



# Oxley Nature Center

March/April, 2013

Volume 214

## Native Alternatives by Donna Horton

### Oxley Nature Center:

-The Interpretive Building will be open Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. and Sunday 12 noon- 4:30 p.m.

-Gate and parking lot is open daily, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. except most City holidays.

-Hiking trails are accessible during Mohawk Park hours, 7:00 a.m.- 9:00 p.m.

### Redbud Valley Nature Preserve is closed:

all Mondays and Tuesdays.

-Open Wednesday through Sunday, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Hiking after these hours is not allowed.

-Interpretive building is open Wednesday through Sunday 11:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.

-Closed most City holidays.

### \*\* Holiday Closings:

### Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

\*\* Friday, March 29.

### Program information:

- 918-669-6644

- Oxley@cityoftulsa.org

- Website at "<http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org>".

### \*\* Register for classes

48 hours in advance unless otherwise stated. A class minimum of 6 is required.

-Some classes require supplies and allow for limited enrollment.

-Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated.

-Most programs are stroller/wheelchair accessible.

-Our new mailing address is: Box 150209, Tulsa, OK 74115

In recent travels, I have seen the desperate plight of native plants fighting a battle against invasive species. Here in Oklahoma, the problem is just getting started. We have a better chance than plant-lovers in most places to halt the invaders in their tracks.

Some of my favorite spots in Ohio and Indiana, where I remember finding spectacular displays of spring wildflowers- trilliums, bluebells, Adam-and-Eve orchids, and but-tercups – there are now solid stands of privet or garlic mustard. Garlic mustard is not here yet, but privet is. We are destroying it as fast as we can at Oxley Nature Center.

Anyone who has been to the southeast U.S. has seen the carpets and draperies of kudzu. There are two known infestations of kudzu in the Tulsa area. One patch near Keystone may be too large to do anything beyond containment. However, if enough of us hit it hard enough and often enough, perhaps we could help the Parks Department obliterate the small but stubborn patch of kudzu on the Midland Valley Trail near 31<sup>st</sup> Street.

It was shocking to find so many infestations of non-native plants (and animals) in Hawaii. Some, like the coqui frogs from Puerto Rico, got started carelessly in an accidental import. Others, unbelievably, were deliberately introduced. We can do better, in Oklahoma.

There is much you can do to help. This spring, when the garden displays appear in the stores, be firm. Insist on buying and planting native species whenever possible. If you do buy and plant non-natives, make sure they are not species that will be spread by birds and other wildlife.

For some of the worst invasive species, try these alternatives: Instead of bamboo (*Bambusa spp.*), plant river cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*.)

Instead of monkeygrass (*Liriope spp.*), plant shade-loving ornamental grasses like American beak grain (*Diarrhena americana*), which stays green all year, or plant inland sea oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*). If you have a sunny location, use a grama grass (*Bouteloua gracilis*) or (*B. hirsuta*.)

Remove privet hedge (*Ligustrum sp.*) and bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera mackii* and *L. morrowii*). Plant shrubs such as deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*) or American beautybush (*Callicarpa americana*.)

Tear out creeping euonymus (*Euonymus fortune*.) Plant a native ground cover or vine instead. There are plenty to choose from. Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia tomentosa*) and passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*) happen to be butterfly host plants, too.

Replace japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) and Asian wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*) with the native red honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) and native wisteria (*Wisteria frutescens*.)

Check out Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's webpage of native plants recommended for Oklahoma:

<http://www.wildflower.org/collections/collection.php?collection=OK>

Be wary of gardening webpages recommending plants "suitable for Oklahoma." Many of the plants that do indeed thrive in Oklahoma gardens are pesky invasive species that do a tremendous amount of damage when they escape to the wild and out-compete the native species. We do not want that to happen here in our lovely home state.

Consider joining the Oklahoma Native Plant Society at: <http://oknativeplants.org> The local chapter meets at the Tulsa Garden Center.



# Nature Center Happenings

## Volunteer Naturalist Training Offered

Would you like to be a Volunteer Naturalist, someone who enjoys being outdoors sharing the experience of nature with others? If so, apply for one of two spring training programs.

Our **weekday session** runs March 5 - March 28, two days a week from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon. If **evenings and weekends** are more convenient, you may attend training two nights from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and four weekend afternoons from 1-3:30 p.m. starting Sunday, March 3.

During training you will become familiar with our trail system as you explore the varied prairie, wetland, and forested areas. We have fun and emphasize leadership skills and interpretation methods.

Upon completion of training, you will join other naturalists, each guiding a small group of visitors on weekday, evening or weekend tours. If you are 18 or older, please call.

## Natural Babies, Natural World

Young children learn by actual contact with real objects, events and people. We will have a story, craft, and time on the trail to experience nature first hand. This will be a sensory experience!

### Hopping into Spring, Rabbit Style

**Monday, March 11, 10:30-11:30 a.m.**



### Pond Life, Frogs & Tadpoles

**Monday, April 8, 10:30-11:30 a.m.**

**Ages: 1 through 5 years with caregiver  
\$2 for general public, free for members  
Please register in advance \*\*\***

## 7th Annual Early Spring Butterfly Count for Citizen Scientists!

Join us **Monday, April 15** for a spring butterfly count. No experience is necessary. You will be placed in a group with an experienced guide to spot, count, tally and/or identify butterflies.

Information gathered is used to supplement the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) Summer Butterfly Count held annually in July. We will be meeting from **8:30 a.m. to dusk**.

You are welcome to participate in all or part of the count. Bring a lunch, water and binoculars if you have them. Meet at the picnic shelter at Oxley Nature Center.

**\*\*\* Please call and register in advance  
so groups can be assembled.  
\$3 fee per person**

## 2nd Saturday Family Adventures at Oxley

**Saturday, March 9, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.**

### “Wreath Making Using Invasive Alien Vines”

Come for a hike and explore invasive alien species at Oxley Nature Center. After we have learned about the aliens we will make a wreath of an alien vine. Please bring materials to decorate your wreath so it will match your home décor.

**Saturday, April 13, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.**

### “Frogs and Tadpoles”

Frogs are calling and laying eggs. We'll dip net to look for tadpoles and frogs. If we're successful **each** family may take **one** tadpole home to watch it make its transition into a frog. Please bring a clear, clean container to provide a temporary home for your tadpole. After the tadpole becomes a frog we request you return to Oxley to release it where it was caught.

## Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature Center

**\$2 for general public, free for members, all ages. \*\*\* Please register in advance \*\*\***

### Full Worm Moon

**Tuesday, March 26, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**



A March thaw will draw worms toward the earth's surface. What draws you out to explore on a moonlit night? Join us on the trails tonight to experience a walk through the wild.

### Full Pink Moon

**Thursday, April 25, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

Some of the first flowers of spring are in bloom now. The world seems new with sounds, smells, and tastes as we discover spring along the trails. Won't you join us?

# Programs and Special Events

## March

**2 “Saturday Morning Birding”** Ages: All  
**Saturday** 8:00-9:45 a.m.  
**Free** registration not required

This is such a busy month, with birds migrating and so much activity! Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

**2 “Make a Bamboo Flute”** Ages: 12 to Adult  
**Saturday** 1:00–3:00 p.m.  
**\$5 for general public** \$2 for members

You will create a simple bamboo flute and learn to make music with it! Meet at Oxley. Registration is required.

**16 “Butterfly Walk”** Ages: All  
**Saturday** 10:30-12:00 noon  
**Free** registration not required

They are back! Join us at Oxley for our first butterfly walk of the season. All ages and skill levels welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them.

**17 “Geology Walk at RBV”** Ages: 8 to Adult  
**Sunday** 1:30-3:00 p.m.  
**Free** registration is required

The defining feature of Redbud Valley Nature Preserve is the limestone cliff separating two distinct habitats. We'll tour this rugged area. These trails are not wheelchair or stroller accessible. Please register in advance.

**23 “Botany Walk”** Ages: All  
**Saturday** 10:30-12:00 noon  
**Free** registration not required

The early wildflowers are racing to take in the sun's energy. Come see what we can find blooming along the trail. Meet at Oxley.

**23 “Print-Making From Nature”** Ages: All  
**Saturday** 1:00-3:00 p.m. “come & go”  
**Free** registration not required

Stop by and try your hand at an ancient print-making technique using bamboo, while we think about what is “not from around here.” Letter-boxers are also invited to use this time to carve rubber stamps (you may purchase your blocks of MasterCarve material from Oxley's Nature Store.) Meet at Oxley.

## April

**6 “Saturday Morning Birding”** Ages: All  
**Saturday** 8:00-9:45 p.m.  
**Free** registration not required

Courtship songs fill the morning air. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

**14 “Terrific Terrariums”** Ages: 10 to Adult  
**Sunday** 1:30–3:00 p.m.  
**\$7 for general public** \$5 for members

We will each design and create our own personal terrarium. Materials are provided. Meet at Oxley. Registration is required.

**20 “Butterfly Walk”** Ages: All  
**Saturday** 10:30-12:00 noon  
**Free** registration not required

Join us at Oxley for our butterfly walk, a delightful Spring pastime. Bring binoculars if you have them.

**21 “Discovering Coyote Trail”** Ages: All  
**Sunday** 1:00–2:00 p.m.  
**\$2 for general public** Free for members

Have you explored our newest trail? Come discover some of the natural history of the flora and fauna. Just what is a rattlesnake fern? Meet at Oxley's Interpretive Center. Registration is required.

**21 “Geology Walk at RBV”** Ages: 8 to Adult  
**Sunday** 1:30-3:00 p.m.  
**Free** registration is required

The defining geological feature of Redbud Valley Nature Preserve is the limestone cliff separating two distinct habitats. We'll tour this rugged area. These trails are not wheelchair or stroller accessible. Please register in advance.

**27 “Botany Walk”** Ages: All  
**Saturday** 10:30-12:00 noon  
**Free** registration not required

What will we find blooming today at Oxley? Find out what is peeking out from beneath last year's leaves?

**\*\*Please register 48 hours in advance of classes unless stated otherwise. A minimum of 6 registrants is required.**

## Spring Equinox Celebration

**Wednesday, March 20 from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.**

**This event is for all ages, bring your friends and family.**

**Free with a donation of a food item for the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma.**

The Vernal Equinox marks the beginning of Spring, a season that brings an increase in both daylight and temperatures. We celebrate the 'rebirth' of our flora and fauna. The word *equinox* is derived from Latin words meaning "equal night." What will you do with your 12 hours of daylight? Why don't you plan to spend some of it with us?

Explore our native landscape. We will have guided hikes throughout the day, or you may hike on your own and complete a scavenger hunt for a small prize. Come inside, enjoy our exhibits, and refresh your body, mind and spirit with a sip of refreshing herbal tea, a spring tonic. Roll a ball of mud in wildflower seeds to plant at Oxley or take home. Create a leaf rubbing, or play a game about the water cycle.

This is a come and go event. Greet Spring by joining our festivities. We look forward to seeing you!

## Project Learning Tree Workshop

**Saturday, April 27, 9:00-3:00 p.m.**

**\$15 fee for curriculum materials**

**To register call Deidra Wakeley,  
Science teacher and facilitator:**

**918-745-9264**

K-12 public, private, and home school teachers, Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H, and Campfire leaders will all learn to use strategies and techniques to teach topics such as forests, wildlife, water, community planning, and energy.

Through hands-on, interdisciplinary activities, PLT helps young people learn "how to think, not what to think", about complex environmental issues.

Participants should bring a sack lunch and dress comfortably. **Questions or to pre-register with Deidra Wakeley please call @ 918-745-9264.**

