

Nature Notes



Wanda Henao and Connie Blakley discover the joy of finding a new mushroom, *Phaeolus schweinitzii* (left), at LTNS.

Having fun with MUSHROOMS :)

story by Connie Blakley / photos by Sergio Henao

Mushrooms can be found in many different sizes and colors, but one of the largest I've seen is the beautiful mushroom pictured above, which was found at Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary in late November. Calvin and I met up with Sergio and Wanda Henao one Sunday and came upon this species near the base of a loblolly pine tree along a road on the north side of the property. This specimen was about eight inches in diameter, and Sergio knew immediately that it was a *Phaeolus schweinitzii*.

This species is orange, red brown or yellow when young turning rust or dark brown as it ages. It has been nicknamed the velvet-top fungus due to its velvety texture. The genus name *Phaeolus* means dark or obscure, referring to its dark brown color when mature. The species was named in honor of America's first mycologist, Lewis David von Schweinitz,

thus the species epithet of *schweinitzii*, meaning "of Schweinitz."

Phaeolus schweinitzii, a pathogen of conifers, produces annual basidiocarps from late summer into the fall, especially during wet weather. It may be found in clusters, but the fruiting bodies are usually single. It is a wood decay fungus that causes brown rot of the roots and base of the tree. This particular species is not edible but can be used for making dyes.

It was fun finding a new species for me and for the sanctuary. Join us on March 26 for our next Visitors Day at LTNS and you, too, might discover something new!

[Reference for information in this story: http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/toms_fungi/nov2007.html]

Group Activities – See websites for additional details

(www.outdoornatureclub.org or www.ornithologygroup.org)

ONC Contacts

ONC General Information

Calvin Blakley, 281-358-5407

Botany/Entomology Group

Russell Jeffords, 713-504-9215

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

Aaron Stoley, 713-781-1372

Ornithology Group (OG)

Pam Smolen, 832-212-1368

OG Field Trips

Adam Wood, 713-515-1692

Meeting Place, Bayland Community Center

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at Bayland Community Center, 5400 Bissonnet at Hillcroft (see map)



Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary Events

All LTNS events are held at the sanctuary, 2001 FM 945, Cleveland, TX (see map)



March 2011

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

April 2011

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

7 Ornithology (OG) Meeting
6:30 pm—Learning Corner
7:00 pm—Program

8 Botany-Entomology
7:30 pm—Program
Colorado Above The Tree Line, by Pauline Singleton.

10 ONC Meeting
7:00 pm—Social; 7:30 pm—Program
Wonders of New Zealand, by Farrar Stockton. See details next page.

19 Ornithology (OG) Field Trip
Birding in Jasper County in search of Bachman's Sparrow. Leader to be determined.

26 LTNS Open House & Highway Pickup
Join us to help pick up trash along our adopted highway, FM 945. Bring gloves, hat, water, etc.
After the work, we'll hike the trails in search of spring bloomers and migrant birds. Camping Saturday night for those who wish to stay over.

4 Ornithology (OG) Meeting
6:30 pm—Learning Corner
7:00 pm—Program

12 Botany-Entomology Meeting, 7:30 pm
Brassicaceae, the Mustard Family, with Common Texas Species, by Dr. Larry Brown.

14 ONC Board Meeting
7:00 pm — Bayland Community Center

16 Ornithology (OG) Field Trip
Birding Quintana & Brazoria NWR. Leader to be determined.

16 LTNS Open House & FEAST Day
Saturday is our annual FEAST Day when everyone brings their favorite covered dish for a pot-luck meal at noon. There will be nature walks in the morning and afternoon. Saturday evening the moth sheet will be out. Camping Saturday night for those who wish to stay over.

Membership Renewal Time

ONC membership runs from January to December and we encourage everyone to renew early. A Membership Form is enclosed. If you haven't already done so, please take a few minutes to mail your dues today. You can also pay your dues at any of our meetings. Thanks to everyone for your continued support!

**CLICK
HERE
TO
RENEW**

Other Notes of Interest

(Submit news and articles to editor – see back page for contact info)

ONC Appreciates Your Donations

Donations to ONC are always appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. Thanks, everyone, for your generosity.

Donations for LTNS Sanctuary Fund

Ron Anderson

Blanca Balderas

Chuck/Priscilla Bauer

Phil/Karen Beekman

Arthur/Ann Jones

Linda Knowles

Charles/Joanne Peterson

Mary Helen Pritchett

Phyllis Thompson

Donations for General Fund

John/Gloria Jones

Linda Knowles

Charles/Joanne Peterson

Billie Strickland

Dick Whanger

March 10 ONC Program

Farrar Stockton visited New Zealand at the end of 2009 during the holidays. He returned with beautiful photos (as always!) and interesting stories about the country and its natural wonders. Farrar and three friends struck out on their own in a rental car and traversed both north and south islands visiting a diverse array of ecosystems.

Farrar is a Master Naturalist, a member of ONC's board, an amateur lepidopterist and mineralogist, and exceptional photographer. Please join us for what promises to be a beautiful and educational program.

Nomination of officers

The annual business meeting for election of officers will be held at the March 10 ONC meeting. Nominations for current vacancies are hereby published as required by our bylaws: Secretary – Andrew Beck; VP of Membership – Margret Simmons. Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor at the meeting. Please join us at the meeting and exercise your right as a member to vote.

Notes from Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary

January Visitors Day

In spite of the cold morning, we had a good turnout for our quarterly trash pickup along FM 945, ONC's adopted highway. Volunteers who assisted were: Calvin/Connie Blakley, Leland Day, Mark Day, Sergio/Wanda Henao, Kellene Jarratt, Charles/Wanda Smith, and Aaron Stoley.



Volunteers pick up trash along our adopted road adjacent to LTNS in January. L-R: Sergio & Wanda Henao, Aaron Stoley, Kellene Jarratt.

Fence Repairs

For some time now, we have noticed evidence — piles of it! — of cattle encroaching on our property, always on the east side. A long section of the east fence near Mary's Glade was down due to fallen trees and old, rotting barbed wire, so Aaron Stoley and Charlie Smith have been working to repair the fence. They have spent several days in January and February working on this arduous task, with help on a couple of occasions from Calvin Blakley and Sergio and Wanda Henao.

Fence repair at LTNS is a never-ending task and there is a lot more fence needing repair than we have volunteers to do the work. If you can help, please contact Aaron.



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Officers and Board of Directors

President (acting)Calvin Blakley
 Executive Vice PresidentSergio Henao
 Membership Vice President.....Margret Simmons
 Sanctuaries Vice President (acting).....Aaron Stoley
 Secretary.....Flo Hannah
 Treasurer Farrar Stockton
 CustodianRussell Jeffords
 Botany•Entomology Representative Leland Day
 Ornithology Representative Pam Smolen

our charter...

A nonprofit educational and scientific organization established in 1923 to protect and conserve natural resources by fostering an interest in nature study.

our sanctuary...

ONC owns a 700-acre nature preserve, Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary (LTNS), 11 miles northwest of Cleveland, TX. All members and guests are invited to attend monthly open houses.

Little Thicket Nature Sanctuary Sightings

Each time we visit the sanctuary we encounter something new, whether it be an insect, a plant, a snake, a bird, or even new people visiting LTNS for the first time. In future issues of *Nature Notes*, this back page will be devoted to highlighting our encounters. Next time you're at the sanctuary, if you find an interesting species and would like to share, please send your photo with a brief description to the editor.

We hope you will learn something here and also be encouraged to visit the Little Thicket!



Mystery Tree?

During an impromptu field trip to LTNS in late January, this beautiful tree was sighted by Charles Peterson along the Magnolia Gulch trail. There are a few ideas as to its identity, but we will have to wait until spring when the leaves appear to be sure. Stay tuned! [Photo by Calvin Blakley.]



Coral Pink Merulius (*Phlebia incarnata*)

This bright pink mushroom, often found in association with false turkey tail (*Stereum ostrea*), was seen along the Big Tree Trail in mid-January. Thanks to Sergio Henao for spotting and identifying it. [Photo by Connie Blakley.]