



the Leaflet



Our mission is to conserve our natural heritage by deepening our knowledge of the plant world and achieving public understanding of the value plants bring to life.

Get Involved

Your End of Year Support is Critical to BRIT's Success

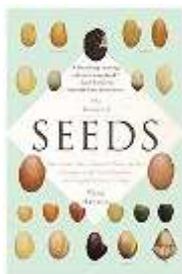
It's the end of the year, and before you get too busy with gifts and parties, we here at BRIT need to ask your help.

It's been an amazing year at BRIT. We embarked on new education and research partnerships with local universities, strengthened ties with the Fort Worth Botanic Garden to expand our education programs for preschoolers through adults, and we rescued half a million plant specimens!

That's the headline stuff, and we love it—but just as importantly, we also did the everyday work of collecting plants, researching habitats, and identifying species. These are the fundamental tasks of conservation and botanical research. They may not sound glamorous, but they're how we come to understand the role of plants on our planet.



We need your support to run our critical conservation and education programs. Please consider including BRIT in your holiday giving and as a bonus an anonymous donor has pledged to match the money donated by you up to \$10,000. Best of all - we'll send you a membership! See below all the benefits you will receive.



BRIT Reads Book Club - 2018 Reading List

list!

The BRIT Reads Book Club, which has been meeting the third Monday of the month for the last two years, is pleased to announce their 2018 reading list. This list, which includes both fiction and non-fiction, classics and new works, was selected by members of the BRIT Reads Book Club from a larger list of books that was suggested by BRIT staff and book club members. Please join us as we work our way through this fascinating reading

For more information, please visit our [webpage](#), or contact Laura Venhaus at 817.346.1844.

- January 15, **Walden** by Henry David Thoreau
- February 19, **Half Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life** by E. O. Wilson
- March 19, **The Wonder of Birds: What They Tell Us About Ourselves, the World, and a Better Future** by Jim Robbins
- April 16, **Silent Spring** by Rachel Carson



Education = The Perfect Gift!

Wondering what to get that special someone for the holidays? Why not give them the gift that truly keeps on giving... education! If you have someone on your holiday shopping list that loves to learn, introduce them to BRIT's innovative, inclusive community of life-long learners who thrive on education with a botanical twist. For a complete list of classes, or to register, please visit our [webpage](#). Questions, please contact Laura Venhaus at 817.346.1844.

- January 27, 10am – 3pm Introduction to Botanical Watercolors
- January 27, 9am – Noon Introduction to Vegetable Gardening
- January 27, 1pm – 3pm Starting your Spring Transplants
- February 3, 10am – Noon Permaculture Basics for the Home Gardener
- February 3, 1pm – 3pm Raised Beds and Irrigation Systems
- February 3, 10am – Noon The Eye and the Microscope: Introduction to Microscopy
- February 3, 10am – Noon Next Steps in Botanical Watercolors

Research, Collections, & Publications



BRIT's Fern Expert Visits the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society In Houston

In November one of our Research Botanists, Dr. Alejandra Vasco, visited Houston to give a talk and a workshop at the Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society monthly meeting. The American Fern Society (www.amerfermsoc.org) is over 120 years old, and has over 900 members worldwide. It is one of the largest international fern clubs in the world, and promotes and fosters interest in ferns and lycophytes. One of the chapters, the Texas Gulf Fern Society, is located in Houston. This chapter is a very active group of fern-lovers that get together once a month to exchange experiences, learn, and share their love for ferns. This time, Alejandra talked about how to press ferns for herbaria, personal collections, and/or art projects. At first pressing plants can look like an easy task, but how do you preserve all structures so that botanists can have a sense about how the plant looked when it was alive? And how do you make sure all of these important characteristics are observable in an herbarium sheet? Pressing ferns can be sometimes particularly tricky because some of them have really big leaves that are difficult to fit in a single herbarium sheet, and also because some of the most important structures for fern identification can be below the ground. We also have a Fern Society Chapter in the DFW area, called the Southwestern Fern Society. Alejandra is scheduled to give a talk for them in February 2018.

Want to know more about research on ferns happening at BRIT? Please contact [Alejandra Vasco](#) at 817.332.4441, ext. 262.

Happy Holidays

The R. Dale Thomas Plant Collection (NLU)

The R. Dale Thomas Plant Collection (NLU) officially completed its journey to BRIT in August 2017. However, this was only the beginning! Follow the NLU rescue team for the next year as they work to make this priceless collection secure and accessible to researchers and the public. Read about the collection's first months at BRIT here on our [BLOG](#).



High Performance Landscapes Project Conclusion

Is your landscape using too much water? Are you interested in helping pollinators and using native species? Are you tired of spending lots of time maintaining your landscape?

The 2-year collaborative project between BRIT and the General Services Administration (GSA) regarding High Performance Landscapes has finally come to completion. In spring 2018, the principal investigators will be presenting the conclusions of this project focusing on landscaping decisions and their effects on water use, pollinators, and carbon footprint.

Keep a lookout in future Leaflets and on the BRIT website for the presentation date early next year. We hope you will join us to learn more what you can do to improve your landscape to attract pollinators and utilize native species, and gain access to the High-Performance Landscapes Calculator Tool! Inquiries, please contact [Keri Barfield](#) at 817.332.4441, ext. 213.

Photo: Painted Lady Butterfly, *Vanessa cardui*, on Gregg's Mistflower, *Conoclinium greggii*



Cabinet Curiosities: Holiday Botany

Winter winds and Fall rains are consummate signs of the changing seasons in Texas, heralding some of our favorite holidays of the year. Of all the holiday decorations that come to mind, plants and their history often hide in plain sight; their past obscured by time and new traditions. But here at *Cabinet Curiosities*, we want to illuminate age-old traditions and their ties to the natural world. For the next few months we'll be revealing plants from our collections and shedding light on their historical uses in holiday traditions.

In our first article of the season, the cheery Poinsettia's history straddles the line of modern and antique customs. Originating from tropical deciduous forests of

Mexico, this plant has become widely planted as an ornamental or sold as cuttings during the holidays. Shown here is a sizable collection of a poinsettia, or *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, from the Universidad de Valle de Guatemala. Though the red foliage may look like flowers, this member of the Spurge family does not bear flowers in a traditional sense. These reproductive organs are called cyathium, a type of false flower specific to the genus euphorbia, with modified leaves called bracts acting in lieu of flower petals. But there is so much more to this species and its namesake, which you can read about in our [BLOG](#).





Green Revolution

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

Green Revolution - an Environmental STEM, positive-youth-development, out-of-school-time (grade 6 - 12) program that immerses youth in formative experiences to advance their personal development, civic engagement, and environmental stewardship just became an affiliate member of the STEM Education Coalition (SEC). This nationwide organization, chaired by NSTA, works aggressively to raise awareness in Congress, the Administration, and other organizations about the critical role that STEM education plays in enabling the U.S. to remain the economic and technological leader of the global marketplace of the 21st century. Members of the STEM Coalition believe that our nation must improve the way our students learn science, mathematics, technology and engineering and that the business, education, and STEM communities must work together to achieve this goal.

"There's no better way to consummate this year's theme – teamwork – than teaming up with a STEM paragon like the SEC. This is not just a distinct honor, but Green Revolution's commitment to do the best possible work in helping youth who've been historically underrepresented develop their competitive advantage," says program Director Reggie Robinson. "In this case, as in many, teamwork certainly makes the dream work."

Now Offering - Bella the Begonia™ Birthday Parties

You've seen our beloved Bella at First Saturday's, Bella's Book and Nature Club and in the community. Well, now she's ready to celebrate birthdays!

Parties are two hours and include a story time from one of Bella's seasonal books like "Planting a Rainbow" by Lois Ehlert. Activities like planting a flower or creating art from nature make for guided party fun. We even have party favors for everyone (adults included)!

Bella provides all the fun and learning for your preschooler's special day! Contact [Katherine Campbell](#) at 817.332.4441, ext. 243 to book the party!

**BRIT members receive special discounts.



Explorers **by nature.**

It's a Great Time to Give a Gift of a BRIT Membership



Can't find that perfect gift to give your favorite nature-lover? Look no more! A BRIT Membership makes the perfect gift and it will keep giving all year long.

Call our [Membership Office](#) now at 817.332.7518 to purchase your gift membership today. We'll mail you card(s) and a gift letter to put under your tree.

Just look at all the activities to be part of just in the first six months!

- Discounts for Camp BRIT
- Free Bella's Book & Nature Club
- BRIT Reads Book Club
- Monthly Brown Bags
- Prairie Harvest
- Discounts for Sip at BRIT's
- Spring & Fall Gallery Night
- Field Trip to Fort Worth Nature Center
- First Saturdays & Plant ID

2018 January - June

Adult Education Classes:

- The Eye and the Microscope
- Lichens: The Introductory Course
- Fall in Love with Fungi
- Introduction to Botanical Watercolor Painting
- Botanical Watercolor Workshop
- Botanical Colored Pencil Workshop
- Creative Nature Journaling
- Botanical Art: The Micro-Wonderland of Plants
- Introduction to Home Brewing
- Culinary Herbal Infusions
- Rare and Endangered Plants of Texas
- Plant Collection and Preservation
- Texas Wildflowers
- Landscaping with Native Plants
- Fire Ants: How they got here and what to do about them.
- Introduction to Vegetable Gardening
- Starting your Spring Transplants
- Introduction to Permaculture
- Raised Bed Workshop
- What is the Soil Food Web?
- Soil Biology for Gardeners
- Urban Gardening: Permaculture for Small Spaces
- Water Harvesting
- Composting: Beyond the Basics
- Aerated Compost Tea



Need More Reasons to Make that Purchase?

Memberships include the following also:

- Subscription BRIT's Monthly Email
- Subscription Better Homes and Gardens
- Store discounts at local reciprocal retail nurseries (see below)
- Free Fort Worth Stock Show gate entrance per cardholder
- Reduced fees for workshops, camps, Sip at BRIT series, and other special programs
- Reciprocal admission to more than 300 botanical gardens, including FW Japanese Garden, Dallas Arboretum, and Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.
- Invitations to galas and benefit parties
- Arts exhibit openings in the Madeline R. Samples Exhibit Hall
- Discount on facility rental and birthday parties

Need it quickly? Call or email today our [Membership Office](#) at 817.332.7518 to purchase your gift membership today. We'll provide card(s) and gift letter to put under the tree.



Plan Your Legacy, Pass on Your Values

BRIT's Shiners Society was named for botany champion, Lloyd H. Shiners, a professor for twenty-five years at Southern Methodist University and director of the Herbarium at SMU (now at BRIT). He was one of the strongest and most interesting workers in the entire field of systematic

botany in the US.

The Shiners Society was created to recognize individuals who are passionate about the planet and eager to learn more about all living things. Because of their commitment to the environment they have decided to include Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) in their estate plans thus preserving nature, education, and research for generations to come.

You can name BRIT in your will or simply name BRIT as the beneficiary of a retirement or financial account. To learn more ways to make a legacy gift, please contact the development department at 817.332.6657, clancaster@brit.org, or visit: this [webpage](#).

If you name BRIT in your estate plans, use the legal name Botanical Research Institute of Texas, with tax identification number 75-2198196 and please let the development office know. Thank you for considering BRIT in your estate plans.

Calendar of Events

December

11th - Volunteer University
7th - BRIT Tour at 1:30 p.m.
14th - BRIT Tour at 1:30 p.m.
25th-26th - Closed

JANUARY

1st - Closed
8th - Volunteer University
15th - Closed
16th - Teacher Tuesday
28th - BRIT Rental Open House 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Every Thursday - BRIT tours at 1:30 p.m.

Additional information can be found at brit.org.



Botanical Research Institute of Texas

1700 University Drive | Fort Worth | Texas | 76107

Phone: 817.332.4441 | Fax: 817.332.4112 | BRIT.org | info@BRIT.org

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