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## **NEWSLETTER INFO**

#### **NEWSLETTER**

Articles .....legendoaks@peelinc.com

#### **PUBLISHER**

Peel, Inc.....www.PEELinc.com, 512-263-9181 Advertising .......advertising@PEELinc.com, 512-263-9181

#### **ADVERTISING INFORMATION**

Please support the businesses that advertise in the Legend Oaks newsletter. Their advertising dollars make it possible for all Legend Oaks II residents to receive the monthly newsletter at no charge. No homeowners association funds are used to produce or mail the newsletters. If you would like to support the newsletter by advertising, please contact our sales office at 512-263-9181 or advertising@PEELinc.com. The advertising deadline is the 8th of each month for the following month's newsletter.

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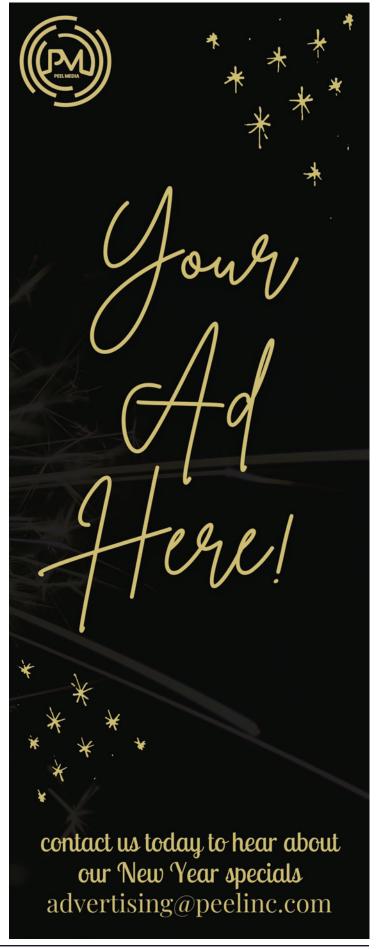
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# NATURE WATCH

# **MERRY MISTLETOE**

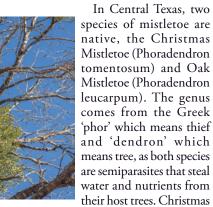
by Jim and Lynne Weber



Beloved Emarginea Moth

times mistletoe has been considered one of the take hold. Interestingly, most magical, mysterious, and sacred plants found in European folklore. Originally used to bestow life and fertility, as a protection from poison, and as an aphrodisiac, in

medieval times branches of mistletoe were hung from the ceiling to ward off evil spirits. With the process of immigration and settlement of North America, traditions associated with the European plant were has attributed a wide range transferred to the New World and evolved into a folklore all its own.





tomentosum) and Oak Mistletoe (Phoradendron leucarpum). The genus comes from the Greek 'phor' which means thief and 'dendron' which means tree, as both species are semiparasites that steal water and nutrients from their host trees. Christmas Mistletoe is by far the most common of the two

species. It has small, elliptical evergreen leaves and smooth green stems covered by short hairs, with tiny green flowers on the male plant and shiny white berries on the female plant. Widely used in the United States as a Christmas decoration, it is especially common growing on Sugar Hackberry, Cedar Elm, Honey Mesquite and other hardwood trees in Texas as well as Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

While mistletoe is often viewed by humans as a nuisance, it



Great Purple Hairstreak

is an important species for wildlife. It is the larval host plant for the Great Purple Hairstreak butterfly and the Beloved Emarginea moth, and its berries are relished by winter resident bird species such as Cedar Waxwings, Eastern Bluebirds, and American Robins. These birds eat the berries and spread the seeds through their droppings and by wiping their beaks on tree

From the earliest branches, both of which may cause a new plant to seeds deposited in this way first spend considerable time and energy developing their roots within the branch's tissue before sprouting external stems and leaves.

> While ancient folklore of mystical abilities to



Mistletoe Flowers

mistletoe, none is more fascinating than the myth of Frigga, the Norse Mother Goddess worshiped by pre-Christian people of northern Europe, and how mistletoe became her sacred plant. She was believed to be the mother of Balder, the God of the Summer Sun, who had a dream of death. Alarmed by this dream, Frigga went to all the elements, plants, and animals to seek a promise that no harm would come to her son. Balder was thought to be safe from harm by anything on or under the Earth.

But Balder's enemy, Loki, was the God of Evil, and he knew of the one plant that Frigga overlooked. It was the lowly mistletoe, which grew neither on nor under the Earth itself, but on the branches of oaks and other trees. Loki made an arrow tip with the mistletoe, and gave it to the Hoder, the blind God of Winter, who used it to strike Balder dead. The sky paled and everything wept for the Sun God, who was restored by Frigga after working with the elements for three days. The tears she shed for her son were said to be the pearly white berries of the mistletoe, and in her joy at his resurrection she kissed everyone who passed beneath the tree on which it grew.

Thus began the custom that whomever should stand beneath the humble mistletoe will come to no harm, but receive only a kiss as a token of love. Merry mistletoe to you and yours!

Send your nature-related questions to 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.



Mistletoe Berries



# ONLINE SHOPPING – A HOLIDAY RECYCLING CHALLENGE!

The pandemic has forever changed many of our shopping habits. Online shopping has become the "go to" for many of us for safety as well as convenience. Online shopping, however, creates all kinds of recycling challenges. My holiday gift to you is some guidelines to help with this recycling process.

• BROWN MAILING ENVELOPES LINED WITH BUBBLE WRAP OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF PADDING – Place in the trash can. They are mixed materials that cannot be separated for recycling.

• PLASTIC MAILING ENVELOPES LINED WITH BUBBLE WRAP – Take these to the plastic bag collection bins.

• BROWN PACKING PAPER – This goes into the recycling bin.

• BUBBLE WRAP AND AIR PILLOWS – These go into the plastic bag collection bins. Remove the air from the air pillows. Bubble wrap in good condition can go to mail packaging stores. Call ahead of time to be sure they have space for them.

• CARDBOARD BOXES – These go into the recycling bin. If there are more boxes than will fit in the bin with the lid closed, they can be folded and set next to your blue bin. They will be picked up at no extra charge.

• CELLOPHANE – This goes into the trash can.

• CRINKLE CUT PAPER - Like shredded paper, it cannot go into your recycling bin, but instead can go into your green compost can. Please put in a paper or compostable bag.

• STYROFOAM – Blocks, chunks, meat trays, takeout containers, sheets, and pouches are accepted at the Recycle & Reuse Drop-Off Center (RRDOC).

• STYROFOAM PEANUTS – Shipping peanuts are not accepted at the RRDOC. Mail packaging stores will take these. Call ahead of time to be sure they have space for them.

• TISSUE PAPER AND WRAPPING PAPER – This can go into the recycling bin. Wrapping paper with glitter or foil is not recyclable; put it in the trash can.

• GIFT BAGS – Glossy gift bags or any with glitter or flocking goes into the trash can.

• HOLIDAY CARDS – Cards without glitter or foil can go into the recycling bin.

• RIBBON AND BOWS – These go into the trash can.

# RESPONSE TO PLASTICS ARTICLE FROM NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

Many of my Lettuce Recycle readers contacted me about a recent story on NPR about plastic recycling. Here is the link to that story: https://www.npr.org/2020/09/11/897692090/how-big-oil-misled-the-public-into-believing-plastic-would-be-recycled. Ken Snipes, the director of Austin Resource Recovery, responded to that article. Following is the link to his response:

http://www.austintexas.gov/blog/recycling-austin-remains-resilient-during-covid-19.

# **OUESTION FROM A READER**

CAN I COMPOST OR RECYCLE DISPOSABLE MASKS? No. They are made with non-woven materials and elastic, neither of which will compost. These must go into the trash.

Here is a very informative City of Austin recycling website that offers help in finding out how to recycle specific items: http://www.austintexas.gov/what-do-i-do.

If you have any questions or recycling ideas, please send them to: recycling@hpwbana.org.

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL OF MY WONDERFUL READERS AND TO THE AWESOME NEWSLETTER EDITORS WHO PUBLISH LETTUCE RECYCLE!



Because you've been through enough. I've got it

I've got it from here.

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