

# Canyon Creek CHRONICLE

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## 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 wound 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 hypoxylon 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](mailto:kevin@arborcareandconsulting.com)



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### **Austin Steam Train Association**

**([www.austinsteamtrain.org](http://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](http://www.blazertag.com))**

**1701 W. Ben White Blvd, Austin, 512-462-0202**

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### **Chapparral Ice Center ([www.chapparralice.com](http://www.chapparralice.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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.





## 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 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](mailto: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](http://naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com) if you enjoy reading these articles!

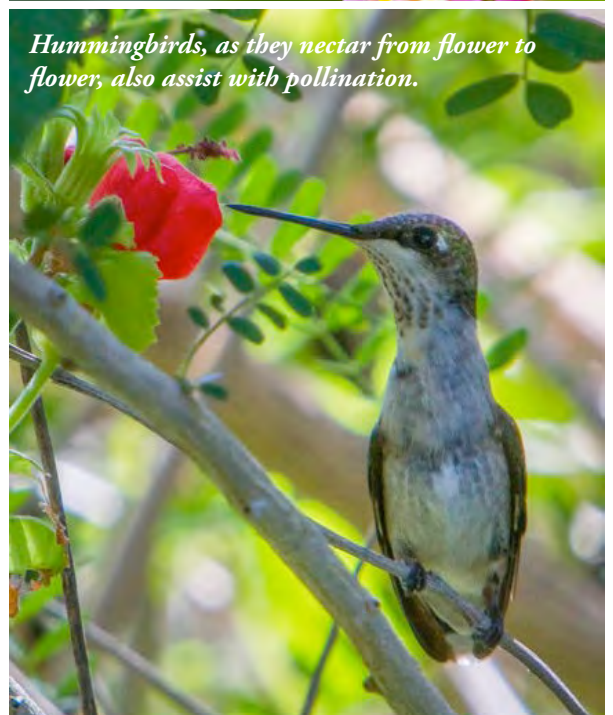
*Bees are the most well-known pollinators.*



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



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



## Local Running Group Seeks to Break Top Myths about Marathon Running

*USA Fit Austin Launches New Season in Time for National Running Day*

With National Running Day just around the corner on June 1, USA Fit Austin seeks to break the top myths about what an actual long distance runner looks like. The local full and half marathon training group program is accepting online registration for its 2016 season now through June 30 at [www.AustinFit.com](http://www.AustinFit.com). The season will kick off with two orientation events on June 11 and 18 in the TXDOT Parking Lot at 150 East Riverside Drive.

"Most people don't believe they can complete a full or half marathon for various reasons," said USA Fit Austin Organizer and Head Coach Linda Brown. "Our mission at USA Fit is to show people they absolutely can succeed by providing training plans for every fitness level in a fun, non-intimidating and safe environment."

Brown herself joined USA Fit Austin in 2005. Now, as a coach, she hopes to bring the same motivation and encouragement that her coaches and fellow members gave her to help runners around the Austin area reach their own personal goals.

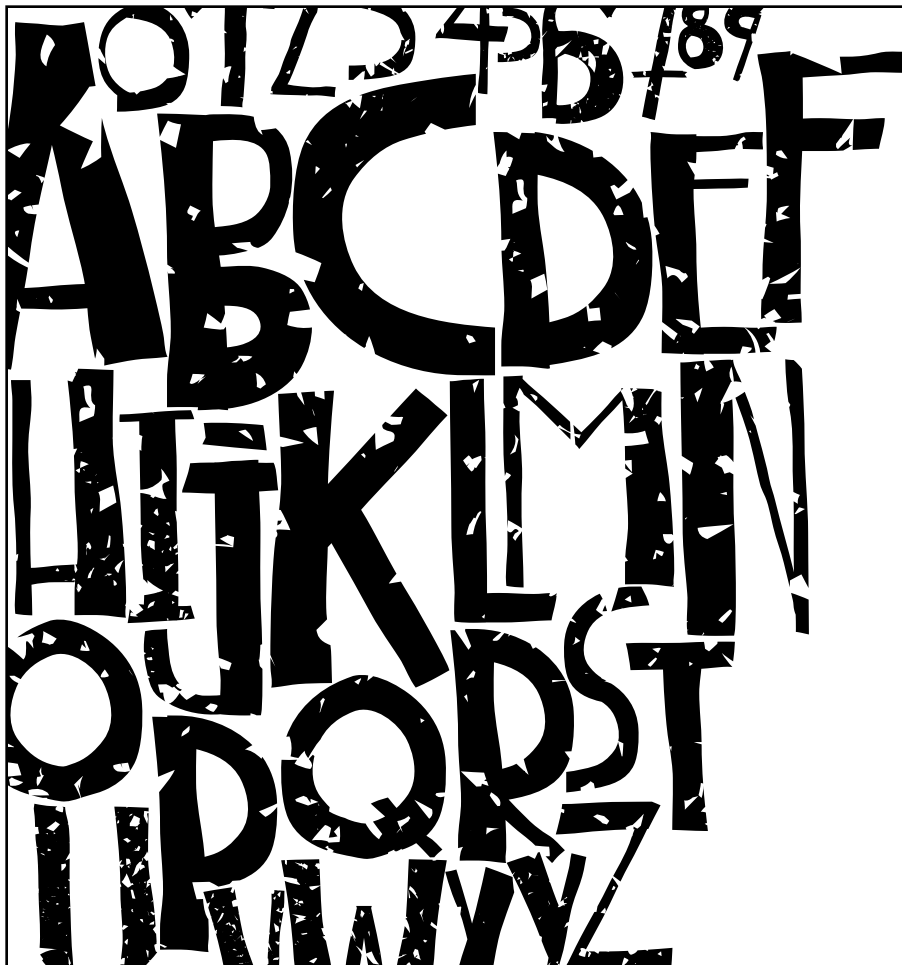
According to Brown, the top myths about marathon running include:

- Marathoners must be young.
- Marathoners must be athletes.
- Running long distances is dangerous to one's health.
- Runners must be a certain weight or size to successfully run a full or half marathon.

She said that members of USA Fit Austin defy all of these myths and have gone on to complete half and full marathons during their very first seasons with the group as well as meet personal health and fitness goals.

"The most rewarding part of our job as coaches is to see members achieve so much more than they thought possible, no matter their fitness level or stage in life," said Brown. "The only thing we ask our members to show up with is a goal and the passion to meet it. We take care of the rest."

Registration for USA Fit Austin is \$135 for new members and \$105 for returning members. Runners meet Saturday mornings for ability-based group trainings, enjoy weekly seminars and social events throughout the season and benefit from the encouragement and expertise of certified coaches. To learn more and to register, visit [www.AustinFit.com](http://www.AustinFit.com).



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The Heart Gallery of Central Texas is a project designed to promote and encourage adoptions from foster care and to provide an opportunity for waiting children to be discovered by potential families. There are no fees to adopt from the foster care system regardless of which agency you work with. There is only one pool of children, and they are all in CPS care, every licensed agency has the ability to assist in adoption of any foster child in Texas. Learn more here: [www.heartgallerytexas.com](http://www.heartgallerytexas.com)



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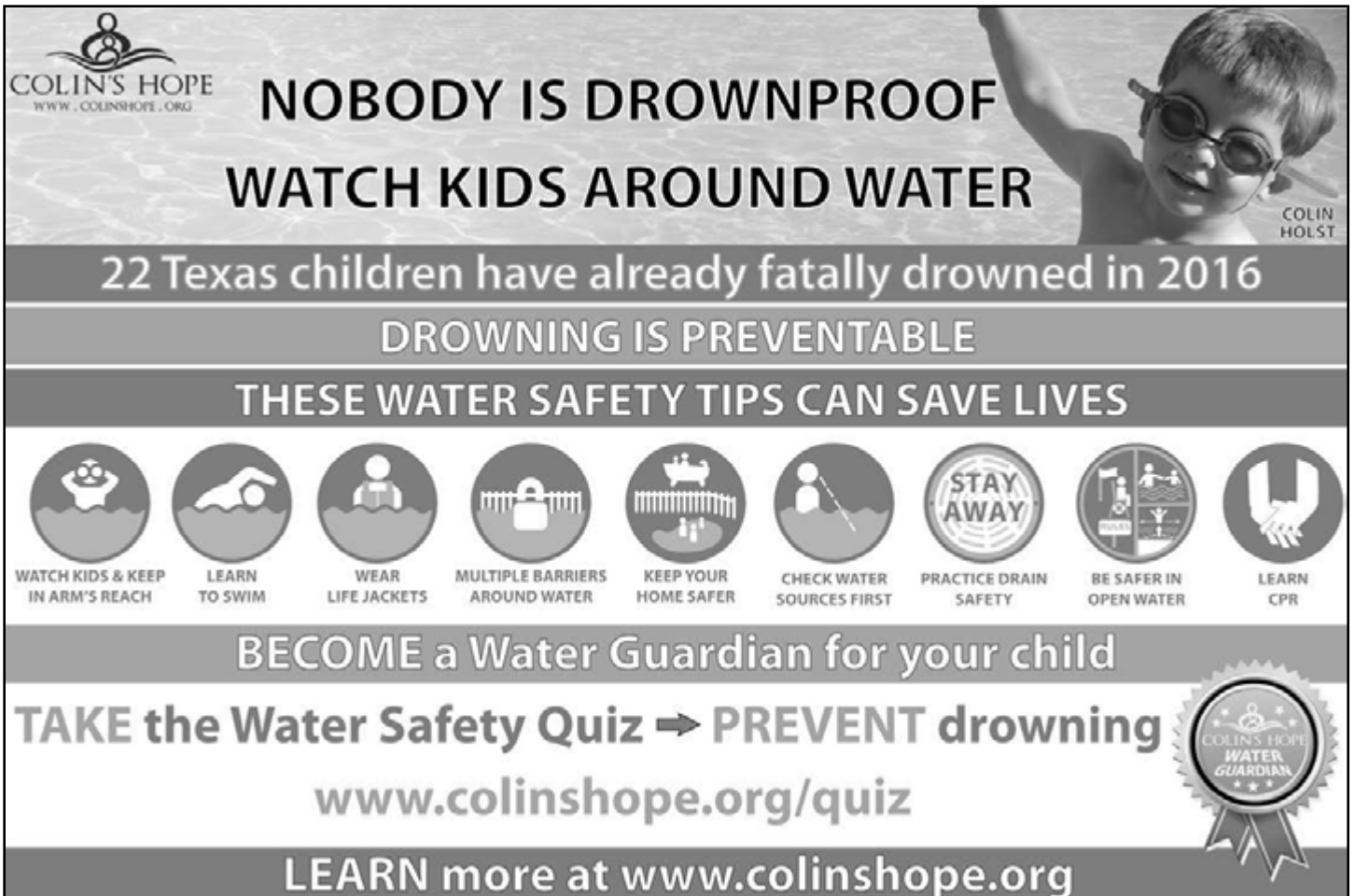
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