



NATURE NOTES

Dedicated to the Enjoyment and Conservation of the Natural Beauty of Sun City Texas at Georgetown

VOLUME 24

Issue 7

July 2022

Tuesday, July 19, 2:30 p.m., SCB

Wildlife Here Before and After Sun City Presented by Jim Christiansen

Tuesday, August 16, 2:30 p.m., SCB

The Songbirds of Williamson County Presented by Martin Byhower

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendars now and save the date.

December 5 – Nature Club Holiday Party

More information coming as we approach the date!

MEMBERSHIP DUES: \$6 for 2022

Dues include our monthly programs and all Special Interest Group programs and activities.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

Nature Club activities are posted on the [Nature Club](#) website calendar. E-mails are sent to Club members only.

REPTILES & MAMMALS

SIG Chair: Open

REPTILE ID, RELOCATION & MAPPING

FREE service, call:

- Jim Christiansen 512-868-3504
- Steve Kelley 512-639-0539
- John Leek 713-825-0145
- Joe Plunkett 774-226-0810
- City of Georgetown Animal Control 512-930-3592



We encourage residents to leave harmless, beneficial reptiles in their landscapes, but call us so we can identify and map all reptiles.

ASTRONOMY SIG

No Meetings in July or August
See you in September!



Check the Calendar for up-to-date info and watch for Special Viewing announcements.

SIG Chairs: Richard Wagoner & David Lingo

BIRDING SIG

Tues., **July 5**, 2:30 p.m., ACA – *“Birds and Butterflies in My Backyard”* presented by Jack Cochran, photographer/naturalist.
No SIG meeting in **August**



BIRD WALKS

Bird walks will resume in September
SIG Chairs: Ed Rozenburg & Martin Byhower

BUTTERFLY/MOTH SIG

No SIG Meeting in **July**
Tues., **August 2**, 2:30 p.m., ACA – *“State of the Monarchs”* presented by Ed Rozenburg



BUTTERFLY WALKS

Wed., **July 27.**, 10:00 a.m. Meet at the Tranquility trailhead off Lone Star.
Butterfly walks will resume in September
SIG Chair: Ed Rozenburg

GEOLOGY SIG

Tues., **July 26**, 4:00 p.m., ACA. *“The Geology and Origin of Carlsbad Caverns”* presented by Debra Rutan

Tues., **August 23**, 4:00 p.m., ACA. *“Practical Geology”* presented by Dave Weinberg

SIG Chair: Paul Swetland



Living With Wildlife SIG

Thur., **July 28**, 10:00 a.m., ACA, - *“Good Bug, Bad Bug”* Presented by Wayne Rhoden
Thur., **August 19**, 1:00 p.m., ACA, *“The Music of the Night”* Presented by Mary Ann Melton
SIG Chairs: Nancy Wagoner and Barbara Meisner

NATIVE PLANTS SIG

There will be no plant walks in **July** or **August**.
All plant walks start at 8:00 at the Rocky Hollow Trail Head Parking Lot.



SIG Chair: Pat Garren

Dealing with Deer in the Garden

Full disclosure; As a designer of sustainable, wildlife friendly gardens and landscapes, I find that deer are my single biggest challenge! Yes, they are cute and endearing as well as benign in most ways. But they play havoc with landscaping, whether you're using native plants or not. And they are one of the biggest threats to wild bird populations! This is true because in areas where they are overpopulated, they overgraze the shrubs and small trees of the forest understory, which provide food and shelter to numerous species of birds and other animals.

Dealing with deer involves trial and error and astute observation in order to detect their grazing presence. They can wipe out a newly planted bed in a day, sampling yet never actually eating a single plant. New plants smell especially interesting because of the soil that they are in; they are particularly vulnerable because they are easily uprooted and because they haven't developed the phytotoxin chemicals that will make at least some of them unpalatable to deer and other pests, eventually.

In helping folks choose which plants to use and then protecting a garden in areas where deer are present, I do the following.

- First, I like to find out **what the deer in that particular area are eating**. Many plants listed as deer resistant may not be so in certain neighborhoods, where the "deer culture" has come to relish them. For a variety of reasons, "deer resistant" plants become more resistant the longer they are in the ground. But if deer become overpopulated and their densities are not controlled, they will eat non-preferred items out of desperation.
- Next, if deer are an issue in the vicinity, I **select a palette of plants** that I believe will work.
- If the yard is **fenced**, deer will easily hop most fences under 6 or less feet high. The trick is to line the inside of the fence with plants, yard art, large rocks, etc. all about a few feet in from the fence. Deer have poor depth perception and won't leap into a yard if they can't see a landing spot. In my 7 years in Sun City, deer are in the unfenced part of my yard daily but have never hopped my fence!
- I **cage most plants** when I first plant them, because of the previously mentioned issues. The only ones I don't cage are most bunchgrasses, yuccas (although deer will eat the red flower stalks of red yuccas), cacti, and a few proven broadleaf plants. I may remove the cages if deer are unlikely to rut on the branches and the plant has been in the ground for a period of time, or (obviously) if the plant is growing taller than deer can reach. However, if there is a plant I really want to grow in my yard, I might leave it caged indefinitely. The green plastic coated metal mesh

material, not to mention the nonmetallic (green) plastic mesh, are not unappealing to me if they protect the plants I really like!

- Don't feed them! It is illegal in most communities because it does more harm than good for all wildlife, including deer themselves. Use mammal repelling birdseed or suet that contains CAYENNE PEPPER to keep ALL mammals (especially squirrels but also deer) away from your feeders.
- There are lots of other ways to discourage deer, but I haven't found one yet that works consistently over time. Deer Scram may be the best repellent product (it lasts longer than others and doesn't smell awful). Without wolves and mountain lions, coyotes are the deer's only remaining predator, but coyotes usually only take fawns or weakened individuals.

if you have gotten this far and still have questions, I'd be happy to try to answer them if you email me at avitropic@sbcglobal.net. Stay green!



For a list of deer resistant plants, see my website, martinbyhower.com