

**Bright Leaf T-Shirts, Caps, & Patches
in Vibrant Colors**



Caps \$20



Friends of Bright Leaf
Patches \$5



T-Shirts \$15

To order, contact Sally Scott at 453-2289

Calendar of Events

October Event—Open House

Saturday, October 18th, 9:00am—1:00pm

Docent Training (call 459-7269 to reserve)

Saturday, November 1st, 9:00am—4:00 pm

November Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 11th, 6:30 pm

Volunteer Appreciation Party

Tuesday, December 9th, 7:00pm

Monthly Interpretive Hikes

Interpretive Hikes are scheduled for the second Saturday and second Sunday of every month. Meet at the parking lot at the north entrance to the park.

October Interpretive Hikes

Saturday, October 11, 9:00 - 11:00 am
Sunday, October 12, 9:00 - 11:00 am

November Interpretive Hikes

Saturday, November 8, 9:00 - 11:00 am
Sunday, November 9, 9:00 - 11:00 am

December Interpretive Hikes

Saturday, December 13, 9:00 - 11:00 am
Sunday, December 14, 9:00 - 11:00 am

Docent Training

There will be a docent training class held on Saturday, November 1st at Bright Leaf. We need volunteers who can lead hikes, help out at open house events, and/or assist the site manager in numerous ways. There is a limit on how many people can be trained at one time, so please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested. Call 459-7269 or email nwoolley@austin.rr.com for more information or to sign up.

Thanks to our 2008 Sponsors



Friends of Bright Leaf
P.O. Box 27921
Austin, Texas 78755-7921

Friends of Bright Leaf



Friends of Bright Leaf

Fall 2008

Some Edible Plants in Bright Leaf

by Sally Scott and Marshall Johnston

Evergreen Sumac (Rhus speciosissima) This common evergreen shrub has clusters of hard red drupes that appear in early fall. The acidic fruit may be sucked or steeped in cool to warm water to extract a sour lemonade like beverage. Warning: some people have an allergic reaction to sumac leaves and fruit as they are in the same family as cashews, mangoes and poison ivy. Poison Sumac is easy to distinguish because it has white berries. When I am with school children I ask them to rub the berry between their fingers and then lick their fingers to taste the "tart".

Persimmon (diospyros virginiana) This brightly colored orange fruit appears in late fall and should be eaten when soft and mushy. Persimmons are best made into jams.

Ashe Juniper (Mountain Cedar) is so abundant on our slopes. This is NOT the European variety used to flavor gin (I was somewhat sorry to find this out) and the blue berries are considered toxic.

Chili Pequin (capsicum annuum salanacdae) is the wild progenitor of the jalapeno pepper and packs a surprising wallop. The small bright red berries are about 5/8 inch long and ripen in summer. They can be used fresh or dried for later use. One or two berries are enough to spice up your chili. They can also be boiled and then used to spice vinegar. Warning: The leaves contain a toxic alkaloid so do not use them.

Agarita (Berberis trifoliolata) This three leafed shrub produces round succulent red berries in the spring. The stiff spiny leaves make collecting agarita berries a challenge. They can be eaten raw in small quantities, but are best made into Agarita jelly. I buy this jelly at the Bob Bullock Museum store.

Hackberry tree (Palo Blanco Celtis) also called the sugarberry tree bears a fruit in late summer to late fall. The sweet pulp surrounds a large pit and is mostly used to make a sauce. The leaves of the Hackberry were used as a tan dye for wool and the long hanging shoots were used for basket making by the American Natives.

Open House

Saturday October 18th
9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Board Nominations

Sally Scott, President
Bruce Bigelow, Vice President
Steve Gerson, Secretary
Michele Morrison, Treasurer

Bill Dodd Jane Tillman
Patricia McGee Kathrine Smith
Linda Nowlin Marshall Johnston

Escarpment Black Cherry (Prunus Serotina). We have one of these (that I am aware of). The purplish red/black cherries are very small (1/4 inch). The fruit ripens in summer and may be somewhat bitter in taste. American Indians used the dried cherries in making pemmican, and some early settlers used them in pies. But they are mostly food for the birds here.

Mustang Grape Vines (Vitis Mustangensis) We have mustang grape vines growing above the creek on Trail one. This juicy purple fruit can be found from midsummer to fall, assuming the birds and squirrels have not gotten them all first. I have collected them and with the addition of plenty of sugar made them into grape jelly. There are recipes on page 206 of Delena Tulls "Book of Edible and Useful Plants of Texas and the Southwest" (my source for information.)

Prickly Pear Cactus (apuntia engelmannii) are in abundance not only in Bright Leaf but throughout the Southwest. The pads are actually joints from the stem and make an excellent cooked vegetable. They are grown as food in Mexico. The tender new spring pads called nopalitos are the best. However, the most delightful part of this plant is the red fruit called tunas. They can be eaten raw (after

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October Event

Official Notice: Elections and Fall Open House

Saturday October 18th from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm

Our annual Fall Open House gives you the opportunity to get reacquainted with the Bright Leaf after the heat of summer has passed. Join us as we:

- Elect new officers and board members to Friends of Bright Leaf (see list of candidates on page 1)
- Visit with others who enjoy Bright Leaf as much as you do.
- Take a hike in the preserve.

What to Bring: Wear clothes suitable for the weather and wear tennis shoes or hiking boots. Bring a water bottle. **Sorry, no dogs or bikes allowed.**

Directions: Take RR2222 west from Mopac. Go one block west of the traffic light at Mesa. Go left (south) onto Creek Mountain. When it dead-ends in two short blocks, turn right onto Old Bull Creek. The parking lot is on the left.

Letter from the Board President

We continued our transition this year while our docents introduced and educated a record number of visitors to the wonders of Bright Leaf. The Austin Community Foundation owns Bright Leaf; John Mahan is Site Manager and we support and augment their efforts to fulfill Ms. Lucas' vision for Bright Leaf.

One important way we can do that in the coming year is to remove more non-native plants and trees so that "native Texans", including our resident endangered Golden-cheeked Warblers, continue to live and thrive here. Fellow board members and I welcome your help to do this. Join us at the October Open

House to get involved with this, and to welcome our visitors.

Thank you for honoring me as your President this year. Other demands on my time mean I leave the Board this year but our new President and Board members, together with your continued involvement (particularly on invasive removal!) will lead us to greater accomplishments in the new year.

Joe Beach
Friends of Bright Leaf

Life Members (>\$1000)

Greg & Mary Crouch
Ben & Joan Bentzin
Kent Hickson
Laurel Foundation
Georgia B. Lucas Foundation Fund
Jane Smoot
Barbara Ruud
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Carol Bennett and Jo Wilson
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Lora Ann and Steve Gerson
Jane and Rory Hall
Janice and Jack Hopper
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Susan Kleinman
Carol Lockley
Janis and Demetrius Loukas
Bridget McPhillips
Margaret Menicucci and Michael Whellan
Michele Morrison
Cleigh Nease
Ed and Judy Parken
Kimberly Patterson and Tom Delaney
Paul and Joan Rubin
Beck Runte
Paulina and Eric Soenen
Del and Kay Taebel
Anne Woolley
Mary Francis Zeitler

(This list reflects contributions received since the start of the fiscal year: September 1, 2007)

Membership Application

Annual memberships to **Friends of Bright Leaf** provide funds to help preserve, protect and make accessible this treasure. Become a member and help assure that Georgia Lucas' dream will last many lifetimes.

Individual \$25 ___ Family \$35 ___ Supporter \$50+ ___ Sponsor \$100+ ___
Patron \$250+ ___ Corporate \$500+ ___ Life Member \$1,000+ ___

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____ (for reminders of hikes and other events)

As a member of the Friends of Bright Leaf, I will support the decisions of the management of the park. My signature releases Friends of Bright Leaf and its members from any responsibility for accidents or death as a result of use of the Bright Leaf property. I understand that the Friends of Bright Leaf will not sell or loan my membership information to any other entity.

SIGNATURE: _____ Date _____

Please Mail to: Friends of Bright Leaf, P.O. Box 27921, Austin, Texas 78755-7921

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you remove the prickles) as the fruit is high in sugar. I have eaten them mostly in prickly pear jelly, which is excellent served with cream cheese. Tulls' book also has recipes for nopalitos gumbo and the jelly (pg 56).

Turks Cap (Malvaruscus abarboreus var. drummondii) I did not know you could eat the flowers, fruit and young leaves of this abundant plant. The mealy red fruit are about 3/4 inch in diameter and taste somewhat like a watermelon or apple.

This is by no means all the edible plants at Bright Leaf. There are dandelions and tomatillos, sunflowers and American Beauty Berry Bushes. Good tasting.

Friends of Bright Leaf

2007-2008 Board of Directors

Joseph Beach, President 342-0588
Kurt Hill, Vice President 343-5550
Steve Gerson, Secretary 452-9887
Michele Morrison, Treasurer 306-9300
Bruce Bigelow 327-4748
Marshall Johnston 335-9525
Bridget McPhillips 374-1547
Linda Nowlin 266-9521
Sally Scott 453-2289

Site Manager

John Mahan

Newsletter Editor

Steve Gerson

Check out our web site:

"www.brightleaf.org"

Letter From the Site Manager

Dear Friends of Bright Leaf,

We at Bright Leaf have come to the end of another summer. It has been hot and dry. I look forward to cooler temperatures and more rain. I would like to thank the outgoing board members of the FoBL for their service and to welcome the new board. I look forward to a great year at the Preserve.

I wish to welcome all to our Bright Leaf open house on Saturday, October 18. Come out and enjoy a hike at Bright Leaf.

John Mahan

The mission of the **Friends of Bright Leaf** is to conserve and enhance Bright Leaf and promote the public's enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of this urban jewel.

Our budget is posted on the Friends of Bright Leaf web site --

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fobl/>