



FEBRUARY 2021 VOLUME 14, ISSUE 02

A Newsletter for the Residents of Legend Oaks II



## LETTUCE RECYCLE!

by Dena Houston

### MANY NEW QUESTIONS!

Over the last few months, I have received more recycling questions than usual. I will focus this edition of “Lettuce Recycle” on those questions. As a Recycling Block Leader and author of this column, I am committed to recycling education. Please continue to send your questions and recycling ideas to: [recycling@hpwbana.org](mailto:recycling@hpwbana.org). Thank you!

• **CASH REGISTER RECEIPTS - CAN CASH REGISTER RECEIPTS GO INTO THE GREEN OR BLUE BIN?** No. Most of today’s cash register receipts are printed on thermal paper. This paper is treated with BPA, making the paper neither recyclable nor compostable. Please place these receipts in the trash can.

• **ARE CARBONLESS PAPER RECEIPTS ALSO TREATED WITH BPA?** Yes, they are. These are the duplicate receipts and invoices often given by people who do work at your home. The typical carbonless paper contains a high concentration of BPA. These receipts have to go into the trash can.

• **FOIL TOPS - ARE THE FOIL TOPS ON YOGURT, SOUR CREAM AND CREAM CHEESE RECYCLABLE?** If the tops are aluminum foil, they are recyclable providing they are clean and dry. Please be sure to have at least a 2-inch ball of foil before placing it in your blue bin.

• **HARD PLASTIC HOLDERS - ARE THE HARD PLASTIC HOLDERS ON BEER CANS RECYCLABLE?** Yes, they are.

• **LABELS AND TAPE ON CARBOARD BOXES - DO I NEED TO REMOVE TAPE AND LABELS FROM CARBOARD BOXES BEFORE THEY ARE RECYCLED?** No, tape and labels do not need to be removed before cardboard boxes go into the blue recycling bin. However, boxes do need to

be emptied of all Styrofoam and other packing material.

• **PLASTIC RECYCLING SYMBOL - WHAT IF PLASTIC HAS NO RECYCLING SYMBOL?** If a plastic container or bottle has no recycling symbol, please throw it into your trash can. Without a recycling symbol, it is impossible for the recycling center to sort and recycle it.

• **RECYCLE & REUSE DROP-OFF CENTER - IS THE RECYCLE & REUSE DROP-OFF CENTER REALLY OPEN?** The center was open, by appointment only, until December 23, 2020. It closed at that time when Austin went to COVID Stage 5. Please check the following website for the most current information: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/recycle-reuse-drop-center>

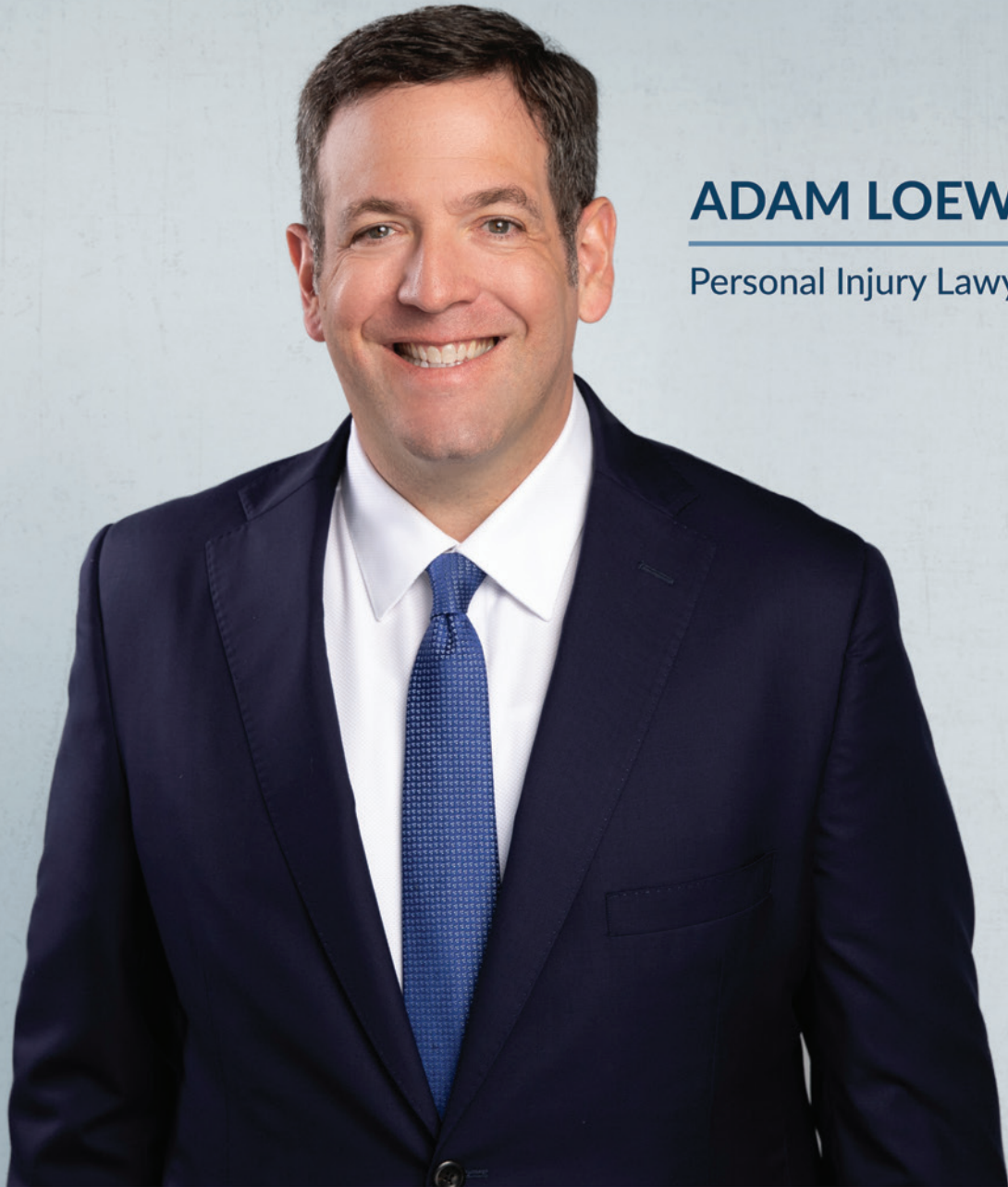
• **STYROFOAM - WHY CAN'T STYROFOAM BE PICKED UP CURBSIDE?** Styrofoam is very lightweight and takes up a lot of space. It can easily break into tiny pieces and scatter in the wind. Picking it up curbside would cause more litter pollution that is impossible to clean up. Please take your Styrofoam to the Recycle & Reuse Drop-Off Center. However, they do not take Styrofoam peanuts.

• **WHAT OTHER TYPES OF FOAM ARE RECYCLABLE?** Foam packaging, such as foam rolls, foam cushioning, foam packing sheets, and foam pouches, is also recyclable at the Recycle & Reuse Drop-Off Center.

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>.

**PLEASE REMEMBER, WHEN IN DOUBT  
THROW IT OUT!**

Bicycle Accidents | Boating Accidents | Car Accidents | Dog Bites | Drunk Driving Accidents  
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# A CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Want to bring a little culture into your life and the lives of your children? Why not try hosting a high school foreign exchange student? It's a great way to learn about a new culture all from the comfort of your home.

STS Foundation is currently looking for host families for the 2021/2022 school year. Hosting is such a rewarding experience and it benefits all of those involved.

STS Foundation accepts all types of host families – from single parents, newly marrieds, empty nesters and same sex couples. In order to host, you would need to meet the following qualifications:

- Host must be 25 years or older
- Pass a background check
- Provide food for 3 meals daily
- Ensure reliable transportation to and from school (bus is ok)
- A bed for your student
- A safe and loving home

STS Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that places foreign exchange students with American host families. For more information about hosting, please contact me at 832-455-7881 PM me or email at [vicki.stsfoundation@yahoo.com](mailto:vicki.stsfoundation@yahoo.com).

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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](mailto:advertising@PEELinc.com). The advertising deadline is the 8th of each month for the following month's newsletter.

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## NATURE WATCH

### EARLY SPRING HERALDS

by Jim and Lynne Weber

February is a time of change in Central Texas, with temperatures often ranging from the 30s to the 70s, and it is precisely these large swings in temperature that create challenges for local wildlife. Finding food is essential, and the little things like insects that emerge in early spring rely heavily on the early bloomers in our native landscape.

Elbowbush (*Forestiera pubescens*), also commonly called Stretchberry or Spring Herald, is a multi-branched deciduous shrub with smooth gray bark, long arched branches, and light green leaves. It is most conspicuous, though, in late January and early February, when small, yellow-green, petal-less flowers begin to burst in small clusters on the bare twigs. Common in open woodlands, brushy areas, and near streams, its early flowering period provides nectar for native bees and spring butterflies, namely Gray, Juniper, and Great Purple Hairstreaks. Elbowbush gets its common name from branches that typically form in right angles to one another, reminiscent of a bent elbow. It produces a quarter-inch, fleshy, dark blue fruit often devoured by wildlife in the summer, and its leaves turn a unique chartreuse color in the fall. Additionally, Elbowbush is one of the larval food plants for the Incense Cedar Sphinx (*Sphinx libocedrus*).



*Elbowbush*



*Two-flowered Anemone*

Poking their colorful blooms above the drab winter landscape are two species in the Buttercup Family, Two-flowered Anemone (*Anemone edwardsiana*) and Windflower (*Anemone berlandieri*). While both of these plants bloom from February to April, Two-flowered Anemone is an uncommon plant that is also called the Edwards Plateau Thimbleweed, since it grows only in this region of Central Texas. Windflower is common and has a more widespread range, and is often called Southern

Anemone or Tenpetal Anemone (even though it can have 10 to 20 petal-like sepals).

Two-flowered Anemone grows 6 to 12 inches tall, and is most often found on the moist banks of shaded canyons. Midway or further up the stem are three bracts, with side stems growing from those bracts, and each side stem can produce 1 to 3 flowers, with only 1 flower on the main stem. In reality, most plants carry only 2 or 3 flowers in total, each 0.5 to 1.25 inches wide and typically white, but can exhibit pink, lavender, light blue, or deep blue. In comparison, Windflower grows 6 to 15 inches tall, with low-lying leaves that are divided into three segments and are often reddish-purple on the underside. Its single stem carries only 1 flower, 0.75 to 1.5 inches wide, and it can exhibit the same range of colors as the Two-flowered Anemone.



*Windflower*

Found on the moist soils in shaded canyons in the southern half of the Hill Country, Golden Groundsel (*Packera obovate*) is a rosette-forming perennial that blooms from February to April. Slender flowering stems rise up to 18 inches above the basal rosette of oval leaves, topped with yellow flower clusters few to many-headed, with each flower 0.5 to 0.75 inches wide. Once established, this plant colonizes quickly, and can create an early-blooming, evergreen ground cover in shady, woodland areas.

Why not plant some of these early bloomers in your landscape, as they not only provide early nectar for bees and butterflies, but they are also welcoming heralds of our coming 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).



*Golden Groundsel*



## IT'S TIME TO CLEAN HOUSE

*By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center*

If you provide “rental property” for Purple Martins, then you know it’s time to clean out your houses to get ready for their arrival.

The first Martins to arrive are referred to as the “Scouts” and they are the oldest birds. Older females arrive next followed by the younger birds. Martins will return to the same colony site where they resided the previous year. Once they arrive, nest-building will begin in 4 to 6 weeks. They use twigs, pine needles and straw. Once the nest is complete, they add a layer of green leaves. Ornithologists can only guess why they do this but think the leaves may act as an insecticide, may help keep the nest clean or help regulate the temperature and moisture levels. The female lays one egg per day for a total of 2 to 8 eggs. In about 15 days, the eggs begin to hatch which can take 2 to 3 days. Babies are fed up to 60 times a day by both moms and dads.

It takes 2 years for Martins to acquire their full adult plumage. Purple Martins aren’t really purple. Mature Martins are a glossy deep blue—almost black-looking. They feed mostly on flying insects and can eat thousands of mosquitoes in a day. They catch most of the insects in mid-air and even drink water from ponds, lakes and streams while flying.

If you’ve never had a Purple Martin house and you’d like to get one, there are some things you need to know. You’ve heard realtors talk about “location, location, location?” As a Purple Martin landlord, this holds true as well. They prefer large, open areas where the nearest building is a minimum of 30 feet away and from 25 to 60 feet away from trees. Make sure your house is secure and doesn’t spin around when it’s windy out. The birds can become disoriented.

You may be lucky and get renters your first year. Sometimes it takes a couple of years for them to discover your house. There are a couple of things you can do to increase your success. One website I checked suggested playing Purple Martin vocalizations near your Martin house very early in the morning. There are several recordings on YouTube. You can also place life-sized black decoys on your house. If you have a large house with several compartments, you can construct a fake nest in one of them. Don’t forget to put green leaves on the top of the nest.

You should protect your Martin houses with predator guards. You can purchase owl and hawk guards. Predator baffles, or pole guards, will help keep snakes and raccoons from climbing the pole.

In late fall, you can take your Martin house down and put it back up when the Martins return in the spring. The other option is that you can leave it up but make sure you clean it well and block the entrances so other species of birds don’t move in. Remove the blockages in spring when the Martins return.

TWRC Wildlife Center is gearing up for another busy year. Because of Covid-19 we’ve had to cut back on volunteers to work at our Center but we are in need of volunteers who would like to learn to rehabilitate wildlife in their homes. We train you and help you every step of the way. Rehabbing wildlife is the most rewarding thing you will ever do. [www.twrcwildlifecenter.org](http://www.twrcwildlifecenter.org). 713.468.TWRC





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