



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

Adult Education Workshops

- Feb 3: Introduction to Botanical Watercolors: Next Steps
- Feb 3: Permaculture Basics for Home Gardeners
- Feb 3: Eye and the Microscope
- Feb 3: Raised Beds and Irrigation Systems
- Feb 24: Bring Color into Your Home with Terrariums
- Mar 3: Lichens: The Introductory Course
- Mar 3: Introduction to Botanical Illustrations with Colored Pencils
- Mar 3: Culinary Herbal Infusions



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



New Exhibit in the Madeline R. Samples Exhibit Hall - Texas Jewish Arts Association

BRIT is pleased to welcome members of the Texas Jewish Arts Association (TJAA) to the Madeline R. Samples Exhibit Hall March 16 – May 3, 2018. The TJAA's wide-ranging exhibition features artworks in a variety of media from the well-respected Texas Jewish Arts Association. Stop by on Spring Gallery Night, March 24, 2018 from 4 - 9 p.m. to view this unique group show and join us for the opening reception from 6 - 8 p.m. TJAA artist's will be on hand to discuss their art with the public. BRIT members are invited to attend our opening reception and will take home a special BRIT commemorative. For more information, please contact [Laura Venhaus](#) at 817.546.1844.

BRIT Reads Book Club: Discussing Two Books on Monday, February 19

WALDEN *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau



Join us February 19 (noon – 12:45 p.m.) as we kick off our new year of reading by discussing a classic American memoir, *Walden*, by noted transcendentalist author Henry David Thoreau. Is *Walden* a socialist manifesto, a how-to manual for living the simple life, or just the musings of a wordy recluse? And, what exactly did Thoreau mean when he said “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately?”

HALF-EARTH *Half Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life* by Edward O. Wilson



Also February 19 (12:45 – 1:30 p.m.) we will discuss *Half Earth*, the latest book by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Edward O. Wilson. In this work, called "his most urgent book to date", the author lays out a proposal for preserving the biodiversity of our planet and saving ourselves from mass extinction.

For more information, please contact [Laura Venhaus](#) at 817.546.1844.

Vine to Table

Wine Dinner & Auction & Special Presentation of the 2018 International Sustainable Wine growing Award to Alexander Valley Vineyards of Sonoma County, California

Event Chairs, Gina & Bob Ravnas

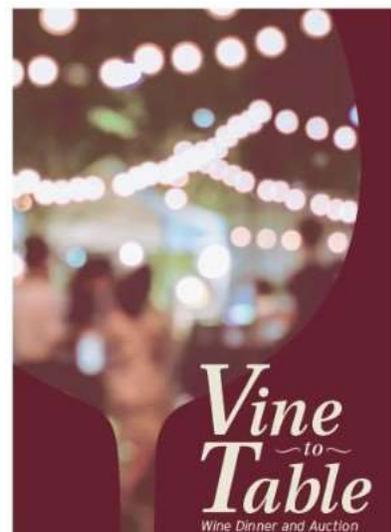
Alfresco at Botanical Research Institute of Texas
Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 6:00 P.M.

Featuring Celebrity Chefs

- Lead Chef Michael Thomson of Michael's Cuisine
- Jon Bonnell of Bonnell's Restaurant Group
- Terry Chandler of Fred's Texas Café
- Tim Love of Tim Love Restaurants
- Molly McCook of Ellerbe Fine Foods
- Bernard Tronche of Saint-Emilion Restaurant

Join us for a delicious and casual evening of fabulous auction items, wining, and dining.

RSVP by March 21, by contacting [Sara Richardson](#) at 817.332.2748 or purchasing tickets online.



Research, Collections, & Publications



Texas' Hidden Flora

Research Botanist Taylor Quedensley was busy this winter hunting for bryophytes (mosses, liverworts, and hornworts), and lichen-forming fungi in Texas. He visited Blue Mountain Peak Ranch, the Double Helix Ranch, and Mason Mountain Wildlife Management Area in Mason County. He also collected at two private properties in Hamilton and Montague Counties, respectively. Lastly, Quedensley traveled to Purtil Creek (Van Zandt County), Mission Tejas (Houston County), and Fort Boggy (Leon County) State Parks. Dale Kruse, BRIT Research Associate and Texas A&M Biologist, collected with Quedensley at two of those parks and they found many taxa of bryophytes and lichens. At Fort Boggy S.P., Quedensley collected *Multiclavula vernalis* on soil, genus of lichen-forming fungi that has not yet been reported for Texas. In the photo the white, upright structures are the fruiting fungal bodies. Quedensley and Kruse also collected a hornwort, a group of bryophytes that is represented by fewer than 150 species worldwide. The “green horns” of the hornwort are the spore-producing structures (sporophytes). Taylor collected over 600 specimens in December and early January and these specimens are being processed and identified and will be deposited in the herbarium at BRIT. Duplicate specimens will sent out to other herbaria to support our specimen exchange program. Interested in more information? Contact [Taylor Quedensley](mailto:Taylor.Quedensley@brt.tamu.edu) at.817.335.8157

Removing Herbarium Cabinet Seals

One of the first steps in curating the R. Dale Thomas Collection, the herbarium specimens rescued from the University of Louisiana, Monroe, is ensuring its security. Herbarium specimens are vulnerable to damage from light, bugs, rodents, dust, and water. The metal cabinets that are used to store herbarium specimens are designed to protect from these damaging elements conveniently and easily if they are in good shape and sealed airtight.



Each cabinet of the 336 received from the university was inspected to confirm that it was performing its job. Of the 336, there were 156 cabinets with seals that appeared damaged or deteriorated. We decided to fix this problem before moving forward with the curation process.

Adhesive turned out to be a lot trickier to remove than anticipated – trying to just peel it off with fingers was frustrating and would have taken a lifetime. A simple Google search revealed dozens of ways to remove sticky substances from various surfaces. Thus, we turned to trial and error tests of alcohol alone, a homemade goo gone with orange citrus oil, and then goo gone alone.

Finally, we stumbled on the idea of using a heat gun and a paint scraper. This method seemed extreme at first, but we realized it was the only one that was completely melting off all the adhesive and leaving us with a clean surface for a new seal to be properly placed.

There and Back Again



On December 15, 2017, Research Botanist Taylor Quedensley visited the San Francisco Botanical Garden, where he volunteered from 1998-2001. The stunning *Deppea splendens* (Rubiaceae) pictured, was first collected in the cloud forests of Chiapas, Mexico by Dr. Dennis Breedlove, then a botanist at the California Academy of Sciences. Breedlove brought back seeds of this plant in 1972, and he has contributed many other Mexican cloud forest plants to the Garden in San Francisco throughout his career. This shrub is thought to be extinct in the wild, and through botanical explorations this species was likely rescued from extinction by a botanical explorer.



Deppea splendens continues to thrive at the Garden thanks to efforts by Dr. Don Mahoney (curator and former horticultural manager) and the Garden volunteers to save the species. For over three decades Dr. Mahoney has been instrumental in focusing on conservation horticultural practices at the San Francisco Botanical Garden through the propagation and cultivation of rare and/or threatened species, especially from Latin American cloud forests.

The plant to the left of Quedensley in the photo is *Roldana gilgii*, an endemic cloud forest species from Guatemala and adjacent Chiapas, Mexico, and on the right his hand is on *Montanoa guatemalensis*, a tree that has attained a height of 55 feet at the Garden and is one of the tallest member of the Sunflower Family (Asteraceae) in the mountainous regions of Chiapas, Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. Both of these plants were grown from seed collected by Quedensley during his graduate work on Pico Zunil in Western Guatemala. Quedensley often cites the influences of Breedlove's collections and Mahoney's horticultural expertise as having helped shape his career ambitions to become a botanist. For more information, please contact [Taylor Quedensley](mailto:Taylor.Quedensley@sfbg.org) at.817.335.8157.

Miscellaneous



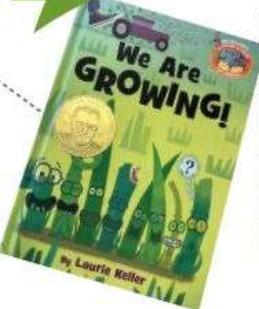
Green Revolution has used this school-year 2017-2018 to take an in depth look at water. We've explored: the quality and quantity of surface water in North Texas through an exploration of watershed systems, the intersection of water and land management, water's connection to renewable energy, and the search for water on other planets.

In December, the Pre-Alumni Council (PAC) journeyed to the world-class Village Creek Reclamation Facility to investigate the wastewater cycle and the process of treating 165 million gallons of wastewater per day. The trip brought abstract water concepts to life through a dynamic lesson that unraveled the mystery of what happens to wastewater after vanishing into the sewer.

The integration of biology, physics, and chemistry apparent at each stage of wastewater treatment formed a splash in the PAC's understanding. "I didn't know that bacteria, pressure, and chemicals could be used this way to clean our wastewater. This is awesome!" The tour of the more than 60-acre plant concluded with an explanation of its efforts to harness residual waste methane to generate electricity necessary to meet the energy demand of cleaning wastewater. This built on the PAC's foundational understanding of conservation and sustainability, advancing Green Revolution's efforts to grow tomorrow's environmental stewards today.

Do you consider yourself a part of the water cycle and have you thought about how you can help make our water clean and bountiful? Green Revolution's Pre-Alumni Council now does and is motivated to share their learning with others. The ripples these leaders will make in the future of water conservation within and beyond Green Revolution is possible because of the gracious support of its sponsors: Rainwater Charitable Foundation and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

FROM YAY TO HOORAY!






Science literacy is at the heart of the BRIT SEED School! At Region 11's Lib2Tell conference, several hundred librarian educators and public-school staff members became engaged in environmental experiential learning during a session titled, "A Novel Approach to Biodiversity".

As we GROW, let's reflect on the success of our established Field Study Trips. In 2017, 31 different campuses from 12 districts made BRIT their outdoor environmental education destination. 2,467 learners discovered our living laboratory. In 2018, our format and content expands as we GROW!

The Celebration Meter

To learn more about SEED School Programs, or if you are interested in sponsoring a teacher or school to attend these programs, please contact Tracy Friday at tfriday@brit.org



Five things the SEED School is celebrating this month!



GROW with us! BRIT Education and Fort Worth Botanic Garden Education are now the same team! Watch for the GROW logo to identify collaborative efforts from the two organizations. This is just a sneak peak of the great things growing in 2018!

Through BRIT & Fort Worth Botanic Garden's collaborative efforts GROW offered a Home School Field Study Trip that exceeded all expectations. 125 home learners & their families enjoyed a day of exploring & discovery at BRIT & the Fort Worth Botanic Garden as the first hints of spring were seen in our urban landscape.

BRIT and the FWSS&R partnered on three successful events and saw 525 students in January: College Ag Day, the Wildlife Contest, and the Range Plant ID Contest. Each event helped students connect with the plant world and future career pathways.

Donors Made Honorary Curators of the Philecology Herbarium

The R. Dale Thomas Collection, the herbarium specimens rescued from the University of Louisiana, Monroe, added 472,000 specimens to BRIT's herbarium. We appreciate the contributions from the donors, and the work of our interns, volunteers and staff that made this acquisition possible. We are also grateful for the National Science Foundation grant that is covering the cost of initial curation of this collection to make it secure and accessible to researchers and the public.

The move of this endangered collection from Louisiana to Texas was made possible primarily through the tremendous support of Billy Brentlinger, President, Seville Farms, Inc., and Bob O'Kennon, Resident Research Associate. They underwrote the cost of the two trips made to move the collection. This included loading the cabinets onto freezer trucks, storing them in the trucks to kill the insects, transporting the cabinets, and moving the collection into the BRIT building.

At BRIT's 2017 Annual meeting of the Board of Directors, Billy Brentlinger and Bob O'Kennon were recognized for their commitment of time, resources, and funds that made the acquisition of the R. Dale Thomas Collection possible. In appreciation, BRIT made them Honorary Herbarium Curators of BRIT's Philecology Herbarium. President Ed Schneider, and Research Vice President Peter Fritsch presented Honorary Herbarium Curator certificates to the honorees, and duplicate certificates will hang in the herbarium.



Volunteer Staff is Growing



Please join us in welcoming two new staff members to the Volunteer and Public Engagement Department. Montana Williams is our new Volunteer Associate Director who recently graduated with his MBA from Colorado State University and moved to Ft. Worth to join the GROW collaboration. Montana has worked for multiple public gardens and a municipality tending many beautiful gardens, but throughout these experiences he attests that the stories he heard from volunteers and garden patrons were always the most rewarding part. He also feels botanic gardens should reflect their region and people, and that volunteers play an essential role in cultivating this image through their continuous support and input.



Also joining our staff is recent Bachelor of Science graduate of Tarleton State University, Sarah Brown. Majoring in biology and minoring in history, Sarah spent time focusing on plant physiology. Formerly a BRIT intern she helped us with the High-Performance Landscape research project and she now is our new Public Engagement Assistant. Science and plants became a passion of hers in college; but she has been interested in the outdoors since a child maintaining gardens with her mother at their home in

Tennessee.

For information about volunteering please contact [Julie Donovan](#), Director of Volunteers & Public Engagement at 817.546.1842.

High-Performance Landscapes Project Presentation

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 come to a completion. This spring the principal investigators will present the conclusions of this project focusing on landscaping decisions and their effects on water use, pollinators, and carbon footprint. We will even showcase the High-Performance Landscapes calculator tool! Check the next Leaflet and watch the BRIT website for the official presentation date. 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.

Memberships are essential to BRIT's success. Members are part of preserving BRIT's priceless library and plant collections, while supporting the Institution's educational, environmental, and research programming and help to increase the public's appreciation of plants and the natural world. **We Thank You!**

Your Memberships benefits:

- Free subscription to BRIT's Monthly Email and subscription to Better Homes and Gardens or Martha Stewart Living
- Free Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo gate entrance per cardholder
- Discount on facility rental, birthday parties, and at local retail nurseries (Calloway's Nursery, Marshall Grain, Mingos Garden Center, Redenta's Garden Shops, and The Tree Place.)
- Discount to attend Adult Education workshops, Camp BRIT, and other special programs
- Discount at 300+ botanical gardens (ahs.org), including FW Japanese Garden, Dallas Arboretum, and Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
- Invitation to galas and exhibit openings in the Madeline R. Samples Exhibit Hall

If you have any questions regarding your memberships, please call our 817.332.7518.

Member Spotlight - Trudy and Charles Hess

Q: How did you come to be interested in conservation and botany?

A: Our earliest realization of the need to protect our fragile environment comes from our SCUBA diving days. The exposure to what was then mostly undisturbed ecosystems, and the exposure to an incredible display of diversity with all its amazing interrelationships, gave us an understanding of the true complexity of nature. And of course, we greatly value its beauty also. A very important part of SCUBA certification was the emphasis on not disturbing the environment. This instilled in us a lasting respect for nature which has evolved into our deep concern for the survival of critical habitats. In our lifetime we have sadly witnessed the massive destruction of large parts of our ecosystem.

After retiring from Texas Instruments, I had more time to spend with my collection of orchids, many originating from the species I brought (legally at that time) from the Philippines. But it was my interest in flowers, and a talent in art which I inherited from my parents, that brought me ultimately to my interest in the BRIT.

A few years after retiring, I began painting watercolors of orchids in my collection. My art inspiration came from my orchid print by Margaret Mee depicting the exotic beauty she saw in her 30 years living in Brazil and her multiple trips into the Amazon. I displayed my art at orchid shows around the Southwest and started donating the proceeds of sales to support conservation efforts as a tribute to Margaret Mee, who used her art to bring the beauty of the Amazon flora to the public's attention. Because she personally witnessed such vast destruction of habitat during her 30 years in Brazil and her 15 trips on the Amazon River, she is considered a pioneer in the conservation movement.

Q: How did you become interested in BRIT?

A: Who would not be interested in the BRIT? Particularly after having the fortunate opportunity to be in Tiana Rehman's (Herbarium Collections Manager) training class on Botany in the Master Naturalist program. Or, after listening to Barney Lipscomb's (Dorothea Leonhardt Chair of Texas Botany, Head of BRIT Press) talk on the botanical history of Texas. Both Tiana and Barney are passionate emissaries for one of Fort Worth's botanical treasures, as are the numerous staff and volunteers with whom I have had the good fortune to become acquainted.

Q: Can you tell us more about your careers?

A: Trudy and I are both retired in the sense that we are no longer working for a paycheck. But we are still working as hard as ever in our second career, which is doing everything we can to preserve and protect our precious environment.

Trudy began her professional career as an elementary teacher, completing her Master's Degree in Education at the same time. Her interests gravitated to a more technical area, and after a few years of teaching she joined General Electric, and later Johnson & Johnson, as a business



application programmer, completing her MBA from Seton Hall during that time. Eventually she started her own consulting business, still in the IT field.

I served in the U.S. Air Force for 5 years, and then spent 25 years with Texas Instruments Semiconductor Division as an engineer, ultimately focusing on IC chip assembly and quality/reliability issues for telecom customers. I hold a Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering from University of Alabama, and an MBA from Southern Methodist University.

While with Texas Instruments, I had the fortunate opportunity to participate in the 1980 startup of an IC assembly factory in Baguio City in the Philippines, where I stayed on for almost 5 years and developed a lifelong interest in the amazing Philippine orchid species found on Luzon island and throughout the archipelago.

Now in our second career phase, we keep very busy pursuing creative and educational avenues. Trudy's computer expertise is now focused on our website (OrchidArtbyCharlesHess.com), as well as the environmental content of our monthly newsletter, which benefits from her communication and writing skills. I continue to focus on expanding my gallery of orchid watercolors and on developing the impact of orchid society conservation members.

Q: Why do you support BRIT?

A: Trudy and I both understand the importance of restoring humanity's connection with nature. BRIT's mission of connecting to, and educating new generations through their community outreach programs is part of a larger program to preserve our biosystem for the future inhabitants of this planet. People will only protect what they know and value. Exposure to nature is vital if we are to slow down the mass extinction taking place. BRIT is an important part of a vast network of organizations engaged in this endeavor.

Q: Any other thoughts we would like to share?

A: Ever since taking a tour of the vaults with Dr. Peter Fritsch, I am excited and intrigued with the prospect of possibly helping to digitize the herbarium samples of orchid herbarium specimens at the BRIT. Because volunteering has been such an enjoyable and educational experience for me personally, I am hoping to persuade other members of my orchid community to participate along with me.

My plans for 2018 include discussing the need or feasibility of the above with Peter and, of course, working with Laura Venhaus on a BRIT Gallery exhibit of orchid watercolors.

Thank you, Trudy and Charlie, for sharing with us your continued commitment to preserve our environment and for supporting BRIT!

Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY

3rd—Bella's Saturday Story Time; Introduction to Botanical Watercolors: Next Steps; Permaculture Basics for Home Gardeners; Eye and the Microscope; Raised Beds and Irrigation Systems

6th—Brown Bag; Bella Book & Nature Club

12th—Volunteer University

20th—Teacher Tuesday

24th—Bring Color into Your Home with Terrariums

BRIT tours: Each Thursday at 1:30 p.m. and 1st Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.

Additional information can be found at brit.org.

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