

HABITAT HERALD

Wildlife Austin's monthly Newsletter



April 2014



Wildlife Austin

City of Austin
Parks and Recreation
919 W. 28 1/2 St.
Austin, TX 78705
(512) 978-2606
wildlife@austintexas.gov

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 3-Dealing With Drought in the Landscape Series: Healthy Lawns, 10A-12P, <http://austintexas.gov/event/dealing-drought-landscape-series-healthy-lawns>

April 7-Free Composting Class, Hampton Branch Library at Oak Hill, 6P-7P, <http://austintexas.gov/event/free-composting-class-hampton-branch-library-oak-hill>

April 12-Free Composting Class, SFC Farmers' Market at Sunset Valley, 9:30A-10:30A, <http://austintexas.gov/event/free-composting-class-sfc-farmers-market-sunset-valley-0>

April 23-Free Composting Class, SFC Farmers' Market at the Triangle, 6P-7P, <http://austintexas.gov/event/free-composting-class-sfc-farmers-market-triangle-0>

April 24-Celebrate the Earth! The Kitchen Diva! Farm Feast Dinner, 6P-9P, <http://austintexas.gov/event/celebrate-earth-kitchen-diva-farm-feast-dinners>

April 29-Free Composting Class, Ruiz Branch Library, 6P-7P, <http://austintexas.gov/event/free-composting-class-ruiz-branch-library>

April 30-Free Composting Class, City Hall, 6:30P-7:30P, <http://austintexas.gov/event/free-composting-class-city-hall-2>

Hello Everyone,

I hope that you are all enjoying the lovely spring weather so far this season. With April comes quite a few Earth Day celebrations!

Please check out some of the upcoming events.

With spring also comes the opportunity to begin planting. As part of your planting plan you may want to know more about the City of Austin Community Garden plan. Please check out our informational flyer located on page 6 for more details. Also, please keep in mind that wildlife may be put at risk when uncovering your pools. In our "Living in the WUI" section you can find a great article by our Park Ranger Julie Webber.

Enjoy!

In This Issue...

Garden of the Month	2
Living in a WUI	3
Schoolyard Habitat	4
Starting Your Own Community Garden	6

Would you like to receive the newsletter?

E-mail us at wildlife@austintexas.gov

Garden of the Month

This month's Garden of the Month is not a garden but a forest — a food forest! Food forests have been around for centuries, with some in northeast Africa dating back over 2,000 years. Although the concept of a food forest is not new the term “food forest” was first used by organic gardener Robert Hart in the 1980s. Food forests are created by planting native edible plants and trees in a “naturalized” setting, or one that mimics how a forest would naturally be structured. Generally, food forests are open to the public and provide free fruits, nuts, seeds, and vegetables to the community. There are plans to eventually install a food forest in the Festival Beach area which would not only help link many eastside communities but also provide a way for people to safely explore the outdoors and increase their consumption of fresh local produce. For more information on this Food Forest please visit <http://eastfeast2022.wordpress.com/rbj-community-forest-garden/>.



Would you like to share your yard with other gardeners? If so please write to wildlife@austintexas.gov for more details!

Living in a WUI Without All the Hooey

Wildlife in pools

Austin is heating up, and those city residents with private swimming pools are probably preparing for the first backyard swimming sessions of the summer. As you prepare your pool for use, keep in mind that it may not just be humans looking forward to taking a dip to escape the heat. Squirrels and other small mammals, snakes, frogs often find themselves stuck in swimming pools, unable to climb up slick steep edges and stairs. In other parts of the country, people have even found moose and bears swimming in their pools! With continuing drought conditions and scarce water sources in nature areas, wildlife may turn to your pool as a source of water, for drinking or for bathing. Pool chemicals are toxic for animals to drink (or even touch, in the case of amphibians).

Providing a clean, fresh water source as part of your backyard wildlife habitat gives animals other options for fresh water and can help keep them away from your swimming pool. You can provide simple escape routes for wildlife that may fall into a pool by placing a floating platform with a ramp when the pool is unattended. A piece of netting hanging over the edge of the pool can also provide an escape route for climbing animals. Small “kiddie pools” can be covered when not in use. With a little effort, we can help make summer pool season safer for our wildlife neighbors. ~ Park Ranger Julie Webber





Schoolyard Habitat Update



Schoolyard Habitats: Clint Small Middle School

The Green Tech Academy at Clint Small Middle School has transformed their school grounds from a barren landscape to vibrant forests, gardens, and native plantings. Students in the Green Tech Academy work daily to maintain and expand the school grounds. Clint Small is a model campus in AISD for making sustainability and environmental education a priority. If you walk the grounds, you will see key hole gardens, a peace garden, a labyrinth, several ponds, an outdoor classroom, a wildlife corridor across the sports fields, hydroponics, a greenhouse, a chicken coop, pollinator gardens and vegetable gardens, as well as a functioning compost and greenhouse. Small MS will be hosting their annual plant sale on April 10 and 11 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and April 19 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Plants for sale include but are not limited to: Texas Red Bud, Mexican Plum, Fragrant Mimosa (in bloom), Possumhaw, Yaupon Holly, Wax Myrtle, Anacacho Orchid (in bloom), Crossvine (in bloom), Montezuma Cypress, Monterey Oak, Red Yucca (in bloom), Twist Leaf Yucca, Manfreda (in bloom), Gulf Muhly, Lindheimer Muhly, Inland Sea Oats, Blue Eyed Grass (in bloom), White Coneflower, Purple Coneflower (in bloom), Cedar Sage, Salvia Cleavelandii, Snake Herb, Red Columbine, Wedelia, Fluttermills, Datura, Texas Betony, Chocolate Daisy, Texas Rock Rose (in bloom), Apache Plume (in bloom), Chili Pequin, Arroyo Sweetwood

Schoolyard Habitat Success Depends on
Volunteers Like You!

Volunteer Opportunities:

April 5

8-12 Oak Hill ES
10-12 Cunningham ES

April 12

9-12 Blazier ES
8-12 Oak Hill ES Open House
10-12 Cunningham ES

April 26

8:00 am Hill ES

Anne Muller AISD Outdoor Learning
Specialist amuller@austinisd.org or 841-
5070





Schoolyard Habitat Update



Donations Needed!

Campuses are looking for donations of the following materials for spring workdays:

- Compost, mulch and soil
- Native seeds, plants, shrubs and trees
- Tools
- 4 inch pots
- Limestone blocks
- Cedar logs
- Decomposed Granite
- Bird Feeders and/or bird seed





Interested in starting a community garden on city-owned land, such as a park?

The City of Austin has made it a priority to support urban agriculture because of its ability to provide nutritious food, promote sustainability, reduce energy needs, contribute to food security, and support the local economy. The Sustainable Urban Agriculture & Community Garden (SUACG) program was created to help Austinites gain access to city-owned land to start community gardens.

In order to start a garden on city land, you must get an “endorsement” from the SUACG program. The following items are required to apply to become an endorsed community garden program and obtain a City of Austin Garden Permit:

- *Written description of the proposed garden, including why the particular site has been identified and what the mission of the garden is in relationship to community needs
- *List of steering committee members and their contact information as well as a list of committed gardeners (minimum of four)
- *Design sketch for the garden, to include location and size of all trees in garden area
- *Garden By-laws or Rules
- *Sample contract or membership agreement for individual gardeners
- *Project Timeline, including steps taken to date
- *Budget & Fundraising Plan for first year
- *Sponsoring nonprofit (often the Sustainable Food Center!), demonstrated by a letter of support or memorandum of understanding
- *Letter of support from Neighborhood Association that contains the garden site
- *Letters of endorsement from neighbors (owners and renters) and key stakeholders (e.g. schools, churches, park users)

Contact: Meredith Gray, Community Gardens Coordinator: Meredith.Gray@austintexas.gov

Visit our website at: <http://austintexas.gov/department/sustainable-urban-agriculture>

2014 NEIGHBORHOOD HABITAT CHALLENGE

City of Austin and the National Wildlife Federation challenge your Neighborhood to create homes for wildlife by taking the HABITAT CHALLENGE for POLLINATOR GARDENS!

Jester Estates, Windsor Park, Bouldin Creek, Crestview, Copperfield, Mueller, and other Austin neighborhoods have risen to the NEIGHBORHOOD HABITAT CHALLENGE. This year make your neighborhood a **Winner for Wildlife!**



Take the Challenge, it's easy ...

1. Provide these habitat basics:

*** Provide Water Sources**

A key element for a variety of pollinators

*** Provide Food**

Pollinators need a diversity of nectar/pollen sources

*** Safeguard Pollinator Habitat**

Remove or prevent invasive plants, avoid pesticides

*** Provide Shelter**

Pollinators need places to nest and to overwinter

2. Neighborhood participates in a community habitat project such as removing invasive plants, planting trees, restoring a creek area, or planting a neighborhood butterfly garden.

3. An article about the habitat challenge is published in neighborhood newsletter and/or website.

4. Neighbors certify their properties with the National Wildlife Federation at www.nwf.org/ Garden for wildlife or with a COA pre-paid application by November 15, 2014.

5. Celebrate! The top three neighborhoods that complete all the requirements and certify the most new habitats between April 15th and November 15th, 2014 will be recognized by the City of Austin and eligible for prizes.

To request a pre-paid habitat certification application or for contest details contact the

Wildlife Austin program: 512-978-2606 or <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/wildlife-austin>

