

# HABITAT HERALD

Wildlife Austin's monthly Newsletter



VOL 1 . ISSUE 4

## Wildlife Austin

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Parks and Recreation  
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[www.KeepAustinWild.com](http://www.KeepAustinWild.com)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**July 4th** - Happy Independence Day! Free fireworks:  
[www.austinsymphony.org/events/austinsymphony-july-4th-concert-fireworks/](http://www.austinsymphony.org/events/austinsymphony-july-4th-concert-fireworks/)

**July 5th** - Wildflower Center Nature Nights:  
The Power of Plants!  
[www.wildflower.org/nature/](http://www.wildflower.org/nature/)

**July 7th** - Texas Tree Round Up: Free Tree ID Workshop  
[www.treeroundup.org/participate/workshop\\_results.php](http://www.treeroundup.org/participate/workshop_results.php)

**July 12th** - Wildflower Center Nature Nights:  
Birds of Prey  
[www.wildflower.org/nature/](http://www.wildflower.org/nature/)

**July 19th** - WFC Nature Nights: Bats  
[www.wildflower.org/nature/](http://www.wildflower.org/nature/)

**July 21st** - TreeFolks Urban Forest Steward Program classes begin. To register:  
<http://treefolks.org/ufs/>

**July 26th** - WFC Nature Nights: Snakes

**July 28th** - Mueller Presents: Psycho Lights and the Plants Who Love It!  
For more info contact  
[Janelle Dozier](mailto:Janelle.Dozier)

**July 28th** - Texas Tree Round Up: Free Workshop  
[www.treeroundup.org/participate/workshop\\_results.php](http://www.treeroundup.org/participate/workshop_results.php)

## JULY 2012



### The Elderhaven Issue!



Greetings everyone! Wildlife Austin is very happy and proud to feature the newly installed wildlife habitat garden at the Austin Groups for the Elderly (AGE) Elderhaven Adult Day Center. This garden has been an amazing collaborative effort led by the Travis Audubon Urban Habitat Committee—particularly Habitat Steward Lynn Hill.



Lynn in her natural habitat

This issue of the Habitat Herald features an article by AGE Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator Amanda Lyles about the Elderhaven project with lots of wonderful pictures! To learn more about AGE of Austin visit:

[www.ageofaustin.org](http://www.ageofaustin.org)

This truly is a wonderful organization and they are always looking for volunteers and support! This project will continue on in the fall, if you would like to volunteer in the garden e-mail us:

[wildlife@austintexas.gov](mailto:wildlife@austintexas.gov)



(from L to R) Elderhaven Program Director Stephanie Hoffman, volunteer Robert, Urban Habitat Committee Members Ashley Williams and Sue Anderson, and volunteer Mike Cord

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## Notes from Erin



Greetings everyone! I just wanted to let you all know that the City has officially updated City code to be more wildlife habitat friendly! They have created an affirmative defense for people who have grasses more than 12 inches tall as long as your yard is certified as a wildlife habitat! This also includes areas adjacent to a stream or waterway, and any city park or preserve land.

This is a big step for Austin, and it puts us miles ahead of many other major metropolitan areas! As many of you know, many of our native grasses naturally grow taller than 12 inches, and this change allows you to keep them that way! Congrats Austin!



# Focus on Austin Wildlife

## Austin Wildlife Rescue

By Susan Edwards

Austin Wildlife Rescue, Inc. is a small non-profit organization that has the mission of rescue, rehabilitate and release of all wildlife that has been injured or orphaned. We depend on the public in the greater Austin area to bring the animal to our intake facility that is located at 5401 E. Martin Luther King Blvd. The hours of operation are 9:00 am – 4:00 pm for intakes and the office stays open until 6:00pm. The facility is open seven days a week and on holidays for your convenience. Please feel free to call us at any time of the day or night at 472-9453.

The majority of the wildlife that is brought to us on a daily basis are Raccoons, Opossums, Squirrels, Porcupines, Birds and Raptors. Many of these are injured while others are victims of being orphaned through improper trapping procedures or the mothers being killed for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. We will raise approximately 300 baby opossums, 150 raccoons and up to 900 baby birds throughout the Spring and Summer. Without the assistance of licensed Rehabilitators and the Veterinarians that are associated with each one, our mission would be an impossible one. Animals are picked



up from the Center by the associated Rehabber and taken to their independent facility to continue the weeks and possible months of rehabilitation that will lead to the proper release. All of our release sites are provided to the State to guarantee that the released will have appropriate acreage, food sources and ample water for survival. We never want to overpopulate our release sites.

Without the assistance of the public that takes so much time of their day to bring the animals to the Center, we would never be able reach so many victims and assist them in their return to Nature. It is a lot of hard work, countless hours and yet is the most rewarding job in the world. Our Volunteers are so important to us and love the ability to learn so much about the needs of each animal that they encounter. Thanks to all of our wonderful supporters, volunteers and the public.

To learn more check out their website at [www.austinwildliferescue.org](http://www.austinwildliferescue.org)!

*Susan Edwards is the Center Manager for the Austin Wildlife Rescue*

# Focus on Keeping Austin Beautiful!

## 140 students, 1 day of service, and nature at its best!

By Monica Lopez Magee

Before the bell rang for summer 140 students from Kiker Elementary School returned for another year of service. The fourth grade classes split up to explore and lend a hand at Convict Hill Quarry Park and at Austin Wildlands' Slaughter Creek greenbelt.

Upon arriving at Austin Wildlands a meadow of wildflowers greeted students. Along the trail bobcat scat was spotted, brown grasshoppers were caught and released, and milkweed seeds parachuted in the air. Down by the creek students identified dobsonfly and mayfly larvae, and observed a molting dragonfly to determine if the creek was clean or polluted. Later, with muddy hands, students lined up to toss seedballs to reseed the meadows they had enjoyed exploring.

At Convict Hill Quarry Park, students swept in with native shade plants, weed wrenches to remove ligustrum, throwing arms for seedball distribution, and keen eyes to spot litter and cigarette butts throughout the park. While the rain delayed our arrival, it helped us to see just how many seedballs from last year had burst open to add native co-reopsis, indian blanket, and black-eyed susan's amongst the grasses. Students even got a chance to see a baby fox on the scavenger hunt, understanding just how important these preserves are to our wonderful Austin wildlife.

The restoration projects are part of the Clean Creek Campus program that fosters environmental stewardship through hands-on activities and service projects. Clean Creek Campus is a partnership between the City of Austin, Watershed Protection Department and Keep Austin Beautiful. Great job Kiker Elementary!



*Monica Lopez Magee is the Education Program Coordinator for Keep Austin Beautiful*



# Garden of the Month



*This month we are happy to feature the newly-installed garden at the Elderhaven Adult Day Center! Read on to learn the story of this garden....*

If you are walking along the sidewalk that lines Cedar Street and pass the corner at 35<sup>th</sup> Street on weekday mornings, you might be interested in the group of elderly men and women sitting together in the yard, under the trellised roof of a wooden gazebo. They sit at the south end of the sprawling fenced lawn, which sits on one corner of the historic AGE Building. Birds chirp overhead, the morning air is cool and the sun is shining. The serenity is infectious and it is easy to smile as a wave from one of these older folks comes your way. Also noticeable is the size, almost 3,000 square feet, and the beauty of the yard. There are potted plants, colorful blooms, looming sunflowers, and birdbaths that adorn the yard, and a gravel pathway leads to a secluded meditation garden on the side of the building.



The butterfly Section of the garden

The elderly folks sitting outside are members of AGE of Central Texas Adult Day Health Center (Elderhaven) which is one of only two adult day centers in Central Texas, and the AGE building is its home. Members are picked up by the AGE van or brought by their family members during the weekdays. Many are working caregivers and need a place to bring their parents, grandparents, or spouses during the day so that they are safe, healthy, happy, and stimulated. AGE of Central Texas Adult Day Health Centers provides these things so that older people, and those with dementia and other disabilities, do not need to go into nursing home care prematurely, but can instead remain with their families and in their communities.

Since AGE adopted the adult day center from Lutheran Social Services in the late 1980's, community groups, churches, schools and corporations have come to AGE for volunteer projects, donating time and money to the garden efforts, and working together in team-building activities to enhance and improve the grounds, the experiences of the members of the adult day center. Through their work, they grow as civic groups. Volunteers from St. David's Foundation, Promiseland Baptist Church, and the Eagle Scouts, to name just a few, have contributed hours of time to weeding the garden beds, watering the plants, and planting new life in the gardens.

Community support is not new to AGE, but something very special began to unfold in the Fall of 2011: the planning and implementation of a multi-phase plan to add to the garden and create a certified wildlife habitat. It was a certain synchronicity in the vision, dedication, and financial support of a number of individuals and groups that have brought this to fruition.

As the program director of the Adult Day Center in Central Austin, Stephanie Hoffman has always remained attentive to the things that make her members happy. One day in the Fall of 2011, she realized that for some time, some of her members had been focused on the lone birdhouse at the outer wall of the facility's building. "I thought that we needed more



Elderhaven Members (L-R) Pat Boyt, Anne White, and Phyllis Lane enjoying the garden!

birdhouses, something that is going to stimulate clients emotionally and cognitively," she remembers. When Hoffman received a phone call from a representative from the City of Austin LEAPS (Leadership Education Public Service) program a few weeks later asking for ideas for a project that they could plan as a group, she suggested building bird houses.

Representatives from Urban Habitat Committee of the Travis Audubon Society, whose offices are located in the AGE Building, had taken notice of the garden for some time, and discussions began to include them. According to Hoffman, it was in these first conversations that the question was asked, "What is it going to take for us to have a certified habitat?"

As these individuals and their respective organizations, including folks from the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department/Wildlife Austin, began to create the habitat plan at the end of 2011, there were several central



One of the newly installed birdhouses

factors that guided the discourse and planning.





Member Pat Boyt looks right at home!

Building an environmentally sustainable and economically sensible habitat meant that native Texas plants were chosen. Careful consideration of the four factors that the National Wildlife Federation looks for in certifying a habitat (providing food, water, shelter, and a place for raising young) influenced everything from the selection of the berry bushes to the placement of birdhouses. At the forefront of the planning was always the positive impact of the environment on the older adults who attend. Lynn Hill, one of the Urban Habitat

Committee members leading the project said, "My mother lives in a retirement home in Michigan and it is beautifully landscaped, and I know that means so much to the residents to have a beautiful place to be."

With the leadership of the Travis Audubon Society, the LEAPS program, Wildlife Austin, the City of Austin Park Rangers and numerous local businesses, individuals, corporations and community groups who donated plants, supplies and labor, Phase One and most of Phase Two are complete, with an application for certification to the National Wildlife Federation submitted. Phase Three of the habitat plan will extend these habitats to the rest of the AGE Building. Adult Day Center members



Member Anne White shows off the Monarch area of the garden

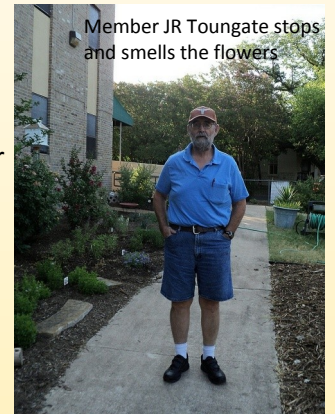
have been directly involved, helping to paint ceramic plant markers to mark the over 35 species of native Texas plants that will eventually occupy the beds. Meredith O'Reilly, the Urban Habitat Steward who led the plant marker project, described the activity, "It was an absolute pleasure to see the smiles and artistic talents of the AGE clients who created very special and purposeful art for the garden."



One of the newly made garden markers

AGE of Central Texas will open its Adult Day Health Center Garden for families on the last Wednesday of the month of May for the first-ever Concert for Caregivers, and there are plans to bring

City of Austin Park Rangers to the gardens to engage members in activities related to wildlife. Anybody strolling through the neighborhood will continue to see these older folks outside engaged in discussion groups and enjoying the weather, amidst the fluttering of butterflies and chirping of birds that will keep growing around them. To learn more join us on [www.facebook.com/ageofaustin](http://www.facebook.com/ageofaustin) or at our website [www.ageofaustin.org](http://www.ageofaustin.org). Contact Age of Central Texas at **512.451.4611** to learn more about our services or join us for a tour.



Member JR Toungate stops and smells the flowers

*By Amanda Lyles - AGE Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator*



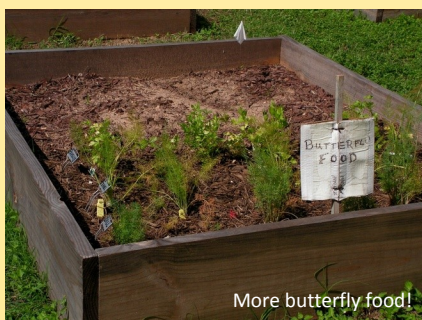
Rapidly growing Pavonia!



Beautiful cedar trellis



Butterfly puddling area and path

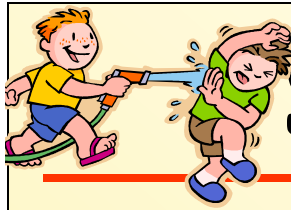


More butterfly food!



Texas Frogfruit





# Schoolyard Habitat Update



By Anne Muller (AISD Outdoor Learning Specialist)

## Spotlight Campus: Gus Garcia Middle School

Students rock at Garcia Middle School! From habitat design, to moving rocks and soil around and planning and implementing the ribbon cutting ceremony- they've done it all! Garcia is one of the 2011-2012 Certified National Wildlife Federation Habitats.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER!**

### The Garden is Magical

The garden is magical in every which way,  
Go there and release stress on any needed day.  
The garden is magical go there and clear your mind,  
Looking for peace the garden shall surely find.

The garden is magical a place for peace,  
Once you get there your problems have seized.  
The garden is magical, it's a beautiful sight,  
A place where you'll actually enjoy the sunlight.

*8th Grader- Garcia Middle School*



Photo by Monica Lopez Magee

### Looking for volunteer opportunities?

For more information contact  
Anne Muller:  
[amuller@austinisd.org](mailto:amuller@austinisd.org)  
or 512-841-5070

## Tips for Living Green

By Dale Bulla

In urban areas, exposed surfaces like roofs, sidewalks and especially roads absorb energy from the sun throughout the day and then hold it so efficiently that it isn't able to fully dissipate overnight. So the following morning it is able to absorb even more energy which, again it isn't able to dissipate, etc.. The result is that urban areas average much warmer temperatures in the summer. This is known as the Urban Heat Island Effect. It results in higher water usage, compromised human health and comfort due to heat stress and much higher energy use. Since most of our energy comes from burning fossil fuels (which create pollution and greenhouse gases) the extra air conditioning actually creates more heat due to the greenhouse effect. Placing trees in positions so that they will grow to shade pavement is one of the easiest, least expensive and most effective ways to combat the Urban Heat Island Effect and otherwise enhance the beauty and value of a neighborhood. The NeighborWoods program is designed to do that.

NeighborWoods, sponsored by Austin Energy, sends TreeFolks staff throughout entire neighborhoods with a set of criteria for placing trees for the maximum benefit but without interfering with utilities. When an opportunity to place a tree is spotted a flag is placed in the spot identified and an order form is left with the adjacent property owner. The order form explains the program and offers the potential participant a menu of trees to choose from. The participant fills out an attached, postage-paid card ordering the trees and agreeing to plant and water them until they are established. TreeFolks then delivers the trees to participants' doors with detailed planting and care instructions. Over four thousand of these trees are delivered every year. The program is completely free to participants. The trees will be 5 gallon in size and may need to be caged if deer are a problem for you. You can sign up now to receive your free tree this fall. If you have questions about the Neighborwoods Program, contact Tree Folks at [www.treefolks.org](http://www.treefolks.org) or call 512-443-5323.





Would YOU like to receive the the Wildlife Austin newsletter electronically?

Simply e-mail us at [wildlife@austintexas.gov](mailto:wildlife@austintexas.gov)!



Keep Austin Beautiful is a wonderful organization that “inspires and educates individuals and the community towards greater environmental stewardship”. There isn’t a much better goal than that! If you are looking for fun and meaningful volunteer opportunities check out their website:

[www.keepeaustinbeautiful.org](http://www.keepeaustinbeautiful.org)

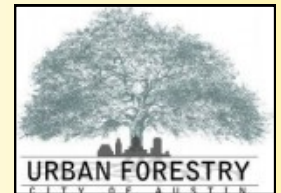
# Tree of the Year

Austin’s Tree of the Year Award was created in March 2007 to identify and recognize outstanding trees within the city limits of Austin that are most valuable and unique to this area. Each year, these beautiful and healthy trees provide Austinites with examples of the benefits of proper tree selection, care and placement. Austin’s Tree of the Year Award promotes and raises awareness about the many benefits and beauty of Austin’s urban forest by recognizing one exceptional tree each year.

In addition to the annual Tree of the Year award, special recognition for a Community Tree of the Year may be given. To be considered for this award you must\_ nominate your tree and demonstrate how your tree supports, promotes and creates community. To learn more of to nominate your favorite tree visit:



[treefolks.org/2012/06/austin-tree-of-the-year-award/](http://treefolks.org/2012/06/austin-tree-of-the-year-award/)



“Like”

[Austin Parks and Recreation](#) on Facebook and look for the Wildlife Austin posts!



The City of Austin is proud to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you require assistance for participation in our programs or use of our facilities, please call (512) 974-6700.