Lunch and Learn with Dr. Ed Schneider

Join us for a special BRIT Brown Bag Lunchtime Lecture on Tuesday, October 4, from noon – 1 p.m. as our new executive director, Dr. Ed Schneider, discusses "The Pollination Biology of Waterlilies." Come learn about his four decades of botanical research into the Nymphaeaceae, or water lily family. Dr. Schneider’s work has ranged from student-directed projects related to field and reproductive biology of waterlilies in Texas, to detailed anatomical studies utilizing scanning electron microscopy (SEM), to exploring the water-conducting tissue (xylem) of these plants. Bring your lunch and bring a friend and join us in the BRIT Commons for this special opportunity to hear about the research conducted by BRIT’s new leader. For more information please visit us here.

BRIT Exhibits

Now through October 21 join us in the Madeline R. Samples Exhibit Hall at BRIT and enjoy the beautiful paintings that make up our current show, “The Nature of Things – Daphne Prairie” by well-known east Texas artist Deborah Paris. Paris’ beautiful work gives the viewer a rare opportunity to glimpse a piece of Texas history in the form of a truly untouched prairie. And, should you find a painting (or paintings!) that you just can’t live without, BRIT members will receive 10% off of the purchase price.

Our next show features the botanical and mycological art of Dr. Denis Benjamin, Resident Research Associate at BRIT. “Images of Nature” features over thirty watercolor paintings of flowers, fungi, and other subjects from the natural world. Dr. Benjamin joined BRIT two years ago to assist in curating the fungal collection in the herbarium. An opening reception will be held on Friday, October 28, from 5 p.m.–8 p.m., and the artist will give a gallery talk at 6 p.m. All are invited to attend.

The Madeline R. Samples Exhibit Hall is open Tuesday–Friday from 10 a.m.–4 p.m., or by appointment. For more information about exhibits at BRIT, please visit here.

Celebrate Your Holidays at BRIT!

Looking for a place to hold your intimate holiday gathering or big winter blowout? BRIT has spaces to fit events of all sizes and occasions!

Call Casey Carter today to discuss availability and pricing at 817.332.7750
How Will You Tell the Story of BRIT to Our Visitors?

As one of our trained Ambassadors, our top tier volunteers, that decision is up to you. Please consider becoming one of our guides who lead the public and private tours of BRIT and share the mission and programs of BRIT with groups of interested gardeners, students, and the general public. We will be scheduling a new Ambassador class starting October 6 at 1 p.m. and are looking for a few chatty volunteers to join the fun. During the class you’ll learn all you need to know about the LEED building, what happens to the specimens botanists collect, why the geology wall is important, and the latest research. You just need to come to the class with an interest in our mission and a willingness to talk. Public tours are held every Thursday at 1:30 p.m. and the First Saturday of each month at 10:30 a.m. Private tours may be scheduled any time convenient for the guests. For more information, please contact Julie Donovan at 817.546.1846.

Thankful by nature.

Bella’s Season of Stories, Seasons of Science

Bella continues the fall series of stories about the Poaceae or grass family. Children and families are introduced to the botany of grass plants. In October, we look at how people use corn, a member of this very important plant family.

Join Bella in the celebration of a family of plants that—although they can cause landscape aggravation or go unnoticed—are worthy of our respect and admiration for all the wonderful environmental services they provide.

- First Saturday Story Time: Saturday, October 1 (10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.), Free
- Bella’s Book & Nature Club: Tuesday, October 4, & Wednesday, October 5 (10:30 a.m. - noon), $10 per family/Free to Members. Pre-registration is required at this link.
Bella at Calloway’s Fall Festival

Bella will join Calloway’s Nursery’s Fall Festival on October 1 at the Hulen and Mansfield locations. Bella will facilitate an interactive read-aloud of *Trudy’s Pumpkin, Grass, Flower Bud, and Tree Bark Pie*, an original story written by Pam Chamberlain that teaches the botanical beginnings of pumpkin pie. Visit this link for more information.

Bella, Books, and Botany

This generously-funded early childhood program takes strategies (Bella’s Building Blocks for Learning), stories (Burke Children’s Library books), and science (botany) to early childhood educators and the children in their care. Bella hosted the first of four seasonal early childhood professional developments featuring the botanical science of the grass family and best practices. Teachers made grass masks (pictured above) as a way to engage their students in Denise Fleming’s book, *In the Tall Tall Grass*, where a little boy, hiding in the grass, visits the creatures within this unique habitat.

The Fall Teacher Tuesday Series

*“Literacy in Nature”*  
*September Session: Reading Like a Scientist*

BRIT Education kicked off its fifth season of Teacher Tuesday with the “Literacy in Nature” series. This series supports literacy strategies while addressing ways teachers can connect students to the natural world. The September session allowed teachers to examine children’s literature that inspires discussion on science and nature. Dr. Robin Griffith, an associate professor at TCU, led the discussion on text features, internal text structures, and comprehension signposts that occur in children’s literature. Children’s books from the Burke Children’s Library at BRIT were used by teachers during this interactive session. Teachers also brought books they use in their classrooms to connect students to nature and support literacy strategies.

The October session “Reflective by Nature” will focus on writing strategies that allow students to creatively express their observations during investigations and through outdoor activities.

High Performance Landscapes Research Project

BRIT has begun a new research project in collaboration with the General Services Administration (GSA) investigating sustainable landscaping practices. The purpose of this project is to determine effects of landscaping decisions on ecosystem services to provide the information needed to create sustainable federal landscapes. The research will focus on effects common landscape design and maintenance decisions have on native pollinator populations, water usage, and net carbon footprint. To conduct the experiment, BRIT has installed 40 research plots planted with a variety of native plants on the BRIT campus and at a federal center, where BRIT researcher Heather Bass has begun data collection that will last for the next two years. To learn more about the project, visit the website, then come to BRIT to see the research plots in person!
The Friendliest Little Plant Conference in Texas

Join us on November 3, 4, and 5 for the 2016 Texas Plant Conservation Conference (TPCC). TPCC is hosted this year by The Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, BRIT, and the Fort Worth Botanic Garden and will feature a keynote address by Barney Lipscomb, Director of BRIT Press and Leonhardt Chair of Texas Botany; a plenary address by Dr. Philip A. Fay, Research Ecologist, USDA-ARS; and two days of talks, poster presentations, evening social events, and field trips. Field trips will focus on North Texas plants and are offered on Saturday, November 5. TPCC is ideal for anyone with an interest in native plant conservation. Come explore current research and conservation projects on rare plants, come learn about native plant communities and plant monitoring methods, and discover best management practices for native Texas plants. For more information and to register, please click here.

World Record Largest Myxomycete Found on BRIT Campus

And there it was—a myxomycete fruiting body about 30 inches by 22 inches, round like a pancake and filled with spores, found in BRIT’s front yard growing on bark mulch in bioswale #3. This discovery was recently published in the 2016 Summer Issue (Volume 9, No. 2) of FUNGI magazine, a popular publication for amateurs and professional mycologists (people who study fungi and fungal-like organisms). There were more than 20 smaller fruiting bodies scattered on the surface of the bark mulch, but this fruiting body eclipsed the former world record by several inches.

How did this myxomycete get to this site? The spores are wind-blown and probably were already present on the oak bark mulch when it was placed in the bioswale around the trees. The magazine article (linked below) has weather data compiled from a BRIT weather station that includes the temperatures, precipitation, and the time course of fruiting body formation for the period March 1st to April 15th, 2016.

Read more and view the full article at our blog.

BRIT Represented Far and Wide

BRIT Research Associate Wesley M. Knapp recently accepted a new position with the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program as the Western Region Ecologist/Botanist which is based in Asheville, NC. He will be working to explore, discover, and protect some of the best remaining habitats in eastern North America.

In the past two weeks he has given two presentations carrying the BRIT flag. The first was a talk entitled “Hope and Discovery for species at the EDGE” at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History’s Conservation Symposium. This talk was given to ca. 350 people. The second, and the focus of his current research, is entitled “Vascular Plant Extinction in North America, North of Mexico: What have we lost and what can we learn?” He is lead author on this project, which currently has 19 coauthors from across North America. A condensed 15-minute talk was given at the Ecological Society of America annual meeting in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, in early August. A full 45-minute talk was given to the Plant Conservation Alliance in Washington, D.C., via Webex in September. This meeting was very well attended by experts across North America, and the talk was well received.
Your New BRIT Membership Benefits

We appreciate and thank you for your interest in BRIT and ask that you partner with us by becoming a member. To show you our appreciation, we would like to share some exciting new benefits you’ll receive:

- BRIT joined the American Horticultural Society (AHS). As a BRIT member you’ll automatically be part of their Reciprocal Admissions Program (RAP), which offers free admission and/or additional benefits at 300 gardens throughout North America and the Cayman Islands. To learn more, visit ahs.org, an online directory listing all the participating gardens for you to enjoy.
- BRIT also recently joined the American Public Gardens Association (APGA). With the added bonus of the APGA membership, you will receive twelve (12) free issues, digital or by mail, of the Better Homes and Gardens magazine.

These new benefits are in addition to discounts here at BRIT on our programs, merchandise, and services, and also shopping discounts with these local area reciprocal partners: Calloway’s Nursery, Marshall Grain Co., Redenta’s Garden, The Tree Place, and Mingos Nursery & Garden Center.

Membership is Just One Way You Can Support the Work at BRIT

- Consider joining BRIT’s planned giving program, the Shinners Society, by remembering BRIT in your estate planning. No matter how large or small, any amount to BRIT in your estate plans will leave a lasting legacy for future generations.
- Maybe you own a company and need a way to show your appreciation to your staff? Become a Corporate BRIT Member, which allows you to gift BRIT memberships to your staff, while you stay connected to your local community.
- Become a Reciprocal Membership Partner by providing BRIT members discounts at your retail business or by providing gifts in-kind of goods or services to BRIT.
- Perhaps you want to honor a friend or remember a loved one with a contribution to making our world a better place for all of us. You can do that with a memorial or honorarium gift to BRIT. We will send a personal note to your friend.

For additional information on any of these membership programs, please contact our Director of Membership and Grants Coordinator, Tammie Cole, at 817.332.7518.
Gardening in Texas is tough, and sometimes, unintentionally, we make it harder by working against nature and our specific piece of land, be it a small urban backyard, a roomy suburban spread, or a sprawling Texas ranch. Permaculture, the practice of using thoughtful observation to learn how to work with your land and employing techniques that mimic natural systems, can help make your garden more productive, cut down on water usage, and increase your gardening enjoyment. Join BRIT next spring as Kim Martin and Laurie Bostic of Barking Cat Farm, located in northeast Texas, walk us through the basics of Permaculture in a special four-part series that combines both lecture and hands-on experience. The four workshops that make up this series are:

- Introduction to Permaculture for Home Gardeners (4 Feb 2017)
- Introduction to Vegetable Gardening (4 Mar 2017)
- Raised Beds and Irrigation (1 Apr 2017)
- Building a Herb Spiral (6 May 2017)

For more information about these classes, please visit here. Registration will open soon!

Green Revolution’s G.R.O.W.T.H.

Leadership opportunities are still growing in Green Revolution! The Green Revolution Pre Alumni Council (PAC) is the latest initiative within the program, aimed at transitioning tenured Command Agents into executive level leadership positions that will further enhance their leadership experiences in support of college admission competitiveness. The PAC will serve as a decision-making board for Green Revolution, as continuous improvement for individual leadership acumen and to both model and prepare Agents for the responsibilities of board membership service in their higher education and in their respective communities. This new chapter of Green Revolution is sure to bring on exciting possibilities.

Our inaugural PAC lyceum was filled with critical thinking, leadership development, and G.R.O.W.T.H. The day was designed to align with two of Green Revolution’s central philosophies: exposure and experience. Between taking survey assessments that led to spirited conversation and reflection on the term “grit” and the cultivation of a G.R.O.W.T.H. mindset, the morning session was replete with thoughts such as “grit is a grind to accomplish goals no matter what,” and a G.R.O.W.T.H. mindset “is the willingness to make mistakes, take on new and difficult challenges, and not be the same forever.”

The afternoon session, like all Green Revolution experiences, thrust the morning learnings into action. We traveled to Southlake’s Escape Room, a physical adventure game where the PAC members were locked in rooms to solve a series of timed puzzles that would help lead to their escape. The result? They failed. But within failure, the PAC embodied the spirit of the scientific process that has led to many monumental discoveries.

Exposing the PAC to controlled failure and its embedded opportunities proved to germinate some poignant thoughts such as “You don’t have to be in the same room to work together,” and “[Green Revolution] teaches us to keep going, to never give up, and to make mistakes and learn from them… to grow.” The optimistic frustration demonstrated by the PAC after the Escape Room is germane to the new direction and focus of Green Revolution.

The exposure to this purposeful challenge, in the security of our Green Revolution family, has spawned an unforgettable experience. In the simple but profound words of a PAC member, “Always embrace G.R.O.W.T.H.” To this end, Green Revolution is fueled and ready to address the challenges of the 21st century by nurturing G.R.O.W.T.H. within its young future leaders.

OCTOBER
1st - First Saturday Story Time; public tour; plant ID
4th - Bella Book & Nature Club; Brown Bag
5th - Bella Book & Nature Club
17th - BRIT Reads Book Club
18th - Teacher Tuesday
20th - International Award of Excellence in Conservation Gala
Every Thursday - BRIT tours at 1:30 p.m.