



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

Learn Something New this New Year!

There are so many classes to choose from next year at BRIT and the Fort Worth Botanic Garden that there is sure to be something that tickles your fancy. Whatever area of botany and horticulture you're interested in, be it botanical arts and crafts, vegetable gardening, landscape design, or plant based cooking, we've got you covered. Join us in January for one of these adult education classes:



- 1/13 – Propagation 1: Seeds and Bumping Up
- 1/19 – Monarch Workshop: Train the Trainer
- 1/20 – Propagation 2: Propagating Ferns with Spores
- 1/27 – Introduction to Botanical Watercolors
- 1/27 – Introduction to Vegetable Gardening
- 1/27 – Hands on Seed Starting

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



BRIT Reads Book Club: *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau

Join us on Monday, January 15, from noon – 1 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?” Read, ponder, and then join us for what is sure to be a lively discussion! For more information, please visit our [website](#) or contact [Laura Venhaus](#) at 817.546.1844.

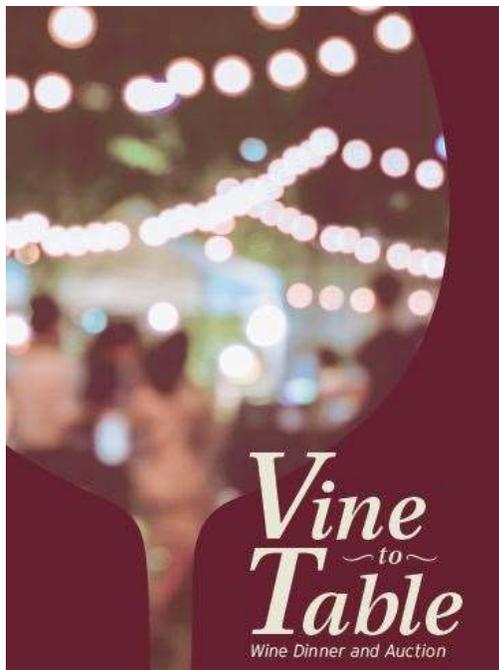
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Native to this Place: Pastels, Acrylics, and Photography by Pam Smith, Marie Maines, and Ray Maines

What does it mean to be "Native to this Place"? This place, North Central Texas, our corner of the universe, that is changing right before our eyes? Join us in the Madeline R. Samples Exhibit Hall from January 12 through February 15 as three local artists -- Pam Smith, Marie Maines, and Ray Maines -- share their



interpretations of the phrase "native to this place." The Madeline R. Samples Exhibit Hall is open Tuesday–Friday from 10 a.m.–4 p.m. and the first Saturday of each month. For more information, please visit our [website](#) or contact [Laura Venhaus](#) at 817.546-1844.



Save the Date

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Celebrity Chefs

Lead Chef Michael Thomson of Michael's Cuisine Restaurant & Bar, 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-Emillion Restaurant

Gala Chairs

Gina and Bob Ravnaas

Honoring

Alexander Valley Vineyards of Healdsburg, Sonoma County, California
BRIT 2018 International Award of Excellence in Sustainable Winegrowing Recipient

Research, Collections, & Publications



The R. Dale Thomas Plant Collection (NLU)

The R. Dale Thomas Plant Collection (NLU) officially completed its journey to BRIT in August 2017. The successful move of almost a half-million specimens was no easy feat, and [we've documented the process](#) at our blog, [Phytophilia](#). However, this was only the beginning! Keep watching the blog and follow the NLU rescue team for the next year as they work to make this priceless collection secure and accessible to researchers and the public. Read about the collection's first months at BRIT [here](#).

Want to get involved? Email the NLU Collections Assistants, [Miranda](#) and [Ashley](#), to find out how!

Project Update: TX Digitization

We are happy to announce the completion of a major milestone in the Texas Digitization Project. Begun in 2016 with the help of a private grant, the purpose of our project was to fill a gap in current digitization projects by imaging and data-basing all specimens in the BRIT/SMU collection from Texas. Numbering approximately 140,000 specimens of monocots, dicots, gymnosperms, and ferns and fern allies; this effort is the culmination of more than two years of work by Joseph Lippert and Miranda Madrid, with the help of many volunteers including 6 imagers, more than a dozen remote data-basers, and almost 20 bar-coders and mounters and filers.



Of those 140,000 images, more than half are skeletally databased and discoverable by species, collector name, date, and county. Although a dedicated position for digitization coordinator ends this year, data-basing of the remaining images will continue in 2018 with plans to complete the effort by the end of next year. Total time spent on TX Digi in 2017 alone totaled 1,359 hours, representing irreplaceable assistance to our work in the Herbarium.

If you would like to know more about our digital collections, follow this [link](#) or look for us during a public tour.

Calendar of Events

JANUARY

- 1st—Closed
- 8th—Volunteer University
- 13th—Propagation 1: Seeds and Bumping Up
- 16th—Teacher Tuesday
- 19th—Monarch Workshop: Train the Trainer
- 20th—Propagation 2: Propagating Ferns with Spores
- 27th—Introduction to Botanical Watercolors
- 27th—Introduction to Vegetable Gardening
- 27th—Hands on Seed Starting
- 28th—BRIT Rental Open House
- 30th—Home School Field Trip Day
- Each Thursday - BRIT tours at 1:30 p.m.

Additional information can be found at brit.org.

Holiday Botany: Mistletoe

As we dive headlong into the holiday season, I imagine many readers are decorating for by stringing lights on roofs and trimming the trees, but what of other botanical decorations? The specimen pictured here (*Phoradendron tomentosum*) is often overlooked in its natural habitat, hiding in secret while vampirically sipping away at the sugary sustenance hiding just beneath its host's skin. Arborists will tell you it's a nasty weed, while birdwatchers call it a natural birdfeeder. For most of the year, mistletoe hides among the branches of its host plant until falling leaves reveal its presence. It grows throughout the coldest winters with green foliage and red berries, creating a distinct contrast to snow-covered branches in winter. How did a parasite become one of the most distinct and famous holiday decorations in Western tradition? Grab a warm drink and [follow the link](#) to read more about the history of mistletoe and how it became associated with the holiday season!



Survey Says We Are Growing

In anticipation of the collaboration with the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, we are addressing what we can do to help our volunteers. We recently sent out a survey to all volunteers and received an astounding response and many great ideas. Some of the things volunteers asked for include the following items:

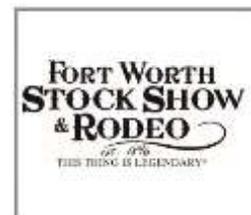
- Overview of volunteer opportunities
- Joint orientation held more frequently
- A newsletter for volunteers
- Education



In the coming months as we develop our volunteer program into a solid part of the community, we will address many of these suggestions. We have already had one joint orientation, and from this point forward they will all be combined. The Volunteer Vine will continue to be emailed monthly to all volunteers as our main form of communication. In blending the orientation into one meeting and having the Volunteer Vine sent to all volunteers, the awareness of available volunteer opportunities should increase. And in response to the request for more education, we have decided to continue the successful Volunteer University classes, which are free and held monthly for all volunteers. Upcoming topics include Backyard Critters, Rare Plants, and the first one of the new year is Native vs. Non-Native: 12 Months of Color. For more information about any of these ideas and programs, please contact Julie Donovan at 817.546.1846.

BRIT's Newest Reciprocal Partner: Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo

Now BRIT members can present a valid membership card at Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo general admission gates and receive free grounds admission for one person any day during these dates: January 12 - February 3, 2018. (Rodeo performances and parking not included.)



*Happy New Year!
from BRIT*

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