Get Involved

**Summer Brown Bags**

Our summer is lined up with special brown bags for lovers of the outdoors!

**Tuesday, June 5, noon - 1 p.m.**: Dr. Victoria Bennett (Texas Christian University), "Monitoring bats in Fort Worth through outreach." Dr. Victoria Bennett will discuss the TCU Bat Outreach Program, established in 2013, which raises public awareness for bats and is the first long-term, citizen science-driven study to monitor bat populations in Texas. The TCU Bat Outreach Program has shown that urban parks can represent quality habitat for bats and essential migratory stopover sites. This data has provided a better understanding of whether we can enhance and use urban refuges to benefit bat populations.

**Tuesday, July 10, noon - 1 p.m.**: Diane Pierce, "Teardrop Trailer Camping" Is "tenting" not for you? How about "glamping" in a classic, vintage-style teardrop camper?! Join GROW volunteer and outdoorswoman, Diane Pierce, to learn about trailer selection, safety procedures, operation, equipment, camping options, and group and individual activities. Hands-on trailer experience will inspire you to leave your worries at home and head for The Great Outdoors!

Find more information about your Brown Bag Lecture Series on our [website](http://example.com). For inquiries, please contact Alyssa B. Young at 817.546.1959.

**BRIT PRESS**

BRIT Press is now taking pre-orders for its newest book, Flowering Plants of Trans-Pecos Texas and Adjacent Areas by Powell & Worthington. This book is the first complete floristic treatment of all of the native and naturalized flowering plant species known to occur in this area, and will be ready for delivery this fall. Click the photo to visit Shop BRIT for more information or to purchase your copy today!

**Botanical Art: Flowers, fruit, and fungi**

Next up in the Madeline R. Samples Exhibit Hall at BRIT is Botanical Art: Flowers, fruit, and fungi, the first juried exhibition of the newly formed Botanical Art Collective of North Central Texas. This exhibit, which will hang from June 14 – August 9, is a celebration of the world of botany and will feature depictions of flowers, fruits, seeds, vegetables, fungi, and grasses executed in a variety of mediums. Join us for the opening reception on Thursday, June 14, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., meet the artists, and enjoy informal gallery talks. For more information, please visit our gallery [webpage](http://example.com) or contact Layla Luna.
**BRIT Reads Book Club**

The BRIT Reads Book Club is splashing out and trying something new this month… we’re reading and discussing our first novel, *The Signature of All Things* by Elizabeth Gilbert. Each year, the members of the BRIT Reads Book Club compile a large list of possible books for the upcoming year and then vote upon them, with the books that get the most votes becoming our reading list. The reading list is always interesting, but the 2018 list was particularly interesting as not just one, but two novels made the cut. Join us on Monday, June 18, from noon – 1 p.m. and see how it goes. For more information, please visit our website. To join the mailing list for this group, please contact Laura Venhaus at 817.546.1844.

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**Adult Education Workshops**

For more information or to register, please visit the [webpage](#) or contact Laura Venhaus at 817.546.1844.

6/2 Exploring Texas Wildflowers
6/2 Landscaping with Native Plants
6/2 Fire Ants: How they got here and what to do about them
6/2 Masterpieces and Microscopes
6/2 Composting: Beyond the basics
6/2 Aerated Compost Tea
6/16 Teen Workshop: Botanical drawing & watercolor
6/18 Demonstration Cooking: Jams and jellies
6/23 Teen Workshop: Botanical drawing & watercolor
7/16 Cooking with Herbs
7/16 Introduction to Oil Painting: Botanical still-lifes
7/28 Teen Workshop: Botanical drawing & watercolors

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**What is This Thing?**

In our newest series at the BRIT blog, “What is This Thing?” looks at weird objects found in nature by staff, volunteers, or visitors. So far we’ve looked at “shaggy Russian hats” and “funky pine cones,” with future plans to cover “cacahuates japoneses,” “wizard wands,” and “brain balls.” Feed your curious mind and check out the stories for yourself!

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**Research, Collections, & Publications**

**Armchair Botany: Dr. T’s Ferntastic Collection**

The BRIT herbarium contains over 1.4 million plant specimens, with the oldest known specimen collected over 200 years ago. These collections are safely kept in light-tight cabinets, in temperature- and humidity-controlled conditions for their preservation. Each of these represents the existence in space and time of the plant featured on a specimen sheet, as recounted by the hand-written, typed, or printed label accompanying it. Can you imagine if we were able to harvest the data from those 1.5 million specimen labels, and furthermore, add a geographic coordinate to each collection? Oh, the powerful questions we could answer!

Our ongoing digitization program is sharing these specimens with the citizen scientist world online in the first step of reaching the goal of complete online access to our herbarium data: digital specimen images. These images can be put online and shared with anyone interested in a little “armchair botany” to transcribe labels. Did you know that Dr. Thomas—who of the R. Dale Thomas Collection (NLU) from Louisiana, now cared for at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT)—was a fern expert? Learn more about Notes from Nature Expeditions [here](#); you just might encounter specimens from Dr. Thomas’ specialty group, the adder’s-tongue ferns (*Ophioglossum*)! Inquiries, please contact Tiana Rehman at 817.332.4441, ext. 223.
Sampling Glade Ecosystems in the Missouri Ozarks

Research Botanist Taylor Quedensley spent two weeks in May collecting plants in Missouri Ozark Glades as part of a research project that is a collaboration between BRIT, two scientists and several undergraduate researchers at Missouri Western State University, and the Missouri Department of Conservation. This project aims to assess the effects of land management in threatened glade ecosystems on protected State property through: 1) recording biodiversity of plants, amphibians, and reptiles, including birds; and 2) evaluating ecological parameters at each site (e.g., presence of invasive species, woody plant abundance, time since last prescribed burn). Missouri glades are dominated by tallgrass prairie grasses (i.e., Indiangrass, Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Switchgrass, and Prairie Dropseed) and other common prairie herbs, such as sunflowers (Asteraceae), legumes (Fabaceae), mints (Lamiaceae), and sedges (Cyperaceae). These ecosystems have shallow, rocky soils, and our research sites are represented by three distinct geological substrates (dolomite, igneous, and limestone). Glades are surrounded by forest habitat and isolated from each other, and the regular occurrence of prescribed fires (every 3-5 years) is required to maintain high levels of biodiversity in a glade and to allow plant species to disperse between other glades. Fire suppression, invasive species, and other disturbances have led to these ecosystems being severely threatened and warranting conservation efforts. Quedensley worked with Helaine Mills, an undergraduate biology student from Missouri Western State University, and they visited 29 glade sites and produced over 900 vouchered specimens. Dr. Tom Powers, plant pathologist from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, brought a team of nematode researchers to the Ozarks, and with Quedensley and Mills they sampled soil from nine different glades. The diversity of soil nematodes will contribute to our ability to predict which species are expected to be present in well-managed versus poorly-managed glade ecosystems. Plant specimens from this project are being deposited at the BRIT Herbarium, and duplicate specimens have been sent out to other U.S. herbaria. For more information, please contact Taylor Quedensley. 817.335.8157.

Center for Plant Conservation Honors Dr. Ed Schneider with Prestigious Star Award

BRIT hosted the 2018 National Meeting for the Center for Plant Conservation in early May. Founded in 1984, the Center for Plant Conservation is a network of 43 leading U.S. botanic institutions and is dedicated solely to preventing the extinction of rare and endangered plants in the U.S. and Canada. It operates the only coordinated national program of off-site (ex situ) conservation of rare plant material. This conservation collection ensures that material is available for restoration and recovery efforts for these species. The annual meeting brings together participating institutions and partners from across the country to discuss plant conservation efforts, methods, and best practices. The three-day meeting featured conservation updates by participating institutions, a keynote address by BRIT editor Barney Lipscomb, and the presentation of the STAR award for Excellence in Conservation to BRIT’s Executive Director and president, Dr. Ed Schneider. The STAR award is presented annually by the executive members of the Center for Plant Conservation to select individuals who demonstrate the concern, cooperation, and personal investment needed to conserve imperiled native plants. The first STAR Award was given in 2001. Dr. Schneider is the 27th recipient of the award.
Volunteers are GROWing

What a wonderful afternoon we had to celebrate our volunteers with perfect weather, good food, enjoyable music, and great company. All the GROW volunteers and their accomplishments were celebrated by the Fort Worth Botanic Garden and BRIT staffs at our GROWing in the GROVE party in April. We are grateful to have wonderful volunteers who help us spread our love of plants to the community by gardening in our many gardens, greeting our guests, leading tours in the Japanese Garden, engaging families at education programs, curating specimens, cataloging books in the library, cultivating begonias, creating indexes for press books, transcribing labels remotely, and much more. Both Dr. Ed Schneider and Bob Byers thanked all of our friends who spend time focused on our mission and support the two institutions. At the conclusion, the volunteers were also treated to the return of the traditional thank you song by the combined staff, "you can grow, let us grow, we will grow."

To get invited to this fun gathering in the future please sign up online to volunteer or contact Julie Donovan or Montana Williams.

Green Revolution

Green Revolution is an Environmental STEM, positive-youth-development, out-of-school-time (grades 6th – 12th) program that immerses youth in formative experiences to advance their personal development, civic engagement, and environmental stewardship. Our movement caught the attention of the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area team as they invited Green Revolution’s Agents of Change for their inaugural Mariposas event. Participants engaged in fun-filled activities including arts, crafts, learning, and service projects, all emphasizing the importance of habitat restoration and conservation in urbanized areas.

The Agents’ commitment to service learning shone during this event as they worked together to contribute to new habitat at LLELA and at various locations along the Trinity River trails, planting over 1,500 individuals of native plants. A Lewisville parent remarked, "These students in the orange are taking over the whole event. Maybe they should plan it next year!"

Green Revolution finished their Experience Saturday at LLELA by hiking and reflecting on life through the eyes of butterflies living in disturbed and protected habitats. These experiences brought together personal development, civic engagement, and environmental stewardship while providing invaluable exposure for our future community leaders. That’s GROWTH!

Sinker Cypress Soars Again

BRIT had left over sinker cypress from the lobby’s east wall. Stored for years, the scraps have found new life at the hands of a local artist. The coffee table top is cypress, joined together using wood glue and birch biscuits. The top is supported by a custom metal frame designed to incorporate a ripple design reminiscent of the Mississippi river which preserved the cypress for over a hundred years. Locking castors add mobility and give the piece an industrial chic look.

The sculpture, “Lines and Plains,” was inspired by the artist’s childhood experience of playing with wooden blocks and the love of aircraft inherited from his aerospace engineering father. Chris says, “I love the way the grain flows in the wood. It has very warm and sensuous patterns that bring out the design of the pieces.”

Interested parties may contact: Christopher Cunningham, MFA 817.707.8616
Calendar of Events

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 2</td>
<td>Bella's Story Time; Family Exploration Saturday; Exploring Texas Wildflowers; Landscaping with Native Plants; Fire Ants: How they got here and what to do about them; Masterpieces and Microscopes; Composting: Beyond the Basics; Aerated Compost Tea; Free Public Tour</td>
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<td>June 5</td>
<td>Brown Bag; Bella's Book and Nature Club</td>
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<td>June 9</td>
<td>Family Exploration Saturday</td>
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<td>June 11</td>
<td>Volunteer University</td>
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<td>June 11-14</td>
<td>Camp BRIT</td>
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<td>June 13</td>
<td>Seedlings</td>
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<td>June 16</td>
<td>Family Exploration Saturday; Teen Workshop: Botanical drawing &amp; watercolor</td>
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<td>June 18</td>
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<td>June 19</td>
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<td>June 25-28</td>
<td>Camp BRIT</td>
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<td>June 30</td>
<td>Family Exploration Saturday</td>
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Every Saturday (Mar-Nov): Family Exploration Saturday in the Garden from 1-4 p.m. BRIT Tours: Each Thursday at 1:30 p.m. brit.org