

# West Lake Hills ECHO

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## NATURE WATCH

### BLAZING BEETLES

by Jim and Lynne Weber

Over 2500 species and subspecies of tiger beetles are currently described worldwide, with more than 45 species occurring in Texas. Tiger beetles get their name from their cat-like predatory behavior, performing an unusual form of pursuit where they alternatively sprint quickly toward their prey then stop and visually reorient, eventually running down their target. In fact, some tiger beetles can run at a blazing speed of 5 mph, and are considered one of the fastest running land animals for their size!

Tiger beetles are believed to be closely related to ground beetles, but they differ in terms of their proportions. Tiger beetles are about one inch long on average, with a head wider than its thorax, which is located between the head and the abdomen. They also have large bulging eyes, long spindly legs, and oversized sickle-shaped mandibles to grab prey and devour it on the spot. Tiger beetles are important predators in the insect world, feeding on a wide variety of ants, beetles, grasshopper nymphs, flies, and spiders. They are most often found in sandy areas, stream edges, clay banks, and woodland paths. Many are active in the daytime, and the colors and patterns on their oblong elytra (or wing covers) are often iridescent and striking.

Some of the more common tiger beetles in our area include members of the *Cicindela* genus, which comes from the Latin and means 'glowworm', referring to the fact that most of these species have metallic, flashy elytra. In Eastern and Central Texas, the Big Sand Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela formosa*) and Festive Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela scutellaris*) prefer the dry sandy areas of post oak woodlands. The Big Sand Tiger Beetle has luminous reddish-purple elytra with irregular white marks around the edges and the Festive Tiger Beetle's elytra are iridescent reddish-bronze to purple to blue-green or blue-black with reduced or absent spotting. Both species can be sighted late spring into fall.

Abundant along water edges, the Ocellated Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela ocellata*) is most active in the summer, and can be identified by its bronze elytra speckled with 8 cream-colored spots (4 on each elytra). Ocellated means having one or more ocelli, or eye-like markings. The Six-spotted Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela sexguttata*) is the probably the most commonly observed species on dirt paths in grassy areas seldom far from woods, and has brilliant green elytra with typically six white spots on the lower half (3 on each elytra).

Tiger beetles are also excellent indicators of environmental quality and are often studied as bioindicators. Many require undisturbed sandy areas and specific microclimates for their burrows. With rapid urbanization and human disturbance of natural areas, these blazing beetles have fewer places to live and survive. They are very sensitive to changes in the environment, and are among the first species to react to pesticides, misuse of natural habitat, and climate change.

Send your nature-related questions to [naturewatch@austin.rr.com](mailto:naturewatch@austin.rr.com) and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, check out our books, *Nature Watch Austin* and *Nature Watch Big Bend* (published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at [naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com](http://naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com).



*Ocellated Tiger Beetle*

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Fire.....	911
Ambulance .....	911
Police Department .....	512-327-1195
Sheriff – Non-Emergency.....	512-974-0845
Fire Department Administration .....	512-539-3400
Travis County Animal Control .....	512-972-6060

### SCHOOLS

Eanes ISD .....	512-732-9000
Westlake High School.....	512-732-9280
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West Ridge Middle School .....	512-732-9240
Hill Country Middle School .....	512-732-9220
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Forest Trail Elementary.....	512-732-9160
Eanes Elementary.....	512-732-9100
Cedar Creek Elementary .....	512-732-9120
Bridge Point Elementary .....	512-732-9200
Barton Creek Elementary.....	512-732-9100

### UTILITIES

Water District 10 .....	512-327-2230
Wastewater	
Crossroads Utility Service 24 Hour Number....	512-246-1400
New Accounts .....	512-402-1990
Austin Energy .....	512-322-9100
Texas Gas Service	
Custom Service.....	1-800-700-2443
Emergencies.....	512-370-8609
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AT&T	
New Service.....	1-800-464-7928
Repair.....	1-800-246-8464
Billing.....	1-800-858-7928
Time Warner Cable	
Customer Service.....	512-485-5555
Repairs.....	512-485-5080
Austin/Travis County Hazardous Waste .....	512-974-4343

### OTHER NUMBERS

City Administration .....	512-327-3628
Municipal Court .....	512-327-1863
Property Tax .....	512-854-9473
Appraisal District .....	512-834-9317
Chamber of Commerce.....	512-306-0023
City of West Lake Hills .....	www.westlakehills.org

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## Mosquito Repellents

As mosquito season is ramping up, everyone is (hopefully) aware of possible disease transmission by mosquitoes. It is important that you protect yourself when spending time outside.

Activity times for mosquitoes can vary. Most people are familiar with the four D's- DRAIN (standing water), DEET (wear some repellent), DUSK & DAWN (stay indoors during dusk and dawn to avoid peak populations) and DRESS (wear long sleeves and long pants). While this is still good advice, it may be a good idea to spread the dress and repellent advice for anytime you spend time outdoors.

When outside, wear long pants and a long sleeved shirt in light colors to reduce the number of mosquitoes that can reach your skin. Repellent should only be applied to clothing and exposed skin. Do not apply repellent underneath clothing! If you want to apply repellent to your face, spray your hands with repellent and rub it onto your face. Do not spray repellent directly into your face or near eyes or mouth. Make sure to apply repellent outdoors. Do not allow children to handle repellents. Wash hands before eating, smoking or using the restroom.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends using a product registered with the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) containing one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535 and some of the products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus.

DEET, also known N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide or N,N-diethylbenzamide, was developed by the U.S. Army in 1946 to protect soldiers in insect-infested areas. Pesticides containing DEET have been used by the general public since 1957. Products containing DEET should not be used on children younger than 2 months of age (read the label and check with your pediatrician if you have questions). DEET has a slight odor and may have a greasy feel to some people. It may damage plastic, rubber, vinyl or synthetic fabrics. DEET may be irritating to the eyes and skin for some people. DEET comes in a wide variety of concentrations, so choose the one that will work best for your situation.

Picaridin was first made in the 1980's and resembles a natural compound called piperine (which is found in plants used to produce black pepper). Picaridin has been used in Europe and Australia for many years, but has only been in the U.S. since 2005. Picaridin is non-greasy and is odorless.

IR-3535, or 3-[N-Butyl-N- acetyl]-aminopropionic acid, ethyl ester, was developed in the mid- 1970's and became registered for use in the U.S. in 1999. It is registered as a biopesticide by the EPA because it is functionally identical to a naturally occurring substance (an amino-acid). It may dissolve or damage plastics and may be irritating to the eyes.

Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or PMD (para-menthane-3,8-diol) are essentially the same thing; PMD is the synthesized (lab created) version of oil of lemon eucalyptus. "Pure" or "essential" oil of lemon

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[hillcountryindoor.com/party-on-the-hill/](http://hillcountryindoor.com/party-on-the-hill/)

# The Echo

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eucalyptus is not labeled as a repellent and has not undergone testing and should not be used as a repellent product. OLE/PMD has been on the market in the U.S. since 2002. OLE/PMD should not be used on children younger than 3 years of age. The natural product (OLE) has known allergens within it while the synthetic version (PMD) has less of a risk to allergens. This product is classified as a biopesticide. OLE/PMD has a varying range of residual, some offering about 20 minutes of protection while other products may last up to two hours.

Many factors play into how long a repellent will last for a person. Some of these are:

- The concentration (or percent of active ingredient) of the product. You can find the percentage on the product label.
- Person's attractiveness. Some people are more attractive to mosquitoes than others (and no scientific research has proven that it is because of eating garlic, taking vitamin B, using tobacco products, etc.). A person's genetic code plays a large part on what makes a person so attractive to mosquitoes.
- Frequency and uniformity of application. In other words, how often is the repellent applied and how good of coverage did you get?

- Activity level of the person. The more active the person is, the more sweat they produce which can cause the repellent to wash off the surface of the skin.

As a word of caution, there are products that combine sunscreen and insect repellent. The CDC recommends that if you need sunscreen and repellent, that you choose two separate products. Sunscreen should be applied more often than repellents.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at [www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

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A black and white photograph of a college football player in an orange jersey with the number 8, running with the ball while being tackled by a player in a white jersey. The background is a blurred crowd in a stadium.

**SCORE YOUR NEXT HOME WITH ME!**

A small portrait of Jaxon Shipley, a man with short brown hair, wearing a blue shirt and a dark tie.

**JAXON SHIPLEY**



# 27TH ANNUAL ALZHEIMER'S TEXAS WALK

October 6, Camp Mabry

This year marks the 27th Annual Alzheimer's Walk for support, care, and research hosted by Alzheimer's Texas. The walk will be held on the morning of October 6 at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas. Alzheimer's Texas, a local nonprofit organization serving Central Texas for 36 years, separated from the National Alzheimer's Association in January 2016. As a result, 100% of the funds raised will remain local to be used here in Central Texas.

"We are, and always have been, deeply committed to providing families in Central Texas with compassionate services that are relevant to their needs, like our caregiver support groups and great educational programs," says Christian Wells, President of Alzheimer's Texas. "When people walk with us on October 6th, they know that they are supporting the services they value and will directly touch the people living with Alzheimer's in Central Texas."

The Alzheimer's Texas Walk is an opportunity for Central Texans' to get together and celebrate the difference we're making on a local level, for those affected by Alzheimer's and to bring the community together. One of the many supporters of Alzheimer's Texas, Valerie Vogt Sills, Gold Star Walker for Alzheimer's Texas, walks for her mother who was diagnosed with this terrible disease in her late sixties. Valerie has walked with Alzheimer's Texas for the past 14 years raising more than \$23,000 to help support programs for the families and caregivers dealing with this disease and to ultimately help find a cure for Alzheimer's.

"When the Alzheimer's groups split, I chose to support Alzheimer's Texas rather than the national organization because I know that the money will go to help out local and state programs," says Valerie Vogt Sills, Gold Star Walker for Alzheimer's Texas. "I lost my mom to Alzheimer's in 2009 and have been walking in her memory since then to help others dealing with this disease."

The Alzheimer's Texas Walk will be held Saturday, October 6 at the Camp Mabry, with check-in beginning at 8:15 am. There are two scenic routes for Walkers to enjoy, a 1-mile course and a 2.5-mile course. In addition to the Walk, the event will feature food, live music, activities for kids, prizes, and more. All participants who raise \$50 or more will receive a free event T-shirt.

In addition to joining the cause as an individual walker or starting a team, you can also support through corporate sponsorships at various levels. Corporate Regional support is provided by Westminster, ABC Home and Commercial services, Silverado Memory Care, Arden Courts, Querencia, and many more.

To learn more and register for the 2017 Alzheimer's Texas Walk and to keep your fundraising dollars for Alzheimer's local, visit [www.txalz.org/walk](http://www.txalz.org/walk) or call (512) 241-0420.

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## About Alzheimer's Texas

Alzheimer's Texas is dedicated to eliminating Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research and to enhancing care and support for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders, their families, and caregivers. The organization provides care consultations, 24-hour help line, support groups, respite care, educational and social engagement programs, and professional training. Alzheimer's Texas was founded in 1982 and serves Central Texas. For more information, visit [www.txalz.org](http://www.txalz.org).

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