



Conservation Insider

February 2021

Happy Valentine's Day! The CCCA Board welcomed its newest members at our first Board meeting of 2021. We have a terrific group of talented and experienced people who have signed

on to help us achieve our goals of preserving land, water and wildlife in Comal County. Your participation on our Committees is what makes CCCA successful. We encourage everyone to volunteer for one or more Committee and be part of the effort to preserve Land, Water, and Wildlife in Comal County.

CCCA also welcomes Kathleen Tobin Krueger to our new **Advisory Board**. Kathleen brings valuable experience and a rich legacy of land stewardship to the Advisory Board and we are excited to have her help.

We are proud to announce that the **State Board of the Native Plant Society of Texas** has accepted our invitation to become a **CCCA Partner**, becoming our most recent Partner organization. The Native Plant Society of Texas is a Texas not-for-profit conservation organization that promotes the "conservation, research and utilization of the native plants and plant habitats of Texas through education, outreach and example". The organization includes both statewide programs and local chapters. Founded in 1981 by Carroll Abbott, and headquartered in Fredericksburg, TX, the statewide organization supports 34 chapters throughout Texas. Its 4,000+ members and volunteers participate in community work projects, plant surveys, workshops, landscaping projects, and demonstration gardens. Citizens interested in being part of the Native Plant Society of Texas are encouraged to join a chapter in their county. Visit the NPSOT website at www.npsot.org to learn more.

SAVE THE DATE - March 9th - for a Special Zoom Presentation

Annalisa Peace, Executive Director of the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance, will join CCCA for a Zoom presentation 6:00-7:00 PM on Tuesday, March 9th. The presentation will address efforts to **protect Honey Creek** and the adjacent State-owned properties, and describe how waste water and high-density developments impact our environmentally sensitive Hill Country watersheds. See the 2021 Events page on our website: <https://www.comalconservation.org/>

Register here for the presentation: <https://forms.gle/zaHvQbJ5SsSyfhsg8>

A friendly Reminder....Valentine's Day is February 14th !

We have the easy way to keep yourself out of the doghouse and make a special person happy by sending them an e-Valentine. You can pick the valentine you want to send and compose a personal message for your special person. And here's the icing on the cake, it's tax deductible plus it helps us conserve Comal County! What a great deal!

Go to our website <https://www.comalconservation.org/> to get the details about how to be a Valentine hero.

IN OTHER NEWS

With all the benefits trees bring to a community, it's sad to see trees being destroyed in our beautiful Hill Country. These articles from the San Antonio Express News are disturbing and

should serve to raise our awareness.

"Everything was there and then it wasn't" --- Developers in San Antonio allowed to skirt tree ordinance

Read the Original and Follow-up article at <https://www.comalconservation.org/trees.html>

OUR MONTHLY HERALD ZEITUNG COLUMN

Our Hill Country trees, such treasures

**By Frank Dietz
Herald-Zeitung
January 30, 2021**

In surveying my own life journey through the decades, it is clear that a very early fascination with and appreciation for trees developed.

My earliest connection remains a cluster of Gulf coastal oaks. They provided playscapes and meditation that nurtured my spirit and imagination. Perhaps you have a similar special place you go to in your personal memory bank. As our childhood habitat expanded it grew to include two historic public parks in uptown New Orleans where play and inquisitive discovery were nearly endless.

Later in life as visitors, our children and grandchildren have had their turns at developing adventurous explorations and memories among moss draped live oaks.

The valuing of trees that was rooted in my early life experiences has prompted attention at every turn to the gifts of trees in our contexts for living and exploring. One dramatic moment comes to mind when our older son came home from his nearby high school on lunch break. A creek bed that wound around our home was being deepened and widened for drainage purposes in an overdeveloped area. A huge handsome sycamore was marked for removal. Lunch break was over and I approached inquiring about whether our son had lost track of time. Read more at:

<https://www.comalconservation.org/trees.html>

SPOTLIGHT ON TREES

Introduction to Oak Wilt (Texas A & M)

Oak wilt, one of the most destructive tree diseases in the United States, is killing oak trees in central Texas at epidemic proportions. Oak wilt is an infectious disease caused by the fungus *Bretziella fagacearum*, which invades and disables the water-conducting system (xylem) in oaks. All oaks can be infected by the fungus that causes oak wilt; however, some oak species are affected more than others. The successful management of oak wilt depends on correct diagnosis and an understanding of how the pathogen and different oak species interact.

Red Oaks

Members of the red oak group, particularly Texas red oak (aka Spanish oak), Shumard oak, blackjack oak, and water oak are the most susceptible of the fungus and may play a unique role in the establishment of new oak wilt infections.

White Oaks

Members of the white oak group include post oak, bur oak, Mexican white oak, white shin oak, Durand oak, Lacey oak, and chinquapin oak. Although white oaks show some tolerance of the disease, all oaks can be infected by the fungus. White shin oak, Lacey oak, and chinquapin oak can grow in stands with interconnected root systems, enabling the fungus to possibly infect adjacent trees are susceptible to the fungus.

Live Oaks

Live oak and Texas live oak are intermediate in their susceptibility to oak wilt, but are most seriously affected due to their tendency to grow with vast, interconnected root systems that allow movement of the fungus among adjacent trees.

Read more at <https://www.comalconservation.org/trees.html>

Central Texas Oak Wilt Forestry Fact Sheet - TX 1

What is oak wilt? Oak wilt is an aggressive fungal pathogen (*Ceratocystis fagacearum*) that affects many species of oak, killing thousands of trees each year in woodlots and home landscapes.

Where is it in Texas? The Hill Country and Central Texas areas have been particularly hard hit by this disease. This map shows the extent of its damage in 2007 with yellow counties having a few incidences and the brown counties recording over 400 mortality areas. Oak wilt has been called one of the most destructive tree diseases in the United States and is at epidemic proportions in the Central Texas Hill Country. Continue at.....

<https://www.comalconservation.org/trees.html>

Oak Wilt Quick Guide

Early detection and prompt action are essential for successful management of oak wilt. The specific measures taken depend on several circumstances but should include appropriate combinations of the following:

Prevent New Infections

- Remove and dispose of oak wilt-infected red oaks immediately.
- Avoid wounding oak trees, including pruning, from February through June.
- Sterilize/sanitize all pruning equipment between trees.
- Paint all wounds and fresh stumps immediately regardless of season.
- Handle oak firewood cautiously, burn all firewood before spring, and never store unseasoned oak wood from infected trees near healthy oaks.
- Cover unseasoned firewood (from infection centers and unknown origins) with clear plastic and bury the edges of the plastic.
- Diversify Your Landscape

- Plant trees that are native and/or adapted to your area.
- Favor a diversity of tree species.
- Avoid wounding oaks during planting.
- Stop Spread through Root Connections
- Install a trench at least 4 ft deep and 100 ft beyond the perimeter of infection centers (last symptomatic tree) to break up root connections.
- Cut or uproot all trees within the 100-ft barrier (except those injected with fungicide).
- Inject High-Value Oaks with Fungicide
- Identify susceptible, high-value oak trees in proximity to expanding oak wilt infection centers.
- Consult a trained and licensed arborist (with certified applicator's license) for treatment of susceptible trees with injections of propiconazole.

Learn more at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/trees.html>

WHY TREES?

THE BENEFITS OF PLANTING TREES FOR OUR PLANET

PLANT ONE TREE

WHY ARE TREES IMPORTANT TO THE ENVIRONMENT?

Trees help clean the air we breathe, filter the water we drink, and provide habitat to over 80% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity.

Forests provide jobs to over 1.6 billion people, absorb harmful carbon from the atmosphere, and are key ingredients in 25% of all medicines. Have you ever taken an Aspirin? It comes from the bark of a tree!

Here are the six pillars that explain why trees are vital:

Continue at... <https://www.comalconservation.org/trees.html>

Rivers in the Sky: How Deforestation Is Affecting Global Water Cycles

A growing body of evidence indicates that the continuing destruction of tropical forests is disrupting the movement of water in the atmosphere, causing major shifts in precipitation that could lead to drought in key agricultural areas in China, India, and the U.S. Midwest.

BY FRED PEARCE • JULY 24, 2018

Every tree in the forest is a fountain, sucking water out of the ground through its roots and releasing water vapor into the atmosphere through pores in its foliage. In their billions, they create giant rivers of water in the air – rivers that form clouds and create rainfall hundreds or even thousands of miles away.

But as we shave the planet of trees, we risk drying up these aerial rivers and the lands that depend on them for rain. A growing body of research suggests that this hitherto neglected impact of deforestation could in many continental interiors dwarf the impacts of global climate change. It could dry up the Nile, hobble the Asian monsoon, and desiccate fields from Argentina to the Midwestern United States.

Until recently, the nuggets of data delivering such warnings were fragmented and often relegated to minor scientific journals. But the growing concerns came to the fore in reports presented at two forest forums held by the United Nations and the Norwegian government in recent weeks.

Continue at: <https://www.comalconservation.org/trees.html>

We found so much of interest about trees this month that we didn't have enough space to put it all in the INSIDER. But never fear - it is available to read on our website. Please visit and browse all our informative articles. <https://www.comalconservation.org/trees.html>

Stay safe, stay healthy, enjoy nature! See you next month.

Comal County Conservation Alliance

<https://www.comalconservation.org/>

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