



# the Leaflet



## Brown Bag Lecture February 2 with Kim Norton Taylor and Bob O'Kennon

Join us on Tuesday, February 2, from noon to 1 p.m. for BRIT's first 2016 Brown Bag event with BRIT's own Kim Norton Taylor and Bob O'Kennon presenting "A Review of the Flora Diversity of the LBJ National Grasslands, Wise County, Texas." The LBJNGL is a U.S. Forest Service preserve totaling over 20,000 acres

that has diverse soils and habitats that harbors over 1000 species of plants. It has over 1000 ponds, each being unique in floral diversity. Properties obtained in the 1930's and 1950's following the worst dust-bowl droughts in U.S. history were cattle ranches with stock tank ponds built to supply water for the livestock. Through the years, these man-made ponds have collected seeds from various sources, and the resulting plants, some quite rare, have been protected and allowed to survive. Some unusual and rare plants and details on pond flora diversity will be discussed.

Bring your lunch and bring a friend to join us for this unique "lunch and learn" opportunity. For more information about the BRIT Brown Bag Series, please visit our [webpage](#).



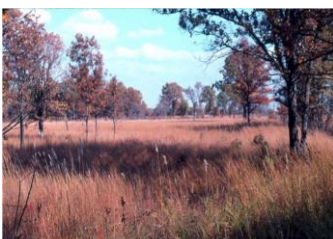
## What's Happening with Bella at BRIT

Pam and Bella can't wait for BRIT's preschool programs to resume on February 2 and Bella's Book & Nature Club on February 6 for First Saturday Story Time.

### Bloom with Bella the Begonia

February's Featured Book is *Time to Sleep* by Denise Fleming. Children and families will explore the different ways we prepare for winter. Join Bella for an interactive read-aloud and family-friendly activities that provide fun explorations of art, nature, and science! For more information, please contact [Kimberly Whitlock](#) at 817.546.1958.

- **Bella's Story Time:** Saturday, February 6 (10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.) - Free
- **Bella's Book Club:** Tuesday, February 2 (10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.) - \$10 per non-member family or free to members.



## BRIT to Co-Sponsor Mid-South Prairie Symposium in Tennessee

BRIT Botanical Explorer Dr. Dwayne Estes has been developing a network of stakeholders to preserve and restore prairies of the Mid-South region of the U.S. (TN, KY, AL). In 2015, Dwayne met with over one hundred people including state representatives, city and county mayors, corporations, ranchers, citizen-science groups, state and federal agencies, and conservationists from a multitude of agencies and non-profits. The project has tremendous momentum going into

2016. To advance the cause, Dwayne is organizing the Mid-South Prairie Symposium, a three-day event (May 25-27) to be hosted by Austin Peay State University's Center for Field Biology (Clarksville, TN) and co-sponsored by BRIT. The event will include invited speakers from major conservation agencies and organizations in the Mid-South and field-trips to natural prairies and restoration sites. For more information, please contact [Dwayne](#) and check-out his [blog](#).

## BRIT Botanical Explorer to Teach Grueling Botany Course in Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina

Although BRIT Botanical Explorer Dr. Dwayne Estes is part of BRIT's research team, he is also an educator. With his joint position as professor of Biology at Austin Peay State University (Clarksville, TN), Dwayne teaches a number of botany courses and guides a team of seven graduate students, who are also BRIT Research Associates. Every other year Dwayne also teaches rigorous advanced field botany courses at the Highlands Biological Station, Highlands, NC, in the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains. This year (May 16-20), Dwayne will teach "Sedges of the Southern Appalachians" for advanced students and professional botanists. This course is demanding, and students are in class for 12-14 hours per day for five days. It combines intensive lab work and fieldwork to study what may be the most difficult group of plants in the U.S. For more information, please contact [Dwayne](#) and you may [register here](#).



## Art and Science at BRIT

Magic almost always happens when two artists collaborate, and BRIT is so pleased to be a part of the magic taking place between Texas artists Carol Ivey and Deborah Mersky! In preparation for their new show "Call and Response"—which will be BRIT's 2016 Spring Gallery Night Show and will be hanging in the Madeline R. Samples Exhibit Hall at BRIT from March 18 to May 5—Ivey and Mersky have been experimenting with the process of collaborative work, drawing from a wide array of images, including specimens from BRIT's Herbarium. These circular works which embody the idea of call and response were sent back and forth between the artists with additions and deletions made in each studio using collage, printing, drawing, and painting.

Please join BRIT on Saturday, March 19, from 4 p.m. – 9 p.m. for the opening of this unique and exciting show. For more information about this exhibit and the Fort Worth Art Dealers Association Gallery Night, please visit our [webpage](#).



## Do You Have a Love of Butterflies You Are Willing to Share?

Do you like volunteering with the public? Butterflies in the Garden: the Mayan Experience will be the theme for Butterflies in the Garden 2016 running from March 1 - April 3. This is a joint project by BRIT, the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, Fort Worth Botanical Society, and the Fort Worth Garden Club. Hundreds of volunteers are needed to help with the butterfly exhibit at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden conservatory. Some of the duties include greeting visitors, interacting with the public, and identifying butterflies. Special training is required for this event, and all volunteers must attend one of these three trainings:

- February 4, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. at BRIT
- February 6, 9 a.m. - noon at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden
- February 10, 9 a.m. - noon at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden



Do you like volunteering with school groups? The Butterfly School Program at BRIT has curriculum written, schools booked, and now all we need are volunteers. The positions for the School Program Volunteers will be Conservatory, In the Mayan Jungle, Butterfly Life Cycle, and Butterfly Behaviors. If you are interested in helping with school-age children in this hands-on learning environment, there is an additional training one of which you are required to attend:

- February 17, 10 a.m. - noon at BRIT
- February 25, 10 a.m. - noon at BRIT

If you would like more information about volunteering, please contact [Julie Donovan](#), Director of Volunteers and Visitor Relations at 817.546.1846.

## Binational Collaborative Conservation Research



As part of a binational conservation effort for the charismatic Shaw's agave (*Agave shawii* ssp. *shawii*), BRIT Biodiversity Explorer Dr. Sula Vanderplank has teamed up with the staff at Cabrillo National Monument in San Diego, California, who are working to better understand this rare plant that they are managing to protect. Shaw's agave is known from just a couple of native populations in the United States but is more common in threatened coastal habitats of northern Baja California, Mexico. As part of a collaborative grant with the San Diego Natural History Museum (funded by the US Navy) BRIT is helping to conduct a full pollination assessment. Sula published a conservation plan in 2013 that highlighted the research needs for this interesting and long-lived plant (living 40 years or more) that can reproduce clonally but is monocarpic (only flowers once before it dies). In an effort to better understand this taxon, the team went on an expedition to Baja California to look at this plant in the middle of its range where it grows abundantly on the coastal bluffs. The results from this expedition were recently published in the journal of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, where they detail the research questions, the techniques they are using to look for bats, collect pollen, and survey the population using drones.

For more information see: [Vanderplank, S. & K. Lombardo. 2015. Shaw's Agave: A short visit. Cactus and Succulent Journal 87\(6\):243-246](#), or contact [Sula Vanderplank](#).

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## BRIT Visits the National Archives

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, BRIT researchers visited the National Archives at Fort Worth for a crash-course in archival procedures. This branch of the National Archives houses documents from federal agencies in Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas spanning hundreds of years. The researchers looked at some gems from the archives' massive holdings, including signatures of some of our favorite presidents and celebrities.

Meg Hacker, the director of the National Archives at Fort Worth, enlightened the group to several series in the archives' holdings that will be useful to BRIT's research efforts. The researchers are eager to make another visit—who could resist an opportunity to explore records from organizations like the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine?

We hope to apply principles observed at the National Archives to expand BRIT's collections, which surely holds its own undiscovered gems!

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## Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo Contest in the BRIT Prairie



The Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo (FWSSR) teamed up with BRIT and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service to offer a new and exciting 4-H and FFA Wildlife Contest on January 18. Thirty teams and five individual contestants, ranging from 8 to 18 years of age, competed in the event that challenged them to identify wildlife species and evaluate habitats and best management practices.



The competition focused on their knowledge of wildlife species identification and habitat management, while promoting the real-world application of using critical thinking skills and decision-making. The competition was a huge success! The contestants, parents, and coaches enjoyed their time at BRIT and are looking forward to the 2017 contest which will again be held at BRIT. The FWSSR and BRIT will continue to work together to make this the best Wildlife Contest in the state in 2017. Bigger and better, reaching more students to help make a difference!

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## Discovering the Future with BRIT's Agents of Change

In December, one of BRIT's Command Agents of Change in Green Revolution, Juma Petro, was awarded an opportunity to attend a multi-day Career Camp at the Fort Worth Zoo. Here is what he had to say about his experience:

*"I liked that I had things to tell people from BRIT and Green Revolution. I also enjoyed working with different animals and discovering new jobs I had never known before. I would not have made it into the program without Green Revolution. Achieving my goal of attending was really important to me. I wish I had a chance to go out there to show them how important the Career Camp was and that it changed my life. I wish all kids were Agents of Change so they would have opportunities like me to see more ways of life."*

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## Specimen Digital Imaging at BRIT

The largest current digitization project at BRIT is the image capture of the 225,000 specimens collected from the southeastern United States in the Vanderbilt (VDB) portion of the BRIT collection. BRIT's component of this NSF project is nearly halfway completed, and the main goal of capturing the images for all VDB Tennessee and Alabama specimens has already been accomplished. One critical remaining goal is the digital capture of the label data from these specimens. Our grant partners have developed the web platform **Notes from Nature**, an easy and fun way to enter in data. Anyone with an internet connection can view imaged VDB specimens from this site and type the label information into appropriate fields. Thanks to our volunteers and others either during one of our "Transcription Blitzes" or on their own time, over 11,000 label transcriptions have already been completed! To find out how you can contribute, please see our [webpage](#).



## BRIT Herbarium Inventory is Complete!

With the generous assistance of BRIT staff, associates, and volunteers, we have completed an overall inventory of herbarium specimens housed at BRIT. From this effort we now know the total number of our core holdings (906,287), the total number of species (66,135), and the general area from which they were collected. Once the specimens from specialty collections (fungi, bryophytes, pollen) or those still-to-be accessioned are added, it's clear that our holdings will number well over one million specimens. Very few large herbaria such as ours have collections data over their entire collections at this level of detail. These data will be invaluable as a means to accurately describe our holdings to anyone interested in our collection, including scientists, range-land managers, and state and federal funding agencies.

## Family and Corporate Memberships

You're passionate about the planet and eager to learn more about living things. So are we! BRIT's research and education programs touch the lives of hundreds if not thousands of people all over the world each year. Now you can join us by becoming a BRIT member. Becoming a member will help us expand our scientific research, serve more students, and reach more teachers with our education programs. We're life-long learners. So are you. [Please join us!](#)



[Calloway's Nursery](#) / [Marshall Grain](#) / [Redenta's Garden](#) / [The Tree Place](#)  
Remember to bring your BRIT membership card for your discounts when shopping!



## Corporate Membership Opportunities

Are you looking for a way for your organization to get connected in the community? Please consider becoming a [Reciprocal Partner](#) or a [Corporate Member](#) of BRIT! You may become a member [online](#) or for additional information on these membership programs, please contact [Tammie Crole](#) at 817.332.7518.

## SAVE THE DATE—MAY 14—PRAIRIE DAY

*"How very exciting!!! I was so impressed with the Prairie Day and enjoyed the variety of vendors! Being in the BRIT building for the first time was eye opening, and I felt so appreciative of the FW treasure! Thank you for the raffle winning ticket. I can't wait to come by for the exquisite book. Flora is my passion!" ~2015 Prairie Day visitor*

**Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT)** | Open Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
1700 University Drive | Fort Worth, Texas 76107-3400 | Phone: 817.332.4441 | Fax: 817.332.4112

*Our Mission is to conserve our natural heritage by deepening our knowledge of the plant world and achieving public understanding of the value plants bring to life.*

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*To subscribe by email contact Tammie Crole at [tcrole@brit.org](mailto:tcrole@brit.org).*