Botanical Art Collective Exhibition Submission Deadline

There is still time to submit artwork to the Botanical Art Collective’s first juried exhibition! From June 14 to August 9, 2018, BRIT is proud to host "Botanical Art: Flowers, fruit, and fungi." We are encouraging the full range of artistic expression of botanical subjects, from classical botanical illustration, to contemporary botanical art, to flower painting. This is a great opportunity to share in BRIT’s love of Art and Nature! For questions about this exhibit please contact Layla Luna.

The BRIT Reads Book Club Tackles a Classic

On Monday, April 16, the BRIT Reads Book Club met to discuss Rachel Carson’s groundbreaking work of non-fiction, Silent Spring. We were thrilled to be joined by special guests, Dr. April Sawey and Mr. Michael Sawey (and their charming daughter, Alara) who helped put the book in context and led the discussion which, as always, covered a lot of ground! Topics of discussion included Carson’s early years, her inspiration for writing the book, changes in the chemical engineering field after the book’s publication, modern day farming practices, and the backlash and criticism that Carson faced as a result of writing Silent Spring. The Saweys, who are both science educators, April at Fort Worth Academy and Michael at TCU, were a valuable addition to our always lively group. To read more about them and the BRIT Reads Book Club, please visit our website. To join the mailing list for this group, please contact Laura Venhaus at 817.546.1844.

Adult Education Workshops

GROW, the new educational and volunteer collaboration between BRIT and the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, is pleased to provide a wide variety of opportunities for the adult learner to expand their knowledge. Join us for classes that range from fun and frivolous to serious and in-depth in botanically related categories including Horticulture and Gardening, Botanical Arts and
Crafts, Food, Health and Wellness, and Botany, Ecology, and Nature. For more information or to register, please contact Laura Venhaus at 817.546.1844.

5/5 Creative Nature Journaling
6/2 Exploring Texas Wildflowers
6/2 Landscaping with Native Plants
6/2 Fire Ants: How they got here & what to do about them
6/2 Masterpieces and Microscopes
6/2 Composting: Beyond the basics
6/2 Aerated Compost Tea
6/18 Demonstration Cooking: Jams and jellies

Green Revolution

Green Revolution is an Environmental STEM, positive-youth-development, out-of-school-time (grade 6 - 12) program that immerses youth in formative experiences to advance their personal development, civic engagement, and environmental stewardship. This month Jared Williams, Green Revolution’s Research Fellow, accepted an invitation to give the opening talk during the Distinguished Lecture Series event at the University of North Texas, Denton. Jared was the opening presenter for the event’s keynote speaker, Dr. Jane Goodall, and was chosen from more than 40,000 UNT students, faculty, and staff to be selected to speak. His talk highlighted the work he is doing to advance sustainability on and off campus through his efforts at UNT and BRIT’s Green Revolution programming. Jared encouraged the thousands attending the event to “embrace opportunities to learn more about the environment and strive to make a difference in our global community through environmental service.” What a wonderful example and mentor for
the Green Revolution Agents of Change to follow. Because of this event, the agents are motivated by Jared’s actions and Dr. Goodall’s words, “It’s never too late, to turn things around… nurture is a seed of hope.” The Agents look forward to doing just that during their next event by restoring urban pollinator habitat by native seed dispersal in collaboration with the Texas Parks and Wildlife, Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area Nature Preserve team, National Wildlife Federation, and the City of Lewisville. Now that’s #growingGROWTH!

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**Research, Collections, & Publications**

**Deciphering Fern Species Complexes**

Dr. Alejandra Vasco, BRIT Research Botanist, considers herself a fern taxonomist. Taxonomists are scientists that name, describe, and arrange species into classifications. One of the beautiful challenges of being a taxonomist are the so-called species complexes. A species complex is a group of species that are very similar in appearance, thus the boundaries among them are unclear. In a recent paper published in the March issue of the journal *Brittonia*, Dr. Vasco and collaborators at the Autonomous University of Hidalgo and the National Autonomous University of Mexico City in Mexico used morphology and anatomy to unravel such a complex in the genus of ferns Myriopteris. Dr. Vasco and collaborators used more than 220 herbarium specimens to measure different characteristics. They analyzed the data statistically and found that although anatomical characteristics did not differ significantly among species in the complex, morphological ones did. Based on their results they hypothesized that the complex has three different species and provided a key with unique morphological features that enabled their identification. The genus Myriopteris belongs to the Pteridaceae or Brake Family.

Mexico is the center of species diversity for the genus, with 34 of the 44 species, but Texas hosts 15 species as well! Myriopteris was previously classified as Chelainthes, and the 15 species occurring in Texas are treated under that genus in the book *Ferns and Lycophytes of Texas* (published by BRIT Press). This is a special paper because the first author is a young female botanist. The results shown in the paper are part of her Master’s thesis.

If you want to know more about research and research opportunities on ferns happening at BRIT, please visit Alejandra Vasco’s webpage or call her at 817.332.4441, ext. 262.

**Pictured:** *Myriopteris marsupianthes Fée*, one of the three species of the complex.

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**Collected Specimens from Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center**

On April 5 several members of the BRIT Research staff gathered at Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center at Cedar Hill for a guided hike led by founder David Hurt. This particular location is the westernmost known population of flowering dogwoods (*Cornus florida*) in Texas. The dogwoods were in full bloom and a stunning sight in the canyon! With permission from the center, BRIT researchers collected some specimens to deposit into the BRIT herbarium. Once the specimens
are adequately pressed and dried, they will complete their transformation from a spectacular canyon bloom to a valuable scientific specimen.

But don't worry – there are plenty of blooms left for you to enjoy! For more information on guided hikes and additional features, please visit their website (Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center).

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**BRIT's Research Botanist Visits the New York Botanical Garden to Conduct Research in Ferns**

In March 2018, Research Botanist Dr. Alejandra Vasco spent one month at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx (NYBG). During her visit, Dr. Vasco conducted collaborative research with colleagues and former advisors both in the laboratory and the herbarium on various projects, including a long-term collaboration with Dr. Barbara Ambrose, director of Laboratory Research at NYBG, to study the evolution of the genetic network involved in the development of fern leaves. Other activities involved identifying herbarium collections of the fern genus Elaphoglossum and digging through the old literature and old specimens to try to understand how to apply species’ names; conducting work at the laboratory to understand venation patterns in several plant groups; and teaching a class to the graduate students of the joint Graduate Program between NYBG and the City University of New York.

During her visit Dr. Vasco not only gathered scientific data for her research, but also discovered an undescribed fern species from Peru that will eventually be published in a scientific journal. She also developed joint plans and ideas for a large collaborative grant proposal to NSF on fern biodiversity research.

If you want to know more about Alejandra’s research, please visit her webpage or call her at 817.332.4441, ext. 262.

**Pictured:** Dr. Alejandra Vasco working with New York Botanical Garden fern curator Dr. Robbin Moran on ferns at the herbarium.

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**Miscellaneous**

**What IS Inside Our LEED Platinum Building?**

Are you curious about LEED buildings? Do you wonder what happens to the specimens botanists collect? Would you like to learn about research? What ages are our education programs geared to? The best way to learn the answers to these questions is to take one of our free public tours. Public tours are held every Thursday at 1:30 p.m. and most First Saturdays of each month at 10:30 a.m. Public tours are free, and reservations aren’t necessary unless you are bringing more than ten of your closest friends.

One of our engaging Ambassadors would love to share the mission of BRIT with you and your friends. If you are interested in a different time, private tours may be booked convenient to your schedule for a small fee. If it has been a while since you have toured, or you keep meaning to tour, please come visit us and learn the latest exciting changes at BRIT.
We are currently accepting applications for summer junior (JR) volunteers, and the applications are due on May 7. JR volunteers are 14-17 years of age and are selected after completing applications and placed in different areas such as education or gardening.

For more information about tours or the JR Volunteer program, please contact Julie Donovan at 817.546.1846.

Vine to Table

Thank you sponsors and supporters for a fabulous Vine to Table event on April 11th celebrating our 2018 International Award of Excellence in Sustainable Winegrowing Award Winner, Alexander Valley Vineyards.

Living Art at BRIT: Fort Worth Garden Club Presents Flowers by Design

The Fort Worth Garden Club held their Annual Horticulture and Design Show at BRIT on Friday, April 20, 2018. The beautiful and diverse Horticulture and Artistic Crafts display included some 220 entries and had Texas natives. Whether the entry was a Cut Specimen or a Container Grown Plant, each horticultural entry included a Latin and/or cultivar name, thanks to the help of BRIT staff. Kathleen Gagan from Peony's Envy presented a lively program, “Designing a Peony Garden,” to about 80 attendees.

Color Our Collections
In February, BRIT was a participating institution in the worldwide “Color Our Collections” event. Hosted by the New York Academy of Medicine, the week-long Color Our Collections event encourages libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions to create coloring sheets using items in their collections. The coloring sheets are available online for anyone to download and print.

Due to the success of the event, BRIT has decided to continuously update the coloring book and make it available outside the Color Our Collections event. We now have a coloring book of 19 pages, available to download for free on our website. The coloring illustrations are all created from items in the rare book collection. The coloring book promotes awareness of and interaction with BRIT’s collections and an appreciation for botany to a broad audience – kids and adults alike!

You can find the BRIT coloring book on our website. Print a copy at home, color it with your family, and share it with us using the hashtag #ColorOurCollections!

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**Calendar of Events**

**MAY**

1st–Brown Bag; Bella Book & Nature Club  
5th–Bella’s Saturday Story Time; Creative Nature Journaling; Family Exploration Saturday  
12th–Family Exploration Saturday  
14th–Volunteer University  
9th–Seedlings  
15th–Teacher Tuesday; Little Sprouts  
19th–Family Exploration Saturday  
21st–BRIT Reads Book Club  
26th–Family Exploration Saturday

**Every Saturday** (Mar- Nov): **Family Exploration Saturday** in the Garden from 1-4 p.m.  
**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](http://brit.org).