



BRIT LEAFLET

BOTANICAL RESEARCH
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

2016 June

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.

BRIT Brown Bag Summer Series

Join us for a brown bag (or two!) this summer and learn about the current state of botanical education in Fort Worth and the country as a whole. On Tuesday, June 7, from noon – 1 p.m. Vianney Flores, a graduate of BRIT's Green Revolution environmental leadership program, will share with us her experiences as a Green Revolution Command Agent and discuss her participation in the highly selective Colorado Rocky Mountain School HS(2) STEM summer program. Future scientist Flores will be joined by her fellow GR Command Agents Jason Thomas and Juma Petro.

On Tuesday, July 5, we'll be joined by our own Pat Harrison, Senior Vice President for Education, who'll be addressing trends in botanical education including issues of capacity and hopeful strategies for carrying forward the message of the importance of plants. For more information about our Brown Bag Lunchtime Lecture Series please visit our [webpage](#).



Your BRIT Membership is Going National - Another Way We Say Thanks!

BRIT is proud to announce our new membership with the American Horticultural Society's (AHS) Reciprocal Admissions Program (RAP). Now that we are a member we can offer our members free admission and/or additional benefits at over 300 gardens throughout North America and the Cayman Islands. Check the online RAP [Directory](#) to find participating gardens to enjoy!



BRIT also recently became a member of the American Public Gardens Association (APGA). This membership allows BRIT to offer a FREE one-year subscription of *Better Homes & Gardens* to new members and to members who renew. You'll receive 12 issues filled with ideas and inspiration to help give your home and garden a boost. You have a choice of print or digital edition. To redeem the subscription you need to mail the postcard we'll be sending at the time of renewal or joining BRIT.

If you would like additional information on these membership programs, please contact [Tammie Crole](#), our Director of Membership and Grants Coordinator, at 817.332.7518.



What's Happening with Bella at BRIT Bloom with Bella the Begonia

Join Bella for an interactive read-aloud and family-friendly activities that provide fun explorations of art, nature, and science! **For more information, please contact [Kimberly Whitlock](#) at 817.546.1958.**

Bella's Story Time: Saturday, June 4 (10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.) – Free. **Bella's Book Club:** Tuesday, June 7 (10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.) - Free to BRIT Members/\$10 per non-member family.



Inspiring Future Environmental Scientists



Tarleton State University and BRIT joined together to co-host the first annual Environmental Education Day for five area districts: FWISD, Aledo, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw, Lake Worth, and White Settlement. The day was designed to challenge the future environmental scientists on content learned in their APES (Advanced Placement Environmental Science) classes and work with BRIT staff, college professors, and graduate students on topics that promote a healthy environment in all communities. 255 high school students explored stations covering Genomics, Plants & Health, Water Quality & Monitoring, Ecology of Arthropods, Designing High Performance Gardens, and Field Skills of a Botanist, Fire Ecology, Soil Science, and Tracking. Students not only explored environmental issues, but also had the chance to explore environmental careers that would help provide solutions for local and global 21st century environmental issues.



Baby It's Cold Inside - Come Volunteer at BRIT and Cool off This Summer



When the weather heats up, where can you go to cool off? BRIT is the best place to chill while giving back to your community! We always promise cold air conditioning and hot coffee to our volunteers, and this summer will be no different. Right now, we have openings in many departments, but we especially need volunteer greeters as well as filers and digitizers for the herbarium. If you love to smile and talk to people, then greeting might be the thing for you. If you like to pay attention to detail and work independently, then digitizing and filing might keep you cool. One of the great things about BRIT is that there are so many different volunteer opportunities that everyone can find something that fits their needs, interests, and schedules!

If you would like more information about volunteering, please contact [Julie Donovan](#), Director of Volunteers and Public Engagement, at 817.546.1846.

International Award of Excellence in Conservation Gala and Dinner Honoring Carter Smith October 20, 2016

Honorary Hosts Ed Bass, Ramona and Lee Bass, and Laura and Greg Bird, along with Event Chair Grant James, look forward to welcoming you to the International Award of Excellence in Conservation gala and dinner. Carter Smith, Executive Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and his contributions to conservation will be recognized with this prestigious award. A fabulous celebration is being planned, and your support will help sustain and grow BRIT.



Save the date for an evening to remember. For reservations, contact Sara Richardson (srichardson@brit.org) at 817.332.2748.



(Another) New Wintergreen Plant Species from China

As part of Peter Fritsch's research in China and the heath family, another new species of wintergreen plant has been published in the *Nordic Journal of Botany*. The species is one of many new species of this group discovered in the high mountains of Sichuan, China, by Peter and his Kunming Institute of Botany colleagues over the last ten years. *Gaultheria marronina* is named for its unusual dark maroon fruiting capsule, which is surrounded by a white fleshy expanded mature calyx, probably to attract fruit-eating animals for seed dispersal. Peter and his colleagues' research on the phylogenetics and phytochemistry of this group indicates that the maroon color is produced by an anthocyanin that strongly absorbs ultraviolet radiation, which they think may protect the seeds from UV damage at the high alpine elevations in which this species occurs. Read more about this plant and its relatives [here](#) and see the Early View publication [here](#). And read more about the other wintergreen species Peter recently discovered over at the [BRIT Blog!](#)

Inquirers by nature.

Prescribed Grazing: A Management Tool for Wetlands



BRIT Resident Research Associate Dan Caudle co-authored a publication with Cattleman, Conservationist, Land Steward, and Consultant David Daigle entitled *Prescribed Grazing: A Management Tool for Wetlands*. Below is a brief overview of the book's message.



The complex and interconnected ecosystems of wetlands throughout the nation evolved with and were perpetuated by a number of ecological drivers and natural disturbances, including fire and grazing or browsing by large herbivores. Today those naturally occurring drivers and disturbances have been eliminated, altered, or diminished as civilizations advanced and populations increased in these once untamed lands.



It is not possible to duplicate the pre-existing, pristine conditions or the natural forces that created and maintained them, but it is possible to mimic them by using techniques and resources that are available today. Prescribed fire and prescribed grazing can be used together as effective surrogates for those factors and processes that were formerly a natural part of the environment.



Summer Reading!

June 20: *The Dirty Life* AND July 18: *The Worst Hard Times*

Looking for a little summer reading? Then how about digging into one of the summer selections for the BRIT Reads book club? In June we'll be reading *The Dirty Life*, a *Memoir of Farming, Food, and Love* in which author Kristen Kimball chronicles the birth and first year of Essex Farm, a year-round, full diet, horse-powered, organic farm in upstate New York. And in July we'll move a little closer to home when we read Timothy Egan's *The Worst Hard Time*, the untold story of



those who survived the great American dustbowl. It might not be what first springs to mind when you say "beach read," but *The Worst Hard Time*, which won a 2006 National Book Award, is truly a compelling page-turner. The BRIT Reads book club meets the third Monday of each month from noon – 1 p.m.

First Peoples Demonstration Garden

The garden is up and growing again this year! Stop by to see it at the southeast corner of the BRIT building. The garden was started four years ago to go along with BRIT's emphasis on the prairie. When we think of Fort Worth, we often think of the cowboy as its representative icon, but the Garden is a small way of reminding us that the story of the prairie didn't start with the coming of cattle. People lived and thrived here for more than ten thousand years before the first dogy ever wandered through.



The Garden has two types of plants. Most recognizable are the "three sisters"—corn, beans, and squash—cultivated by the more sedentary Native American inhabitants around the North Central Texas area long before the European invasion. We are lucky to have heritage seeds of these plants, especially the White Eagle Corn supplied to us by the Western Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma. Other plants might not be thought of as typical garden plants. These are ones that Foragers or Hunter/Gatherers would have searched out on the prairie. There is amaranth, devil's claw, and *chiltepin* (the progenitor of all those hot peppers we love today), and a few others that might surprise you.

If you'd like to know more about the Garden, or if you'd like to bring a school or other group for a guided tour of it (that could include a walk around the BRIT grounds looking at other plants and how First Peoples used them), please contact BRIT Resident Research Associate, Dr. Grace Bascopé, at 214.549.9013. She'll also explain about the use of Hugelkultur, ollas, and other methods for dry-climate gardening.



BRIT Hosts Texas CPC Meeting

On May 13, BRIT hosted like-minded institutions for a state-wide meeting of the Center for Plant Conservation. Four members of the BRIT staff participated alongside representatives for the Center for Plant Conservation (CPC), Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Mercer Botanic Gardens, San Antonio Botanical

Garden, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and University of Texas. BRIT became a Participating Institution in the CPC network in February and is the only such institution in North Texas.

CPC helps facilitate collaborative relationships to protect rare and endemic plants. The meeting was the first step in creating a coordinated conservation program throughout the state of Texas, which is one of the most diverse regions of the United States. The Participating Institutions plan to combine their strengths and increase knowledge about the value of plants and plant conservation to all residents of Texas.



Special Thanks to our Sponsors!

BRIT would like to thank all of our generous sponsors who supported this year's Prairie Day. We are extremely grateful for their help in making this the best festival possible! Please join in thanking the following individuals and organizations:

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JUNE

4th - Bella Story Time; Public tour; Plant ID
7th - Brown Bag
7th - Bella Book & Nature Club
20th - BRIT Reads book club
Every Thursday - BRIT tours at 1:30 p.m.

JULY

2nd-4th - BRIT is closed
5th - Brown Bag; Bella Book & Nature Club
18th - BRIT Reads book club
Every Thursday - BRIT tours at 1:30 p.m.

Additional information can be found at brit.org.

Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT)

1700 University Drive | Fort Worth, Texas 76107
Phone: 817.332.4441 | Fax: 817.332.4112
Open Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
1st Saturday of the month 9 a.m. - noon (April-October)

If you'd prefer to receive this as an email please send tcrole@brit.org a note.