



Oxley Nature Center

November/December, 2015

Volume 230

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.
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 Closings:

Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

**** Wednesday, November 11, Thursday, November 26 and Friday November 27 Thursday, December 24, Friday, December 25 and January 1.**

Program information:

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

***Register for classes 48 hours in advance.**

-Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated.

-Most programs are stroller/wheelchair accessible.

-Our new mailing address is:

Blessings by Amy Morris Marcoux

Change is in the air.

Golden leaves drift down like offerings. The vibrant red of Virginia creeper winds sinuously around tree trunks, climbing toward the pale blue of sky. Other leaves are beginning to carpet the earth: red, rust, orange and shades of brown; an artist's palette. The day is calm and crisp, leaves a crunchy accompaniment underfoot.

Gray squirrels scamper across the forest floor, gathering a variety of acorns, pecans and seeds. Some of these they carry to a prime location, where they bury them quickly in the soil before darting into the tree canopy. They follow a living chain of vines and branches that form a labyrinth in midair.

Butterflies and moths lay tucked in chrysalis and cocoon, hidden treasures for a winter's day. All animals have their own way of coping with seasonal change. Many birds and mammals will take advantage of seasonal fruits: persimmons, plums, berries, nuts and rose hips. Under secret cover of crisp fall leaves, burrowing creatures can be heard migrating downward into the earth for a winter's rest.

What about you? What preparations are you making for the changes this new season will bring? What reflections will you make on the season past? Nature continues to weave its story for those attentive to the nuances of life. Curiosity and wonder sustain and enrich us.

Wrap yourself in the warmth of your favorite sweater. Step outside where the air is redolent with wood smoke. Visit a wild place. Any wild place. It may be as small and rich with life as a patch of golden-rod along a roadside. Relish this feast of scents and sights and sounds. This time of year is evocative of memories.

Come outside and create some with us.

Nature Center Happenings

Volunteers Graduate

Congratulations to our new **Volunteer Naturalists** who graduated from the fall training program and are now leading school groups, night walks, pathfinder tours, and other tours:

**Katie Ferris, Bill Frances, Karen Harris,
Rosanna Richardson and Frances Whitehurst**

Welcome to Kathy Crocker, new visitor Center Host.

Thank You and Welcome To our Team!



Winter Solstice Hike

Join us Tuesday, December 22, at Oxley Nature Center from 1:30-3:30 p.m. to celebrate the changing of the season!

The winter solstice marks the shortest day of the year, and is followed by the day the sun begins to return to the Northern Hemisphere. Seasonal change is cause for great celebration!

Let's take a walk through the winter woods. Then we will warm up by the fire, watch the birds at the feeders and enjoy some hot chocolate.

**All ages, \$3 suggested donation
Please register in advance.**

Natural Babies, Natural World

Young children learn by contact with real objects, events and people. We will spend time on the trail to explore nature first hand. This will be a sensory experience!

Monday, November 9, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

"What is Happening to the Plants and Trees?"

We will take a walk to see how fall is affecting the flowers and trees. How are they different, compared to summer? Why do the leaves and seeds fall, and what happens to them now?

Monday, December 14, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

"The Squirrels in Winter"

We will talk about squirrels and how they and other animals and birds survive the winter. What do we do in winter that we do differently in the other seasons? We will take a walk and collect some biofacts to make a winter sensory bottle.

Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature Center

\$3 requested donation per person, all ages welcome

**** Please register in advance ****

Full Beaver Moon

Wednesday, November 25, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Beavers are preparing for winter. Will they make themselves known tonight? Join us for nocturnal explorations of the trails.



Full Cold Moon

Saturday, December 26, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Change is in the air. Nights are long and dark. What will we discover under cover of darkness as we explore the trails this evening?

Certified Interpretive Guide Training Workshop

When: November 30-December 3, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Where: Oxley Nature Center Instructor: Donna Horton

The National Association of Interpretation's Certified Interpretive Guide program offers a professional certification designed for anyone who delivers interpretive programs to the public. From the theoretical foundations of the profession to practical, hands-on-training, we learn how to design and present programs that help audiences make connections. Must be 16 or older.

For more information or to download a registration form:

http://www.interpnet.com/nai/nai/_certification/CIG_Workshops/CIG-2015-11-OK.aspx

Contact: DonnaHortonCIT@att.net, 918-587-0522.

Fourth Annual New Year's Eve Celebration

For Oxley Nature Center Members Only

Begin a new tradition!

We'll take an evening walk to welcome in the New Year! Following our hike, we will warm up in front of a bonfire or fireplace to share stories. Hot chocolate, apple cider, and the fixings for s'mores will be available.

Thursday, December 31, 5:30-8:00 p.m.

**Members Only! Please call and register in advance
Spaces are limited.**

Frost Flowers

Many of nature's gifts are fleeting, and frost flowers are a prime example. Perhaps that makes them all the more precious; conditions must be just right. Two of our native wildflowers that mature late in the year, yellow wingstem (*Verbesina alternifolia*) and white crownbeard (*Verbesina virginica*), are especially prolific this year. This increases your chances of seeing this natural phenomenon.

Both these plants have winged stems and grow up to 4-6 feet tall. They are prevalent on the drive into Oxley, along the trails, and in the prairie. They nestle back into the forest edge just along the roadside leading to the Lake Trail. These late-bloomers attract a large number of nectar gathering-butterflies and other insects in September and October. They are an important source of energy for migrating monarchs. But their gift to us does not end there. When they go to seed, their stems remain green and tender, with a pithy interior core capable of holding an abundance of moisture if rains have been adequate. That is the second important criteria—a wet fall season. Now we wait for that first hard freeze of the season, when the ground is not yet frozen.

The moisture in the stem of the plant expands, causing long, thin cracks to form along the length of the stem, splitting it. Water is pumped out through tiny vertical rows of fissures by capillary action and freezes upon contact with the air. As more water is forced through the cracks, more thin ice layers are pushed further out from the stem, causing delicate petals or ribbons to form in exquisite patterns. As more cracks reveal layers of thin ice, delicate petals form "flowers of ice" or curls that resemble ribbon candy. Each is unique.

Frost flowers are best seen in the early morning or in shaded areas. Once the sun touches them, the ethereal ice forms begin to disappear. Finding frost flowers may be a once in a lifetime event. It cannot be guaranteed nor predicted. Discovering them can be an exceptional and wonderful treasure. It is fleeting. No photograph can capture the delicate beauty. The vision, the experience, will rest with you. The conditions are good this year, so get out there and look after that first hard freeze. I guarantee you won't be disappointed!