



Oxley Nature Center

March/April, 2011

Volume 202

Finding Spring by Amy Morris Marcoux

A \$2 fee per car (for non-members) is charged on weekends April - October to enter Mohawk Park.

Oxley Nature Center:

- The Interpretive Building will be open Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. and Sunday 12 noon- 4:30 p.m.
- Gate and parking lot is open daily, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. except most City holidays.
- Hiking trails are accessible during Mohawk Park hours, 7:00 a.m.- 9:00 p.m.

Redbud Valley Nature Preserve is closed:

- all Mondays and Tuesdays.
- Open Wednesday through Sunday, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. only. Hiking after these hours is not allowed.
- Interpretive building is open Wednesday through Sunday 11:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
- Closed most City holidays.

****Holiday Closing for Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:**

Friday, April 22.

Program information:

- 918-669-6644
- Oxley@cityoftulsa.org
- Website at "<http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org>".

- ** Please register for classes 48 hours in advance** unless otherwise stated. A class minimum of 6 is required.
- Some classes require supplies and allow limited enrollment.
- Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated.
- Most programs are stroller/wheelchair accessible.

There is no eternal spring where I live. That's the way I like it. I want each season to present its unique gifts. Here, I have a sense of place. A connection to the natural world around me as it spins through space on its rotation around the sun 365 days a year. As the blood flows through my veins, the sap flows through the trees and subtle comforting changes occur that leave one feeling rooted and grounded to the earth, while reaching for the sky. In our quiet unconscious, physiological changes are taking place. The days are lengthening.

What is the first thing you notice? Which of your senses inform you, teasing you with the first hint of spring?

As a creature of sight, do you detect change as the first flower bud pushing through the soil or perhaps as a turtle hauling out of a pond to bask on the shore? Or is it something more primitive, more intuitive? There is a smell borne on a SE wind that carries a promise even as you walk through snow up on the bluff trail. It is subtle, hopeful, reaching back into memory. On a warmer day in February, an unmistakable scent arises from the damp earth, where you crouch to study mushrooms that appeared overnight. It is rich, fecund, filled with thousands of organisms bursting with life within the soil. It is a gardener's delight.

Sharpen your eyes. Look out among the trees and shrubs and vines. Can you see the change in color on branches where new growth has begun -- the brighter red, the greener green? There, and there, and over there; the yellow buds of the Spice Bush pop out all up and down the branches of this shrub and fill the forest with its spicy scent. Once you find the first one, the others will make themselves known to you. That is how it works. They become familiars. Have you waited all winter to scramble up some eggs with some fresh wild onions; a perfect spring tonic? Taste is a gift of spring too. Gnaw on the end of a Spice Bush twig, nibble on a violet, or perhaps gather some redbud blossoms to sprinkle on your salad greens.

Trout Lilies push their heads up through the deep leaf litter in the North Woods, reaching for the sun before the trees leaf out, blocking life giving rays. Their two leaves rise from the base of the stem, reaching outward and upward. The leaves are thick and fleshy to the touch, and often mottled with spots. As the bud opens, it gently nods its head, bending its face in supplication. Around one lily, there are usually many. It is like a graceful ballet upon the forest floor. Look carefully, once found, they become a seasonal gift to hunt for. Those acquaintances that call out their names to us as we walk the trails that both greet us as old friends and delight us with their cheery presence.

Joyful noise is the spring chorus that begins slowly and builds quickly to a crescendo. It is the courtship songs of the birds, announcing their intentions to the skies. It is the chickadee singing 'come nest with me, come nest with me'. Insect songsters join the orchestra of sound using rasps, shrills, chirps, clicks and drumming. Grasshoppers fiddle with hind leg on forewing, while crickets sing by rubbing a file on one forewing over a scraper on the other forewing. Bees buzz and the heart strums.

There is a feeling of renewal, as the circle of the seasons tip toes, then leaps forth, with a rush of anticipation, into spring. The joyful noise, well, that would also be the excited voices of curious children filled with awe at the beauty all around them, right out here on one of our trails! Come join the concert, embrace the change -- just as it embraces you.

Nature Center Happenings

Volunteer Naturalist Training Offered

Who is a Volunteer Naturalist? Someone who enjoys being outdoors sharing the experience of nature with others is the person we are seeking to join us for one of our two Volunteer Naturalist training programs.

Our **weekday session** runs March 8 - April 1, two days a week from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon. If **evening and weekend** training is more convenient for you, you may attend training three nights from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and three weekend days from 1-3:30 p.m. Please call for more details about the training schedules.

During training you will become familiar with our trail system as you explore our varied prairie, wetland, and forested areas. We have fun and emphasize leadership skills and interpretation methods.

Upon completion of training, you will join other naturalists each guiding a small group of visitors on weekday, evening or weekend tours. If you are 18 or older, call us for more information. Enthusiasm is a plus, and no previous experience necessary.

6th Annual Early Spring Butterfly Count for Citizen Scientists!

Join us on **Friday, April 15** for a spring day in the great outdoors in pursuit of butterflies. No experience is necessary. You will be placed in a group with an experienced guide to spot, count, tally and/or identify butterflies in a specific area.

Information gathered is used to supplement the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) Summer Butterfly Count held annually in July.

We will be meeting from **8:30 a.m. to dusk** and you are welcome to participate in all or part of the count. Bring a lunch, water and binoculars if you have them. Meet at the picnic shelter at Oxley Nature Center.

***** Please call and register in advance so groups can be assembled. *****

2nd Saturday Family Adventures at Oxley

Saturday, March 12, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.

“The Aliens Are Here”

Many of the aliens have been hiding beneath snow cover, but as days lengthen, they begin to show themselves. Who are these aliens, why are they a problem, and what can we do about them? Join us at Oxley to seek out and destroy some of these invasive plants.

Saturday, April 9, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.

“Transitions and Renewal”

Birds are returning to traditional nesting grounds. The air is full of courtship songs and displays as birds prepare to lay eggs and raise their young. We will create a small bird feeder to help the birds during this time of great activity.

***** Free, all ages, registration not required. The same program will be offered morning and afternoon. *****

Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature Center

\$2 for general public, free for members, all ages. * Please register in advance *****

Full Worm Moon

Friday, March 18, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

As the cold recedes and the ground begins to thaw, earthworms move through the softening soil toward the surface, leaving casts that invite robins to dine. Let's walk the trail and feel the difference in the 'spring' of the earth beneath our feet.



Full Pink Moon

Sunday, April 17, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

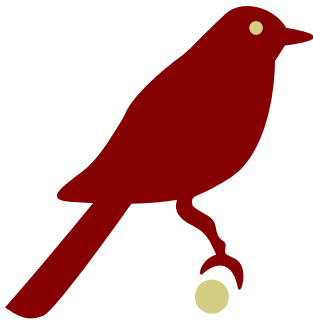
Some flowers of pink hue are the earliest wide-spread flowers of spring. How long will color be visible to our eyes as night and moon rise above tree line? Come learn about night and color vision as you stroll the trails.

Programs and Special Events

March

5 “Saturday Morning Birding” **Ages: All**
Saturday **8:00-9:45 a.m.**
Free **registration not required**

March signals the return of spring migrants to familiar territories. Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them. The first Saturday of every month beginner, intermediate, and advanced birders all meet to share their enjoyment of watching birds.



19 “Soap Making” **Ages: 18 to Adult**
Saturday **2:00-4:00 p.m.**
\$20 for general public **\$15 for members**

Come experience soap making the old fashioned way. We will use fats and lye for the base. Each participant may customize their soap for their own purpose. We will experiment with a natural dye. Meet at Oxley.

26 “Botany Walk” **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30-12:00 noon**
Free **registration not required**

Everywhere things are beginning to green up. Buds are swelling on trees and shrubs. In the forest, Spice Bush displays sprays of yellow bloom, while bluets, violets and Spring Beauties peek up from below. Join us at Oxley to explore.

****Please register 48 hours in advance of classes unless stated otherwise. A minimum of 6 registrants is required.**

April

2 “Saturday Morning Birding” **Ages: All**
Saturday **8:00-9:45 a.m.**
Free **registration not required**

It is time for spring warblers to make an appearance, singing courtship songs and performing displays. Join us at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

16 “Butterfly Walk” **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30-12:00 noon**
Free **registration not required**

Join us for the first butterfly walk of the year! Weather permitting we may see Monarchs, Spring Azures, Black Swallowtails and others. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

17 “Journaling for Change” **Ages: All**
Sunday at Oxley **1:00-3:00 p.m.**
\$3 for general public **\$1 for members**

Friday, April 22 is the 41st anniversary of Earth Day. What does that mean to you? Bring a journal or we will make a simple one and take it out with us on the trails. What will attract our attention and why? What techniques can we use to journal about it? We will discuss how a journal can be a vehicle for insight.

23 “North Woods Botany Walk” **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30-12:00 noon**
Free **registration not required**

Have you explored the North Woods Trail? We'll look for Trout Lilies and the elusive Toothwort. This hike is NOT wheelchair or stroller accessible. Meet at Oxley Nature Center parking lot and we will carpool. Please be on time.

30 “Bark Baskets” **Ages: 14 to Adult**
Saturday **12:00 noon- 3:00 p.m.**
\$35 for general public **\$25 for members**

We will harvest elm bark and make a bark container that can be used for berry picking, shopping at the farmer's market or for displaying an arrangement. This class is moderately difficult. Meet at Oxley.

Going Primitive

Have you ever wanted to take a trip back in time without leaving the modern urban lifestyle of Tulsa? What if you lived in a world without glass, plastic or metal; where your every need wasn't available at the local dollar store?

Do you have an interest in Paleo skills and primitive technology?

Over the years we have offered classes in a variety of primitive skills and technology: flint knapping, fire starting, primitive shelter, medicinal plants, edible wild, cordage, atlatl, drum, flute, elm bark baskets, pine needle baskets, brain tanning, catfish bone needles and traditional wood working.

If this piques your interest, call and let us know about it. We want to get something started, and we would like you to join us!

Use that modern technology to contact us today!

The Cost of a Hardcopy Newsletter:

Do you wish to continue receiving the Oxley Newsletter?

If you are not a member of Oxley Nature Center but would like to continue receiving our bi-monthly newsletter, please notify us by **April 15, 2011.**

**To reduce the amount of paper (hence trees) inks, energy and postage; please consider getting your newsletter online at:
<http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org>.

To continue receiving your newsletter:

Call: 918-669-6644

E-mail: oxley@cityoftulsa.org

Write: Oxley Nature Center
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Tulsa, OK 74115

Thank you!

