



2024 Fall Symposium ▾

Annual Symposia

2024 Spring Symposium

## 2024 Spring Symposium



### Registration is Open!

The NPSOT 2024 Spring Symposium is coming to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center March 2nd! The in-person event has filled to capacity, but you can still register for the virtual event! (Photo credit: LBJ Wildflower Center by Claire Sorenson)

### Event Overview

Saturday, March 2, 2024

at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Symposium 8:45 am - 3:00 pm | Tours from 3:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Hybrid Event: Recordings available to both in-person and virtual attendees approximately two weeks after the event.

### Agenda

**8:00 am - 8:45am** Check in and Light Breakfast begins

8:45 am - 9:00 am Welcome and Opening Remarks

9:00 am - 9:55 am Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies and Moths, Jim & Lynne Weber - Master Naturalists & Authors

9:55 am - 10:45 am Connecting Habitats in the Urban Environment and the Importance of Native Plants, Mei Ling Liu - Texas Conservation Alliance

**10:45 am - 11:00 am Break**

11:00 am - 11:55 am Lewisville's Roots For Wings Program: How One Texas Town Is Rethinking the American Lawn, TJ Gilmore - Mayor of Lewisville

**11:55 am - 12:55 pm Lunch**

**12:55 pm - 1:10 pm Chapter of the Year Announcement, Presentation of the Kate Hillhouse Quilt**

1:10 pm - 1:50 pm Student Research Studies:

Xinyi Yan - UT Austin: Maintaining Soil Microbial Diversity in Texas Grasslands

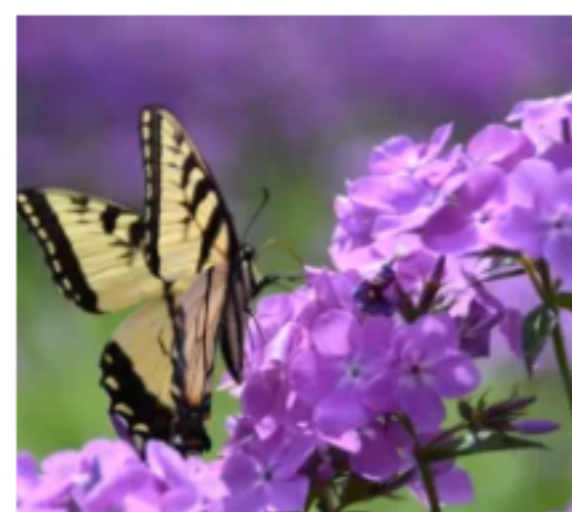
Silas Jenkins - TSU: *Quercus buckleyi* Seedlings: Does Mycorrhizal Inoculation Affect Drought Response?

1:50 pm - 2:45 pm Unique Ecological Systems and Associated Rare Flora of Texas, Jason Singhurst - Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

**2:45 pm - 3:00 pm Closing Remarks**

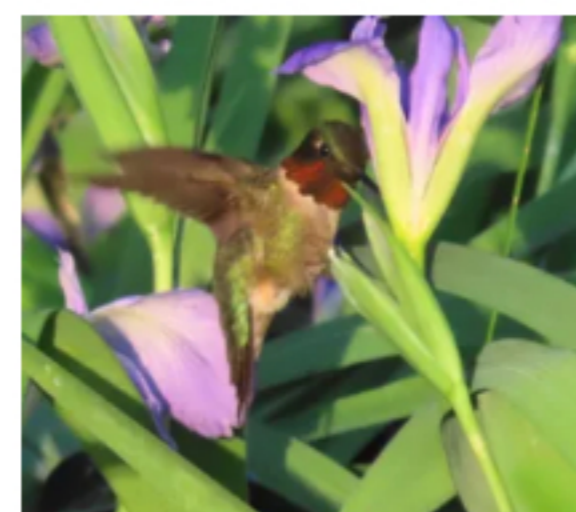
**3:00 pm - 3:30 pm Wildflower Center Guided Tour** (In-person only; Preregistration Required)

### 2024 Spring Symposium Details



#### In-Person Registration

The in-person event registration is now closed; please consider virtual event registration!



#### Virtual Registration

Register here to stream the event live and receive event recordings approximately two weeks after the event.



#### Speakers

Learn about our [speakers here!](#)



#### Program Information

Read more about the [presentations here!](#)

### Get in Touch

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## 2024 Spring Symposium Program Information

### "Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies and Moths," presented by Jim & Lynne Weber

Want to attract beautiful and beneficial pollinators like butterflies and moths to your garden? Learn about the special relationships that exist between several native plant species and the butterflies and moths that use them, beyond monarchs and milkweeds! Explore why native plants are essential to healthy ecosystems, the role of nectar and host plants, and how these insects find the desired host plant species upon which to lay their eggs. This talk will leave you with the knowledge and resources needed to encourage and appreciate a wider diversity of caterpillars, butterflies, and moths in a Texas native plant garden.

### "Connecting Habitats in the Urban Environment and the Importance of Native Plants," presented by Mei Ling Liu

Four major cities in Texas continue to develop substantially, with open fields rapidly transforming into housing, shopping complexes, car washes, etc. The relentless pace of ongoing development seems nearly unstoppable. The Native Plant Propagation Center, formed in 2022 through a partnership between the Dallas Zoo and TCA, aims to save pollinators by advocating for the use of native plants across North Texas. The presentation will share more details about the partnership, outlining how it has developed its current program and its impact on North Texas. Additionally, it will explore ways to mitigate the impact of habitat fragmentation and loss in our urban and suburban landscapes.

### "Lewisville's Roots For Wings Program: How One Texas Town Is Rethinking the American Lawn" presented by TJ Gilmore, Mayor of Lewisville, Texas

The March 2023 issue of Texas Monthly magazine featured a story about the City of Lewisville's Roots For Wings program which certifies residential pollinator and native habitat gardens. This program provides residents with training and education on site selection and preparation, plant selection and maintenance, and ecological benefits. The workshop is taught with the Native Plant Society of Texas, Denton County Master Gardeners, and Elm Fork Master Naturalists. In this presentation, you will hear from Lewisville Mayor TJ Gilmore who was a major proponent of this initiative. He will explain how Roots For Wings expands the city's commitment to sustainability, is an integral component of its strategic plan, explain program guidelines and partnerships, and how it is being implemented. We hope attendees will take away ideas of implementing similar programs and strategies in their communities.

### "Maintaining Soil Microbial Diversity in Texas Grasslands," presented by Xinyi Yan

Biodiversity loss and climate change are two key threats to native ecosystems. The loss of native plant diversity and of soil microbial diversity may reinforce each other due to their pervasive links and have cascading effects on ecosystem functioning. Further, drought or change in precipitation, which is increasingly affecting central Texas, may further complicate the impact of plant diversity on the soil microbial communities. To evaluate how native plant richness and phylogenetic diversity (PD) shape soil fungal communities under different water availabilities, we conducted a multi-year biodiversity-ecosystem functioning experiment at UT's Brackenridge Field Laboratory.

### "Quercus buckleyi Seedlings: Does Mycorrhizal Inoculation Affect Drought Response?" presented by Silas Jenkins

Most plants form mutualistic symbioses with particular taxa of fungi through their root systems. These relationships are known to benefit plants in several ways, including amelioration of drought stress, however soil fungal communities are spatiotemporally variable; a seedling may have more or less access to compatible fungal symbionts depending on microsite conditions. We conducted a factorial greenhouse experiment in which *Quercus buckleyi* seedlings were introduced to inocula sourced from four site types and subsequently droughted in attempts to answer the questions: Does inocula provenance influence the mycorrhizal partnerships formed in early life stages? Do these relationships impact resilience to water scarcity? As hot drought conditions become more frequent and severe in Central Texas, understanding potential dependence on soil mutualists could inform our restoration techniques.

### "Unique Ecological Systems and Associated Rare Flora of Texas," presented by Jason Singhurst

Details coming soon!

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## 2024 Spring Symposium Speakers

The Native Plant Society of Texas is pleased to welcome our 2024 Spring Symposium Speakers:



### Lynne and Jim Weber, Master Naturalists and Authors

Both Lynne and Jim Weber are retired from 30+ year accomplished careers at IBM. They are certified Texas Master Naturalists and Lynne is a past president of the Capital Area chapter. The Webers are dedicated naturalists who have been studying Texas natural history since they moved to Austin in 1989. They have served on the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) as well as on the boards of the Big Bend Natural History Association, the Big Bend Conservancy, and the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute. They conduct Golden-cheeked Warbler and Colima Warbler surveys, lead guided hikes, restore native habitat, map and remove invasive plants, and are stewards of an 8-acre preserve that is part of the BCP. Their nature photography and writing appears on Flickr (https://www.flickr.com/photos/webersaustin/) and on their monthly blog (http://naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com) as well as in several nature publications. They have co-authored *Nature Watch Austin* (2012), *Nature Watch Big Bend* (2017), *Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies* (2018), a 2021 NPSOT Carroll Abbott Award Winner, *Native Host Plants for Texas Moths* (2022), a 2023 NPSOT Carroll Abbott Award Winner, and *Naturalists Austin: A Guide to the Plants and Animals of Central Texas* (2024), all published by Texas A&M University Press.



### Mei Ling Liu, Texas Conservation Alliance

Mei Ling oversees the Community Conservation program at Texas Conservation Alliance (TCA). At TCA, one of Mei Ling's primary responsibilities involves prairie restoration, which encompasses managing the Native Plant Propagation Center dedicated to growing native plants. Additionally, Mei Ling is involved in the Lights Out, Texas! initiative. Another of her responsibilities is organizing community events, encouraging public participation in prairie restoration and clean-ups.

Mei Ling earned her B.A. and her M.A. in Taiwan. In 2013, she moved to Texas where she pursued a M.Sc. in International Sustainable Tourism from the University of North Texas. In 2019, while working in her backyard, she discovered a bumblebee nest, which broadened and heightened her passion for wildlife conservation. Prior to joining TCA, Mei Ling worked at the Dallas Zoo Volunteer Services Department, where her knowledge of wildlife conservation and community engagement blossomed.

Today, in addition to her work with TCA, she is a Texas Master Naturalist with the Blackland Prairie Chapter and a member of the Collin County Chapter of the NPSOT.



### TJ Gilmore, Mayor of Lewisville, Texas

**Personal:** Lewisville Resident since 2001; Wife, Tanya; Children, Bridget, Thomas, William; Father was a cutting horse trainer and mother worked as a hospital clerk

**Academic:** 1991 Graduate of Kofa High School, Yuma, Arizona; 1996 Graduate of University of Arizona - B.A. Social and Behavior Science, Minor in Business

**Occupation:** Sales Team Manager, Isogent - 2023-Present; Client Engagement Manager, Isogent - 2019-2023; Public Sector Manager, Waste Management - 2016-2019; Regional Sales Account Executive, ICON Voice Networks - 2002-2016; Dale Carnegie Training Sales Executive - 1996-2000; Dale Carnegie Training Instructor - 1999-2014

**Civic Activities:** Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) - 2019-Present (2019 Vice Chair, 2024 Chair); North Central Texas Council of Governments Emergency Preparedness Planning Council - 2018-2020; Metrocrest Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors - 2018-2019; Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team - 2017-Present; Denton County Behavioral Health Leadership Team - 2017-Present; 2016 and 2014 - Mayor Pro Tem; 2013 - Deputy Mayor Pro Tem; May 2011 - Elected to Place No. 3, Living Chamber Board of Directors - 2003 - 2004; Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra Board Member - 2004 - 2005; 2013 - Graduate Lewisville Citizens Fire Academy; 2011 - Lewisville Planning and Zoning Commissioner; 2009 - Graduate Lewisville Citizens Police Academy; 2005 - 2011 - Lewisville Community Development Block Grant Committee; 2005 - 2007 - Member; 2008 - 2009 - Vice Chairman; 2009 - 2010 - Chairman, Citizen Participant; Lewisville Urban Drilling Ordinance Committee - 2010 - 2011; Cub Scout Pack 323 - Parent and Cubmaster; Troop 9168 Committee Chair 2015 - 2017.



### Xinyi Yan, 2022 Recipient of the Ann Miller Gonzalez Grant

Xinyi Yan studies Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior at University of Texas at Austin, co-advised by Drs. Caroline Farrior and Amy Wolf. Her research focuses on interactions between plants and soil microbes in a changing world, and how these interactions shape plant coexistence and community assembly. To answer these questions, she uses a variety of approach such meta-analysis, theory, field experiment and soil sequencing.

Under anthropogenic change, the loss of plant diversity and of soil microbial diversity can reinforce each other, and the feedback can have cascading effects on ecosystem functioning. My proposed research aims to help understand the link between Texas native plant diversity and their soil microbial communities. In particular, I aim to answer how plant taxonomic, phylogenetic, and functional diversities each influence soil microbial diversity and composition, and how the diversity-diversity links differ under conditions of altered precipitation and biotic interactions. To answer these questions, I use a local field experiment of 12 Texas native plant species with treatments of plant taxonomic diversities, plant phylogenetic diversities, watering, and insect exclusion. I helped collect plant trait data and will sequence soil fungal communities collected from each treatment plots. I will then conduct statistical analysis to explore the relationship between soil fungal diversity (and composition) and the treatments. Results from this project will help elucidate the impact of biodiversity loss and environmental change on plant-microbe interactions, and provide insights on native plant conservation and soil restoration.



### Silas Jenkins, 2022 recipient of the Ann Miller Gonzalez Grant

Silas is a graduate student in the Biology Department at the Texas State University. Their research focuses on the potential effects of inoculum source and mycorrhizal status for Quercus buckleyi growth and drought stress response at the seedling stage. This greenhouse study will endeavor to answer the overarching question: Does mycorrhizal inoculum affect drought response in Quercus buckleyi seedlings? Specifically, a) does the ecological origin of the inoculum affect the rate of root mycorrhization and the identity of the mycorrhizae (arbuscular vs. ectomycorrhizal as the first approximation of taxonomy); b) does the drought treatment change the mycorrhization rate and mycorrhizal identity; and c) do initial colonization patterns or their changes during drought affect plant response to drought?



### Jason Singhurst, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

I am a Botanist and Plant Community Ecologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department with an interest in the flora of Texas. I am especially interested in conserving rare and declining plant communities of Texas, with an emphasis on conserving rare, endemic, and peripheral flora of Texas that occur within these communities. I am highly interested in documenting tallgrass prairies. I am also very interested in isolated wetlands state wide. I also support the fishes of Texas project.

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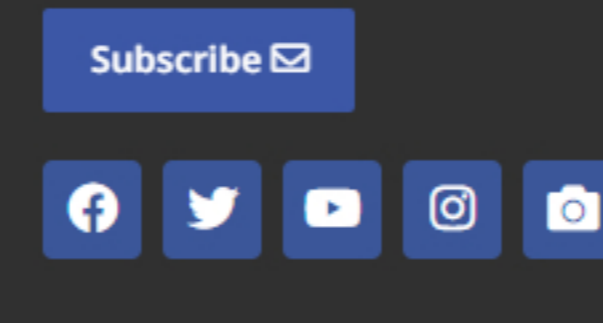
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