

In the Shade

**NEWSLETTER OF THE ISA TEXAS CHAPTER
LATE WINTER 2023**



Texas Chapter
International Society
of Arboriculture



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From the President

Welcome to the new year, y'all. Time is flying by, in large part because we're so busy. The ISA Texas Board of Directors and Executives have been very busy planning a jam-packed year.

We recently had our Board Retreat, where we met to create our annual plan and determine our goals for the year. One of the things we keep coming back to is membership. ISA Texas has almost 1,500 members, but there are around 500 Certified Arborists in Texas who are not members. Why aren't they members? What are we not doing that would make it worth their while to give us their \$45 annually?

Every current member should have received a member survey. Please fill that out and let us know why you're a member and what we're doing right, but also tell us what we are missing. We really do want to know what we could be doing better; we're not satisfied to rest on our laurels.

We're continuing with all of our great educational offerings – TRAQ and TRAQ renewal, TX Oak Wilt and Wildfire Risk Reduction qualifications, and our annual Texas Tree Conference are in the planning process. In addition to our regular offerings, the education committee has been hard at work putting together an incredible Masters' Series workshop with Frank Rinn and Chris Luley, "Decay, Testing, Biology, and Mechanics." All you ever wanted to know about testing for decay, identifying decay and how that decay affects the safety of the tree. Members get early access to sign up, so don't let your membership lapse.

See you in the trees,

Rebecca

“

In the depth of winter, I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer.”

— Albert Camus

In the Shade

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Texas Chapter International Society of Arboriculture

Are you a Chapter member? If not, go to www.isatexas.com and join today!

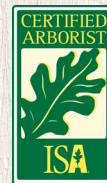
Chapter member benefits include:

- **Publications:** In The Shade, a bi-monthly printed newsletter
- **Email Update:** TreEmail, a monthly calendar of tree events and important tree news
- **Networking and Promotional Opportunities:** Texas Tree Conference, Texas Tree Climbing Championship, Arbor Day and other events
- **Discounts:** Discounts on Texas Chapter seminars, workshops, and conferences
- **Online Learning:** Monthly/bi-monthly educational webinars created by the Chapter

Certification Exams

February 17, 2023—

Austin, TX



March 31, 2023—

Houston, TX

More info at ISATexas.com



Texas Chapter
International Society
of Arboriculture



On the Cover

Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) berries sparkle in the Winter afternoon.

Editor's Note



Greetings, fellow Tree People! Woo Hoo—it's February 2023!! As the year comes to an end (and our HVAC systems—bless their hearts—are struggling with the temperature fluctuations... here on the Gulf Coast, I'll turn on the heater one day and need the air conditioning the next), it's time to reflect on 2022. Be sure to spend some time alone in the forest to think and enjoy the stillness of Winter.

In the meantime, you'll find tree-related goodies in this issue, including "Helping Today's Trees Survive Tomorrow" on page 8 and the "Beatitudes Prayer Walk" project on page 14.

Be sure to "leaf" through the rest of this issue for Upcoming Events and other goodies. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue and to those out there reading it. Enjoy the cooler weather!

Sincerely,

Heather McKnight

Poison Ivy/Poison Oak Reminder:

Even though it's Winter (and there are no leaves on Poison Ivy and Poison Oak), remember that the Urushiol in the woody vines and roots is still active. If you can't positively identify the vine, don't touch it.





TREE PLANTING COMPETITION

Teams are invited to participate in the 2023 Tree Planting Competition. Each team can have 11 people (one captain) & will properly plant 100 small trees. Event is open to all experience levels & is age appropriate for teens & older.

Awards will go to the top 3 fastest teams.

This opportunity is free, teams will need to register by Feb. 28th.

Event will be held rain or shine on Saturday March 4, 2023 10 am -12 pm

Curtis M Graves Stormwater Detention Basin - 6400 Homestead Rd. 77028

If you would like to participate or have any questions, please contact: Mickey Merritt
713-688-8932 mmerritt@tfs.tamu.edu

New Members

Roger Armendariz.....Carrollton TX
 Zachary Thomas CastroHelotes TX
 Scott Cohen.....Rancho Santa Fe CA
 Joseph D'AilleboustStafford TX
 Amelia Jane DeVivoAustin TX
 Stephen DodsonDallas TX
 Roy DuranLubbock TX
 Robert John Enzman.....Arlington TX
 Eric Gore.....Cedar Park TX
 Justin R. JelacicKitchener ON
 Jeffery JenkinsCaddo Mills TX
 Douglas Lane.....Georgetown TX
 Gavin Tyler LehdeCollege Station TX
 Mr. Luis LemusAnchorage AK
 Noe Lemus.....Garland TX
 David LopezSpringtown TX
 Adolfo MaldonadoGarland TX
 Joseph Marks.....Universal City TX
 Michael John MaxonForney TX
 Jeremy Wayne McCombsModesto CA
 Jacob Menken.....Arlington TX
 Najwa MoghniehHouston TX
 Luis OcampoSan Antonio TX
 Pete Carlos OrtizDallas TX
 Marybeth ParsonsSan Antonio TX
 Max PinedoHouston TX
 Layla Prestwood.....Austin TX
 Jacqueline Romeyn.....Port Aransas TX
 Rebecca Setliff.....Georgetown TX
 Ty Hunter Stonecipher.....New Braunfels TX
 Jennifer Szuchia SunCarrollton TX
 Ron TaylorAnna TX
 Rudy Esau Ramirez Urizar Waller TX

Newly Certified Members

Certification Type

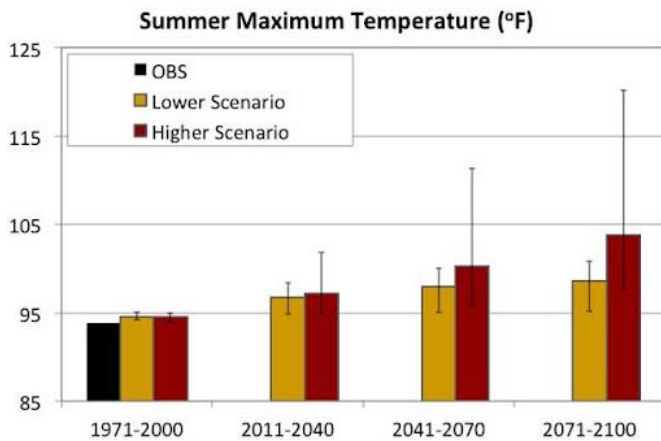
Daniel Shaw.....BCMA Houston TX
 Doug Deskin CA Bastrop TX
 Eric Hollenbeck CA Kingwood TX
 Francisco Bello..... CA Jarrell TX
 Gustavo Pernaletе..... CA Georgetown TX
 Justin Krobot..... CA Municipal Specialist . New Braunfels TX
 Logan Slaughter CA Dallas TX
 Matthew Hafkesbring.... CA Burleson TX
 Miguel Teveni..... BCMA San Antonio TX
 Myles Cooley..... CA Austin TX
 Osuel Castillo Paz..... CA Rio Hondo TX
 Randa Homann..... CA Arlington TX
 Robert Enzman CA Arlington TX
 Rodolfo Delbosque..... CA Rockwall TX
 Shaun Sykes CA Oklahoma City OK
 Skyler Stanworth..... CA JarrellTX
 Soren Andrews..... CA Denton TX
 Virginia Deden..... CA Houston TX



Helping Today's Trees Survive Tomorrow

by Keith Babberney, Education Forester for the Development Services Community Tree Preservation Division, City of Austin.

As arborists, our customers often look to us for guidance on how to manage their trees. We study biology, proper pruning, and diagnosis to help each tree reach its full potential. But how many of us consider climate predictions in our decision making? It's easy to take our trees for granted. We must be careful to avoid this if we want to continue enjoying a healthy urban forest in coming decades. Climate experts have forecast significant changes in our average temperatures, rainfall, and major weather events. Our trees may struggle to adapt and survive in the new conditions.



Experts predict higher summer temperatures in our area in future decades.

Change is coming

There will be significant changes to our climate statewide for the foreseeable future. The City of Austin partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Climate Hubs in 2020 to assess the vulnerability of Austin's urban forests and natural areas to climate change. The USDA report warns we will see increases in temperature of five to ten degrees Fahrenheit over the next century. Rainfall patterns may vary seasonally from what we historically have expected. Similar changes are predicted across the state. As a result, our favorite plants may struggle to survive. We will probably see a changes in hardiness zones. Some tree species will be better able to adapt to these changes than others.

City land managers and State urban foresters are already taking climate changes into account in their decisions. Often, this involves large projects with big budgets. For people who want to help but don't have resources for major projects, there are some simple steps we can suggest. Below are some ideas to share with clients that we can all use in our own lawns and neighborhoods so future generations of Texans will be able to enjoy the benefits of a healthy urban forest.

What can we do?

There are some simple ways to help preserve our urban forests that don't require a huge effort or expense. These are things we already do, for the most part. The goal now is to be more aware and deliberate about doing them consistently. Predicted changes to our climate should guide us as we manage existing sites and plan for new development. Below are some goals to consider and some strategies that can help us reach them:

Increase Diversity

We love to plant trees, but we need to be thoughtful about what species we choose. Diversity of species, lifespan, and mature size are all important. The species we choose should be native to the site or adaptable to the conditions there. Sometimes, we may have to guess how a given tree will respond to hotter, drier weather or how it can handle the type of soil where it is planted. Our goal as we move forward should be to try a range of species, even within the same site. This will increase our chances that at least some of the trees we plant will be successful over the long term.

Here are some ways to take diversity into account as we plant new trees and landscapes:

Avoid planting the most common species nearby. If every tree in an area is the same species, we risk losing them all to one problem as stressful conditions become more prevalent. For example, some northern cities lined their streets with American elms, then lost them all to Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970s. They replanted with only ash trees. Then they lost all of these trees to Emerald Ash Borer in the early 2000s. Planting a diverse mix of species would allow us to avoid this same mistake. If an outbreak of disease or pests occurs, we can retain some tree benefits while we replace any lost or damaged specimens.

(continued...)



Above: A street in Ohio was lined with healthy ash trees in 2006. In 2009, they were all killed by emerald ash borer. Photos by Daniel A. Herms, The Ohio State University.

Choose new species from places where soil and other conditions are similar. A tree that thrives along the banks of a stream or river will probably struggle on a rocky hilltop. Species that have flourished in areas similar to your site conditions will have a good chance to survive there. Of course, with the hotter climate, they still might struggle. Look to hotter, drier places with the same soil type and conditions for species that can tolerate the changes. There is risk inherent in this strategy, unfortunately. The species we bring from other places could become invasive and crowd out the plants that historically have grown here. We will need to monitor results carefully and develop new species recommendations as we see how different trees perform.

Create communities of plants instead of isolated specimens. Plants often form harmonious relationships together. For example, we often see landscapes with post oak, blackjack oak, and yaupon holly all growing in the same area. If we look at hotter climates with yaupon holly, we might find another species of tree that commonly grows near yaupon but isn't common nearby. We can develop these new communities locally in hopes that the new trees will perform well as our climate heats up.

Water during droughts

Trees are well adapted to storing resources to help them survive difficult conditions, but they have limits. Extended droughts take a heavy toll on trees. To avoid damage during long periods with no rain, it is important to give trees a long, slow soaking, even in yards with automatic sprinkler systems. The short, frequent intervals that keep grass looking good are not usually enough to help trees. Young trees might need additional water each week. Mature trees can usually get by with monthly irrigation, provided it soaks into the soil at least several inches deep.



Soaker hoses can help trees survive drought conditions efficiently, especially when topped with mulch.

Keep your leaves in autumn

In a forest, the ground is covered with fallen leaves and other dead plant material. As it decays, it improves soil health and structure. When we remove all the leaves from a suburban lawn, our soil suffers. It's good to rake leaves off turf grass, but instead of bagging them and sending them to the landfill, keep them on your property. When raked underneath trees or shrubs, the leaves will blanket the soil and protect plants from extreme temperatures. If you prefer to contain them so they don't blow back onto grass, they can be composted in a bin or other container and used to feed the soil after they decompose.

(continued...)

Tree care

Planting new trees is great, but we must care for our existing trees to have a healthy urban forest. We can improve the health of most trees by protecting and improving their soil. A tree with healthy roots can better defend itself against pests, diseases, or environmental stress. This means we can avoid chemical applications that might damage sensitive ecosystems.

Adding compost to root zones twice a year and maintaining mulch beds under trees and other plants improves the soil and helps roots thrive. It can be hard work, but it's inexpensive and requires only basic skills and equipment. It's a good idea to test the soil in case other amendments are needed. We can help our customers understand the different options and their cost.

environment. Most young trees need up to 25 years of regular structural pruning to develop a strong, permanent structure. Even mature trees can often benefit from careful attention to improving structure as we prune. We should consider structure every time we touch trees with a saw or lopper.

A forest for the future

These are some simple ideas that can preserve our urban forest for future generations. If you would like to consider more ambitious projects, you can learn more from the USDA's site. If we all remember to consider these strategies as we care for our homes and neighborhoods, future Texans will be able to enjoy a healthy urban forest for decades to come.



Even small mulch rings help protect trees against drought and temperature extremes

Structural pruning

Why do some trees break in storms, while others come through them fine? We can never control every factor, but we arborists can learn to identify warning signs that a tree may be more likely to fail. Proper structural pruning while trees are young can reduce the chance they will break in old age. This saves tree canopy for shade and wildlife, reduces injuries to people and property damage, and provides significant benefits to our



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Member Spotlight

Tara Nathanson

What inspired you to become an arborist?

My ultimate goal in my career is to be a city urban forester. One of the major requirements for this position is to be a certified arborist. You can gain a lot of tree knowledge through work experience, but it is really nice to have that professional title under your belt. It can really help in the field of urban forestry.

As a student, you were awarded a scholarship from ISA Texas. How did that impact your studies and your motivation to enter arboriculture?

Receiving the ISA Texas scholarship was a great confidence booster while I was in school. It made me feel like I was a valued future member of the Society and that I had the potential to go far in my career within this field.

What do you find most useful about being an ISA Texas member?

I find the networking opportunities to be the most useful part of being an ISA Texas member. Having connections is EVERYTHING in the professional world, no matter what career path you take. Having the opportunity to

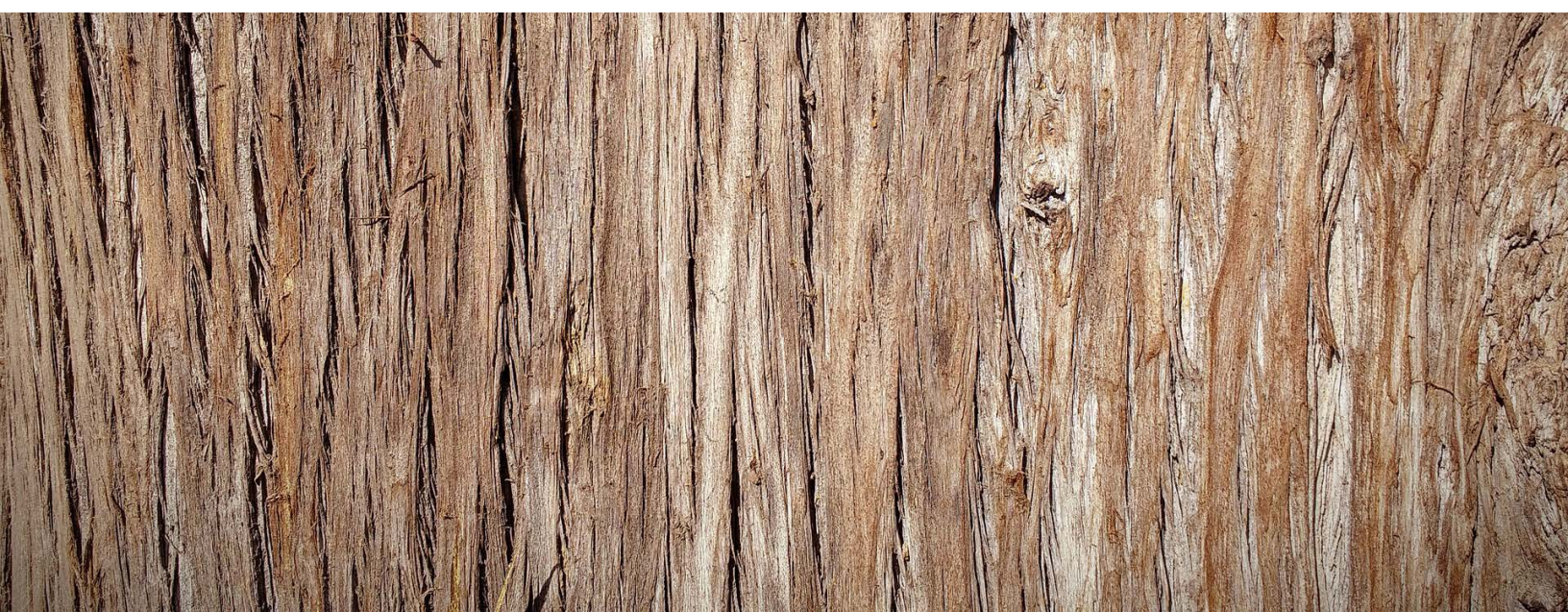
meet new people every year at conferences, learn new things, and have those conversations that can help you progress forward in your career is something I do not take for granted. You can get a real sense of community and camaraderie amongst the ISA Texas group, and I think that is a rare thing amongst professional groups. I love tree people!

What's something surprising or that you're grateful for as a young professional in the tree care industry?

I am very thankful for the welcoming attitude of others in this field that has historically been male-dominated and it is exciting to see more women rising up in this field. ISA Texas is a very welcoming society to people of all kinds.

When you're not working, what do you like to do?

I really enjoy playing competitive 2v2 sand volleyball leagues, singing in the choir at my church, and enjoying the outdoors with my fiancé and dog.





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Moving the Woods into the Front Yard: Texas' First National Wildlife Federation Sacred Grounds™ Congregation

Article and photos by Rachel
Cywinski, ISAT professional
member

Few groups know the value of understory as well as arborists and wildlife-watchers. Each group has specialized knowledge. Naturalists know understory as the shelter and nesting area of numerous species. Arborists know smaller plants over the root zone protect trees from mechanical damage and soil compaction. Yet sharing this important information with landowners is a challenge which must be met in these critical times of canopy loss throughout Texas.

National Wildlife Federation has created a program to get critically important information about native plants and wildlife habitat to the average homeowner through often overlooked community resources—houses of worship.

National Wildlife Federation (NWF) considers faith groups to be “uniquely positioned” to influence group members, interfaith community and society by their stewardship practices “as respected community leaders, and also often large property owners” (<https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Create/Places-of-Worship/Sacred-Grounds>)

NWF offers a “Sacred Grounds™ congregation” designation to faith groups who meet four criteria:

1/Create and sustain a Certified Wildlife Habitat® at place of worship

2/Leadership integrates faith and environmental conservation into



religious activities

3/Educate and engage the individual congregation members to participate at home and in group activities

4/Connect and advocate for these practices in the greater community

Currently 800 faith groups have a Certified Wildlife Habitat® with NWF. Eighteen of them have also been recognized as Sacred Grounds™ congregations. Northern Hills United Methodist Church (NHUMC) in San Antonio is the first Sacred Grounds™ congregation in Texas.

Becoming a Sacred Grounds™ congregation

Destruction of habitat in adjacent property, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the desire to provide outdoor spaces for church members and the larger community, caused NHUMC, under the leadership of senior pastor Lupina Villalpando-Stewart, to place emphasis on the

community beyond the church campus. NWF Sacred Grounds™ requirements were used for guidance. For two years, church members focused efforts on developing an initial trail that would combine opportunities for spiritual growth with education about native plants.

NHUMC Worship Director Abel Stewart sought a way to “let nature do nature, rather than sinking in time, cost and energy trying to impose our will.”

The resulting Beatitudes Prayer Walk (BPW) flipped the traditional concept of a path in nature: Participants traverse the edge of the asphalt parking lots to various stations for spiritual reflection where limestone blocks provide them opportunities to look at the trees and other featured plants. The trail skirts the edge of preserved areas rather than going through them, which would compact soil over the root zones.

Stewart said learning trail-building techniques and applying them to the diverse focal points is

an ongoing challenge for numerous congregation members as they plan for the next initiative and more plantings of native trees.

Materials have been purchased with substantial donations of church members, supplemented by specific project funds from San Antonio River Authority and from Native Plant Society of Texas-San Antonio chapter.

San Antonio River Authority met with church leadership at the site, and provided technical support for native plant community conservation, Low Impact Development approaches, sustainable landscape practices and other types of nature-based infrastructure.

NHUMC member Todd Phillips, a veterinarian by occupation, served as liaison to various community organizations. Numerous church members, including retired architect Randy Jeffries and artist Sylvia Carpenter, devoted many hours to design and implementation.

Church member Rebecca Futchel proposed integrating the Beatitudes along the path. Stewart

realized the potential to integrate spiritual concepts: “We wanted to showcase the humble landscape—cactus, scrub brush, and wildflowers—as something valued and important. Through that embodied engagement with scripture and the environment, we can grow spiritually.”

Prayer stations with stone benches and metal plaques invite pilgrims to reflect on foundational teachings of Jesus in short sentences collectively known as “Beatitudes” or “way of blessing.” QR codes link to devotional materials that are changed each season, and to information about highlighted native plants.

Maintaining the Sacred Grounds™ congregation

As a Sacred Grounds™ congregation, NHUMC includes ongoing educational opportunities. November 14, 2022, Native Plant Society of Texas-San Antonio chapter vice president Pam Peck provided a “Nurturing nature in your landscape” workshop. Church members offered attendees potted native plants



Above:

Each meditation station of the Beatitudes Prayer Walk includes a plaque with one “Beatitude” in English and Spanish, supplemented by QR codes linked to seasonal devotionals in English and in Spanish. Signs also mark specific native plants along the trail, with QR codes linking to nature education resources.

Facing page:

Artist and art educator Sylvia Carpenter, a member of NHUMC, designed and painted a mural on an existing shipping container in the church parking lot, to mark the trailhead in a way visible from the far side of the parking lot.

Left:

When natural habitat was replaced by apartments near Northern Hills United Methodist Church in 2019, members responded by expanding their focus to educate the community about the importance of native plants and completing requirements to be designated as a “Sacred Grounds™ congregation” by National Wildlife Federation. NHUMC member Sylvia Carpenter, an artist and art instructor by profession, connected the resulting stations along the Beatitudes Prayer Walk with painted footprints as wayfinding markers.



(Continued on next page...)

and “seed bombs” with instructions in English and Spanish explaining how to start home prairie restorations.

Peck said: “The trail affords users with a bit of spiritual solitude for reflection and prayer in the midst of urban development. The trail is also an opportunity to educate congregants and other users as to the importance of stewardship within our urban properties, including our homes, worship centers, schools, and other public spaces. Protecting, nurturing and restoring native flora in all these areas is essential to preserving our increasingly fragile food web as urban development continues to push into our remaining undeveloped areas. This provides an essential urban corridor through our large metropolitan areas for wildlife migration.” The trail is open to the public 365 days a year from, sunrise to sunset, at 3703 North Loop 1604 East in San Antonio (www.nhumc.org)

NHUMC encourages other faith-based organizations in Texas to pursue designation as a Sacred Grounds™ congregation. Abel Stewart shares these lessons learned for other faith groups:

1. Start where you are. What is already around you that is beautiful and God-honoring? Start by showcasing that, and build on it from there. Start simple and faithfully grow it.
2. Try. Don't be daunted by the fact that no one has done something exactly that way before. Be open to listen, learn, and refine ideas. Take it step by step, and keep going.
3. Follow through. Break the task down into manageable chunks: 1) draft the plans, 2) walk and mark the route, 3) provide seating and content for key landmarks (like the prayer stations), 4) make path signage to guide users, and 5) then just keep improving things from there.

Stewart offers to mentor other faith leaders and provide formal site visits of the Beatitudes Prayer Walk. Contact information for Abel Stewart: abels@nhumc.org or 210-654-0881.



Above: NHUMC used Low Impact Development practices in the design of its meditation areas along the Beatitudes Prayer Walk. Paths direct people along the parking lot perimeter where they can sit on limestone benches and gaze upon the trees rather than compacting the root zones by walking through them.

Becoming a Sacred Grounds™ Congregation

National Wildlife Federation encourages faith groups interested in joining the Sacred Grounds™ congregations, to use personal assistance by email to sacredgrounds@nwf.org

Texas Tree Critters

Banana Spider: *Nephila clavipes*

- Females have yellow spots on a tan body with banded legs
- Females are approximately 1 to 3 inches in length; males are approximately ½ inch in length
- Webs range from 3 to 6 feet in diameter
- Pest Status: Beneficial—prey on a variety of insects.



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2023 Events Update

The ISA Texas Board approved the 2023 events calendar at the December meeting. We will host four full TRAQ courses in 2023. The first was in Austin, the next one is in Arlington and the third is in Houston. Depending on demand, there will be a fourth offering in the Austin/San Antonio area in late fall.

Dr. Appel and Sheila McBride have both agreed to host the Diagnosis Workshop in College Station at the Plant Diagnostic Clinic on March 13-14, even though both are retired. The Texas A&M Forest Service has agreed to teach the Wildfire Risk Reduction Qualification course on April 20-21. The Decay Workshop with Chris Luley and Frank Rinn is scheduled for April 24-25. The Oak Wilt Qualification will be the fourth week of May and the second week of June.

Next Steps:

- 1) Renew your ISA Texas membership (Registration links emailed directly to members first)!
- 2) Look for the registration link emails from ISA Texas
- 3) Periodically check the Events Calendar on the ISATexas.com website

Date	Event	Location
February 15	NTUFC	Hurst Convention Center
February 22	Virtual TRAQ	Virtual
February 23	Bilingual Workshop	Schertz
March 3-5	Women's Climbing Workshop	San Marcos
March 13-14	Tree Diagnosis Workshop	College Station
March 28-29*	Wildfire Risk Assessment Qualification	Austin
April 11	TRAQ Renewal	Arlington
April 12-14	TRAQ	Arlington
April 24-25	Master's Series Workshop: Decay, Testing, Biology and Mechanics	Arlington
May 3	TRAQ Renewal Online	Virtual
May 18*	TTC workshop	TBD
May 19- 20*	Climbing Comp	TBD
May 25-26	Oak Wilt Qualification	Glen Rose
May 25 & June 7*	OWQ Virtual	Virtual
June 8-9	Oak Wilt Qualification	Fredericksburg
June 20-22	TRAQ	Houston
Last week of June	Full TRAQ	HCFCF Office Houston

*Dates will be confirmed soon. Make sure to check the ISAT Events calendar online at www.ISATexas.com!



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What's the Big IDEa?



Can You Identify this Texas Tree?

If you know this tree, look for the photo on our Facebook page and correctly identify it in the comment section under the photo, using the full scientific name and one or more common names. If you don't know it, check the page for an answer in a few days. The winner gets bragging rights and the chance to submit a tree to stump fellow arborists in the next issue.

Hint: Since this tree flowers throughout the year, it's usually covered with purple and black fruit of various stages of maturity, giving it another common name—Purple Haw.

Last Issue's Tree ID



Last issue's winner was: Jessie Farris; tree was: Mexican Plum (*Prunus Mexicana*)

New challenge was submitted by Jessie Farris.