The most common misconceptions I encounter go as follows:

Cedar isn't a native tree right?

Ashe Juniper is actually a Texas native tree, which was found mostly in mountainous rocky areas (i.e.: the common name Mountain Juniper). Also, it was found in locations where natural fires or fires ignited by the Native Americans did not spread to.

Cedar is a very invasive tree!

Ashe Juniper is a successful native plant that is unchecked in reproduction, when the natural cycle (which includes fire) is significantly altered by human efforts. The reasoning of this argument would also conclude that Live Oaks are also invasive. Due to the lack of fires and the avoidance of removing any oaks during clearing of land, we now have the catastrophic consequence of interconnected roots across the entire hill country and the capacity of the oak wilt fungal virus wiping out the vast majority of our Live Oak trees. Historically, our oak motts were much fewer and mostly separated from one another preventing the devastation we now experience.

Cedar is a water hog and is sucking all the water out of my land.

Ashe Juniper is actually one of the most efficient water users in our entire cadre of native trees. It is usually the last species to die in a drought. It grows very successfully in places like Junction and Rock Springs, where few other species are able to grow. It is true they are evergreen, but the amount of water they require per diameter inch is less than a Live Oak. I say this not to advocate for the removal of all Live Oaks by any means, rather to show the reasoned conclusion of removal of Live Oaks will also decrease significantly the absorption of water from the ground by a tree species! The fundamental fact behind the shade value of trees to land is this: the Sun exponentially more than any amount or type of plant, causes the desiccation of the soil. Use of a tension-meter in an Ashe Juniper copse and then outside in a neighboring field will substantiate this.

(Continued on Page 7)

(Continued from Page 6)

Cedar will turn my land into arid, infertile land.

Ashe Juniper significantly minimizes erosion of topsoil. Watch a slow motion video of the effects of a full-speed rain drop on soil. By contrast, Ashe Juniper slowly drips the rain onto the ground. It is a fact that the topsoil under a cedar is deeper. Not only that, it is nutrient-rich humus. The dead needles condition the soil where beneficial bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi populations thrive; the berries and needles significantly help lower the alkaline soil ph.

All cedars around good trees should be removed though right?

Actually, Ashe Junipers situated around the perimeter of other trees help buffer them from winds minimizing erosion plus cool the micro-environment (soil temperature, cambial tissue in trunk, canopy of tree near Ashe Juniper) significantly around the tree. In addition, it reduces the loss of moisture of that tree as a result of the effects of the sun to its root system outside its own canopy.

Summary

Generally, my initial approach to Ashe Juniper removal on raw land is a 60% removal and 40% retention. With time, more removal is often warranted. Obviously, Ashe Juniper in a field for grazing or for growing coastal hay is a negative value. But even for livestock, a mature Ashe Juniper can offer excellent shade. Also, raising the Ashe Juniper canopy to 3' or 4' can allow for grass to grow underneath it. Furthermore, wildlife absolutely needs Ashe Juniper as well as highly desirable rare natives such as the Texas Madrone.

PEEL, INC.
308 Meadowlark St.
Lakeway, TX 78734-4717

BT