



# BEE CAVE *Messenger*

NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE BEE CAVE AREA

VOLUME II, ISSUE II  
NOVEMBER 2020



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## NATURE WATCH

### GONE TO SEED

by Jim and Lynne Weber



*Flame acanthus seed*

Often used as an informal figure of speech meaning to deteriorate or go downhill, 'gone to seed' can have a negative connotation. But each seed contains a new beginning: a tiny plant just waiting for the right conditions such as water, warmth, and a good location, to germinate and grow. Seeds and seed heads form fascinating shapes, varying sizes, and intricate patterns, often adorning the fall and winter landscape.

Plants have many ways of dispersing their seeds, and most have evolved over millions of years. While many of the methods are tried and true, certain seeds have developed in very particular ways to take advantage of such methods, and some plants only release their seeds in response to specific triggers.

Wind helps seeds float or flutter away, often aided by seed structures such as thin wing extensions or long, feathery tails like those on the endemic Scarlet Clematis (*Clematis texensis*). Texas Bluebonnets (*Lupinus* sp.) employ the expulsion or explosion method, where the small, pebble-like seeds are forcibly expelled when the dried pods twist open in the warm sun. Similarly, Flame Acanthus (*Anisacanthus quadrifidus* var. *wrightii*) has hood-shaped capsules enclosing seeds attached to a hooked stalk, and ejects the seed from the capsule when it dries and breaks open.

Gravity plays a part in many plants seed dispersals, where weighty seeds fall off the plant and roll to a new location. The best example of this are the round, heavy fruits that simply fall off a plant when ripe, such as those on Mexican Plum (*Prunus*

mexicana) or Texas Persimmon (*Diospyros texana*). If the fruits have a tough outer shell, they may travel some distance from the parent plant, and if they have a soft skin, they may break open where they fall and scatter the seed or seeds within.

Some plants produce very light seeds, seeds with buoyant fluff, or seeds with air trapped in them, so they can float away from the parent plant that grows in or around water, like Common Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) or Black Willow (*Salix nigra*) or Eastern Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*). Others employ the assistance of animals, which can come in the form of seed or fruit eating (where the seed can pass undigested through the animal), seed caching or burying, or seed transportation. Common examples of seed and fruit eating include Cedar Waxwings and American Robins consuming juniper and yaupon berries, and seed burying is a common practice of both ground and tree squirrels, who eat and cache acorns. Often unbeknownst to the animal, some seeds can be covered with tiny hooks or spines that catch on a passing animal's fur, eventually transported to and rubbed off in another location.

This fall and winter, let the seeds linger, at least until early spring. Not only do they provide much needed food for wildlife, but leaving them allows for some beautiful and mysterious patterns in your winter landscape, and the promise of renewing the cycle of life that begins again each spring!

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*, *Nature Watch Big Bend*, and *Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies* (all published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at [naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com](http://naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com).



*Scarlet clematis seed*



# IMPORTANT NUMBERS

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

EMERGENCY .....	911
Fire.....	911
Ambulance.....	911
Police Department .....	512-314-7590
Sheriff – Non-Emergency.....	512-974-0845
Travis County ESD No.6/Lake Travis Fire Rescue	
Administration Office .....	512-266-2533
Travis County Animal Control.....	512-972-6060

## SCHOOLS

Lake Travis ISD .....	512-533-6000
Lake Travis High School.....	512-533-6100
Lake Travis Middle School.....	512-533-6200
Lake Travis Elementary.....	512-533-6300
Hudson Bend Middle School .....	512-533-6400
Lake Pointe Elementary.....	512-533-6500
Lakeway Elementary .....	512-533-6350
Serene Hills Elementary .....	512-533-7400
Bee Cave Elementary.....	512-533-6250
West Cypress Elementary .....	512-533-7500

## UTILITIES

Travis County WCID # 17.....	512-263-0125
Lakeway MUD .....	512-261-6222
Hurst Creek MUD.....	512-261-6281
Austin Energy .....	512-322-9100
Pedernales Electric.....	888-554-4732
Texas Gas Service	
Custom Service .....	1-800-700-2443
Emergencies.....	512-370-8609
Call Before You Dig .....	512-472-2822
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

Bee Cave City Hall.....	512-767-6600
Bee Cave Library .....	512-767-6620
Municipal Court .....	512-767-6630
Lake Travis Postal Office.....	512-263-2458
Baylor Scott & White Medical Center.....	512-571-5000
City of Bee Cave .....	www.beecavetexas.com

## NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

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(Culinary.net) While apple pie is a traditional seasonal dish, you can add unique flavor with this skillet version. Simply toss Honeycrisp apples with brown sugar, cinnamon and lemon juice then spoon between two pie crusts simmering in a thin layer of brown sugar and cinnamon then drizzle with caramel sauce for a deliciously gooey evening treat.

Find more dessert recipes at Culinary.net.

### Skillet Apple Pie with Caramel Sauce

4 large Honeycrisp apples, peeled, cored and sliced  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 1/2 tablespoons cinnamon, divided  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
6 tablespoons butter  
1/4 cup, plus 2 teaspoons, brown sugar  
2 refrigerated pie crusts  
2 teaspoons whipping cream caramel sauce

Heat oven to 350 F.

In large bowl, combine apples, sugar, 1 tablespoon cinnamon and lemon juice until apples are covered. Set aside.

In oven-safe, 10-inch nonstick skillet, melt butter. Add 1/4 cup brown sugar and remaining cinnamon; mix until combined. Boil 5–8 minutes.

In same skillet, place one pie crust over brown sugar mixture. Pour apples over pie crust. Cover apples with second pie crust. Cut slits in top to release steam.  
Brush whipping cream over crust. Sprinkle with remaining brown sugar.

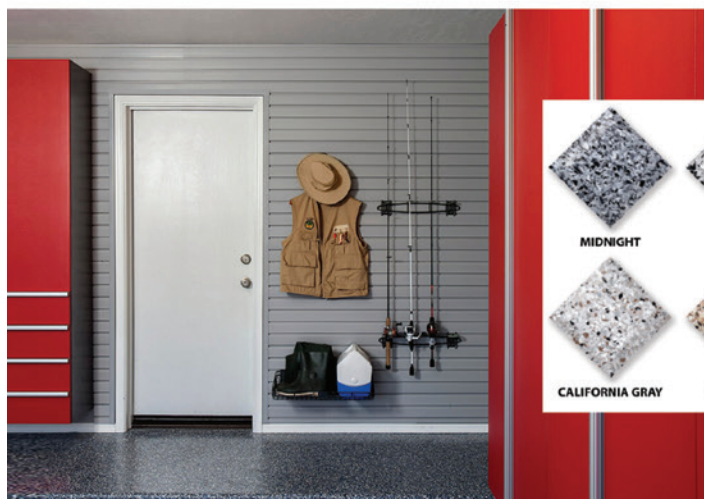
Bake 35–45 minutes until crust is golden brown.

Drizzle with caramel sauce.





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