



Oxley Nature Center Newsletter

Volume 145

May/June, 2003

Reflections by Eddie Reese

I like spring. You would think I would get used to it by now. But I am always amazed at the transformation. It's always exciting to see the first violet. We made a special trip to the North Woods just to see the trout lilies. I experience these events every year. The deer coats change from winter gray to summer reddish brown and the summer birds return. It never gets old. It's like I see all of them for the first time every spring. But how can one get used to seeing miracles? I'm glad they keep coming back.

Another favorite spring activity of mine is rummaging through the plant nurseries across town. Sometimes I'm looking for something in particular. Sometimes I'm just looking for a surprise. I never know what I might discover. One thing is for sure, I have come to look at every plant new to me with suspicion. Will it become the next botanical nightmare? Most of the plants in the nurseries are non-native. They could have come from anywhere on the planet. I'm not opposed to foreigners, it's just that sometimes they find a way to get their offspring into some wild place like the nature center. Most of these plants never make it in the wild. But a few of these beautiful, harmless-looking plants transform into monsters. Back home in their native habitat they may just get by. There is a bug that keeps eating on them, or the climate suppresses them. But in their new world none of these pressures that make them behave exist and they go rampant. The plants already there can't keep up with them.

Take Japanese honeysuckle for example. I don't know how it got here, but I know it spreads. One plant can eventually cover hundreds of square yards. On Yale Avenue near 36th Street North I noticed a small patch of honeysuckle on a fence. It was about two square yards in size last spring. Right now it may cover a quarter of an acre. There is no sign of it slowing down; it just keeps spreading. Any plants in its way are covered up. It's just like laying a blanket over them. Eventually, for lack of sunlight and competition for water and nutrients the natives die out. I'll never forget the day I found a wildflower I hadn't seen before. It was on a street right-of-way. I had not seen it anywhere else and I have not seen it since. But it's not in that spot anymore. There was lots of honeysuckle nearby that had spread to that spot and choked the little wildflower out.

There are other troublesome plants here like that. The list can get long. Some of the bad guys are sericea lespedeza, Johnson grass, Chinese wisteria, and Bermuda grass. They're not intrinsically bad. It's just that when they escape from cultivation and become the only plant in the woods or prairie, they have crossed over to the dark side. If I have to lose a species from the nature center I would prefer to lose one that is invasive instead of the ephemeral trout lilies in the North Woods. If voracious plants such as honeysuckle, creeping euonymus, and liriope win the war, where in Tulsa can we go see trout lilies. Next spring would really be a bummer.

What about the affect on wildlife. With the spread and dominance of exotic species our plant diversity diminishes. That affects the wildlife. One example is the yucca plant. If sericea lespedeza overruns the yucca patch at Redbud Valley and the yucca disappears there goes the yucca moth as well. The yucca moth depends upon the yucca plant for survival. We could discuss lots of examples and there are some plant/animal relationships that we haven't discovered yet. So, if you see a patch of honeysuckle or lespedeza being removed, remember what is being preserved. And plan a trip next March to see the trout lilies and other spring flowers.

Nature Center Happenings

Oxley and Redbud Valley will be closed:

Friday, May 23 and Monday, May 26, 2003 for Memorial Day Holiday



OXLEY AND REDBUD HOURS:

The gates at Oxley Nature Center are open daily, with the exception of most City holidays, from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. At Oxley, you may park outside the gates from 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. to walk the trails even when the gates are closed.

At Redbud Valley Nature Preserve, the gates are open Wednesdays through Sundays, from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. You may **not** hop the fence when the Nature Preserve is closed: on Mondays or Tuesdays, on City holidays, before 8:00 a.m., or after 5:00 p.m.

PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Call: 669-6644 to register or for more information about programs. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult, unless otherwise stated. Programs that are wheelchair accessible are designated with the ♣ symbol.

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

Kid's Saturday Programs

\$5 for general public, \$3 for members, all ♣

Discovery Club (Ages 3-5 years)

Each child accompanied by an adult, please

May 17, 10:00-11:30 "Sun and Shadow"

We will go outside and look for our shadows and make sun pictures. Sign-up begins Sunday, May 4.



Adventure Club (Grades K-2nd)

Kid's only, please

May 17, 10:00-11:30 "Playing 'Possum"

Come learn about one of our most common yet unique animals. Sign-up begins Sunday, May 4.



Star Program

**\$2 for general public
free to members**

All ages welcome

♣ **with advance notice**

"Total Lunar Eclipse"

**Thursday, May 15,
8:00-9:00 p.m.**

The total eclipse of the moon will start long before the moon rises over Tulsa. In fact, the moon will reach its darkest moments of totality a few minutes before it rises. Bring something to sit on and binoculars or a telescope if you wish. We'll watch the sun set, the moon rise and the eclipse proceed as the moon moves out of the earth's shadow. Meet at the circle drive on the east side of Lake Yahola. Sign-up begins May 4.

Welcome to New Volunteers

Oxley Nature Center staff would like to welcome **Linda Godbold** and **Vernon Jackson** as our new volunteer naturalists after their graduation from spring training. We also welcome **Carol Eames** who will assist us with clerical work and **Maria DeLong** who will be helping with trail work.

Programs and special events

May

3 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All ■
 Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
 Free registration not required



Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.
 Bring binoculars if you have them.

10 "Butterfly ID for Beginners" Ages: All ■
 Saturday 10:00-11:30 a.m.
 Free registration not required



We will be helping beginners recognize different types of butterflies. We'll view slides and specimens indoors and then go outside for the last 45 minutes. Meet at Oxley. Bring binoculars if you have them.

10 "Family Nature Walk" Ages: All
 Saturday 1:30-3:00 p.m.
 \$2 for general public free to members

We will explore the mysteries of the Wildlife Study Area Trail. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins April 27.

17 "Breakfast at Redbud" Ages: All
 Saturday 8:00-10:30 a.m.
 \$2 for general public free to members



Bring a brown bag breakfast. We'll go for a hike afterwards. Meet at Redbud Valley. Sign-up begins May 4.

You can contribute to Oxley Nature Center Association when you access Amazon.com through the Nature Center's website. To make your purchase go to:
["http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org"](http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org)
 and click on **Amazon.com**. Oxley will get a 10% share of the sale!

June

7 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All ■
 Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
 Free registration not required



Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.
 Bring binoculars if you have them.

8 "Shapes & Patterns in Nature" Ages: All ■
 Sunday 2:00-3:30 p.m.
 \$2 for general public free to members

Shapes and patterns in nature are the language that unlock the mysteries of the wild. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins May 25.

14 "Butterfly Walk" Ages: All ■
 Saturday 10:00-11:30 a.m.
 Free Registration not required



Meet in Oxley parking lot promptly at 10:00 a.m.
 Bring binoculars if you have them.

22 "Redbud Valley Backcountry Hike" Ages: All ■
 Sunday 9:00-12:00 noon
 \$2 for general public free to members

Explore the backcountry at Redbud Valley not often seen by anyone. This is a very rugged and difficult hike and is not recommended for small children or the physically limited. For ages 9 to adult. Long pants are mandatory. Snacks and water are recommended. Meet at Redbud Valley. Sign-up begins June 8.

28 "Suntime & Funtime" Ages: All ■
 Saturday 1:30-3:00 p.m.
 \$5 for general public \$3 for members

You'll never lose track of time after making this sunclock. You'll learn how to use it with ideas as old as time itself. The best part -- it doesn't need batteries. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins June 15.

Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day--May 10

Many of the birds that nest and raise young in Oklahoma get here from their winter quarters in Central and South America by flying thousands of miles each spring. You can enjoy them by learning more about them through observation and reading. You can also help them by providing fresh food and water, nesting sites and cover. Visit your local nature center, zoo and parks. Become involved in national and local bird organizations. Celebrate the birds!



7th Annual Outdoors Woman Weekend

Saturday, May 31 and Sunday, June 1



Are you a person who enjoys the outdoors, but would like to gain confidence and learn more skills? Here is your chance! Women (and men) ages 18 and up are invited to enroll in a variety of outdoor-skills related classes being held at Oxley Nature Center. Some highlights offered:

- ✿ Fly-fishing and fly-tying
- ✿ Butterfly identification
- ✿ Dutch oven cooking
- ✿ Map and compass
- ✿ Geocaching with a GPS unit

- ✿ Backpacking and hiking
- ✿ Primitive skills - make a catfish-bone needle or a looped string bag
- ✿ Tai Chi
- ✿ Adventure sampler - rock wall climbing, bicycle repair and equipment selection.



All necessary equipment will be provided.
Payment must be received at time of registration.

To request a registration packet
or for more information:
phone 918-669-6644
fax 918-669-6653
Oxley@ci.Tulsa.OK.US
www.oxleynaturecenter.org

