

Woodwind Lakes

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Scherzo Lane Lake 2 drainage repairs

LOCATION

Walking trail, Lake 2,
Scherzo Lane

Harris County MUD 261 will be replacing the inlet pipe leading into Lake 2. This will require excavating around the existing pipe for removal, followed by installing the new pipe and then securing it to the concrete backslope interceptor located in the backslope swale at the top of the lake near the homeowner's property.

Access will be blocked during the repair process.

Repairs will start late March or early April.

Additional details and times will be published as we get closer to the work beginning.

WOODWIND LAKES GARAGE SALE

SPRING 2025



April 5th from 7am to 2pm



IT'S BINGO TIME!

Many Thanks to Eats Mesquite Grill at 13918 Hempstead for allowing us to hold our February Bingo Event at their facility. The venue was changed at the last minute due to necessary repairs to the Windfern Forest MUD Building.

Prizes were four \$25 Mastercard/Visa Gift Cards and a gift donated by Mari Delgadillo.



Vice President Ann Tatum addresses the group



Looks like Gail Ford has a winner



Birthday Girls

Gail Ford, Lynne James, Terry Buckner, Christina Smith, Cathy Peveto



Helen Laughlin and Mari Delgadillo



Bingo Winners

Cindy Sheen, Diana Cadieux, Lynn Collins, Helen Laughlin, Gail Ford

The hide and seek champion: the walking stick

In Mother Nature's world where only the most cunning survive, the masters of disguise hold the winning hand. Insects and animals alike depend on their ability to remain unseen to ensure their continued existence. Take frogs and toads as an example. Their skin is often mottled with browns, greens and grays, providing excellent camouflage in leaves or near water. Owls blend into tree bark or foliage. The fur of rabbits and hares often matches the surrounding environment.



The walking stick is an example of an insect that is nearly impossible to spot. As the name implies, it looks like a stick. The body is divided into three parts: the head, thorax and abdomen. They are wingless, have long, slender legs and long thread-like antennae. Normally they grow to about four inches long but there is one Texas species that grows to almost seven inches long making it the longest insect in the United States. Everything is bigger in Texas, right?

Be careful with this one

One particular species of the walking stick insect, the two striped species, emits a milky, toxic spray to defend itself against ants, birds, possums, cats, even people. Aiming for the eyes, they can spray up to 15 inches with astonishing accuracy.

The spray can cause serious injury to eyes with cases ranging from conjunctivitis to corneal ulceration. If you get sprayed, it is advisable to seek medical attention. (See sidebar)

Specialty survival skills

The opossum isn't the only thing in nature that plays dead. The walking stick has been known to purposely fall from wherever it's perched and lay completely still on the ground until the danger has passed. Another defense mechanism is swaying back and forth mimicking the movement of branches in the breeze.



OTHER NAMES: *devil's riding horse, prairie alligator, stick bug, witch's horse, devil's darning needle, scorpion, and musk mare.*

An important ecological role

What are walking sticks good for? Believe it or not, they play a very important ecological role especially in dense forested areas. Because they eat leaves, they create light gaps. These gaps allow sunlight to reach the ground. This helps new plants to grow. Consumption of leaves also encourages new growth.

What I find most interesting about these insects is that people actually keep them as pets. Apparently they are easy to care for. They don't smell, they're quiet, require minimal space and they're fascinating to watch. Not for me!

Camouflage is one of many ways animals have to survive in their environments. I find the walking stick insect to be one of the most interesting examples of camouflage in the animal world. Now, go see if you can find one.

Cheryl Conley, Lake Creek Preserve Board of Directors

AN INCIDENT IN TEXAS [1937]

"The victim was observing a pair of *Anisomorpha buprestoides* with his face within two feet of the insects, when he received the discharge in his left eye. The pain in his left eye was immediately excruciating; being reported to be as severe as if it had been caused by molten lead. Quick, thorough drenching with cool water allayed the burning agony to a dull aching pain. The pain eased considerably within the course of a few hours. Upon awakening the next morning the entire cornea was almost a brilliant scarlet in color and the eye was so sensitive to light and pressure for the next forty-eight hours that the patient was incapacitated for work. Vision was impaired for about five days. Symptoms gradually disappeared and there were no lasting effects."



WOMEN'S CLUB MARCH EVENT
Tuesday, March 18

HUMAN TRAFFICKING*

*Signs to watch for, how to report and what you can do to help the victims.
Presentation by Lea Byrd from The Landing (www.thelanding.org)*

Venue change for this event

Meeting will begin at 10:00 am
Speaker will commence at 11:00 am
7676 Hillmont Street
(Boxer Property at Northwest Crossing II)

*Please contact Ann Tatum at anntatum9203@gmail.com by March 13, 2025,
if you wish to attend, plan on bringing a guest or have any questions.*

anntatum9203@gmail.com

- * • An estimated 25 million people worldwide – including over **300,000** in Texas – are victims of human trafficking.
- There are an estimated 80,000 youth victims of sex trafficking in Texas.
- Less than 1% of human trafficking victims are identified.

It was one of those March
days when the sun shines hot
and the wind blows cold:

when it is summer in the light
and winter in the shade.

Charles Dickens

Crane flies*

Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist

It's a bit chilly and raining as I write this but I know soon the weather will warm up and the "Texas groundhogs" will be out in force. "Texas groundhogs" is the term I use for crane flies as these typically are the first insects we begin to see emerging in the spring. Like Punxsutawney Phil, crane flies signal spring is coming soon.

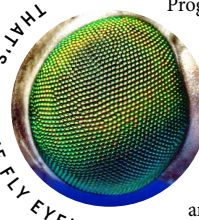


Crane flies can be small to large in size with some reaching up to an inch (not including their legs). Legs are long and slender legs and have a V-shaped suture on the thorax. The spindly legs of crane flies tend to break off very easily, so you may often encounter these insects with less than their allotted amount of 6 legs. Adults sometimes are mistaken for giant mosquitoes and may frighten people.

Crane flies are sometimes called "mosquito hawks" which is a misnomer. The name mosquito hawk is usually used to refer to dragonflies but sometimes it is also used to refer to a large species of mosquito that has a larval stage which feeds on other mosquito species. Other incorrect information about crane flies is they eat mosquitoes but this is untrue. Adult crane flies feed on nectar or are non-feeding.

Crane fly larvae are found in moist soil where they feed on decaying organic matter. Larvae are wormlike and legless without well-developed heads. Some species of larvae feed on roots of turfgrass or other plants. Crane fly larvae usually do not cause enough damage to be considered a pest but with very high populations management may be needed.

In Texas, crane flies tend to be abundant in the spring. While adults may be a nuisance when entering homes or disturbing outdoor activities, they do not cause damage and do not bite. Keep doors and windows closed and make sure screens are in good repair. Either turn off outside lights at night or use "bug bulbs" to reduce the number of crane flies that are drawn near the home because of light sources.



"They are harmless. They don't have any mouth parts so unfortunately, they can't eat our mosquitoes which would be cool if they did."

*Dr. Sonja Swiger,
entomologist at Texas A&M University*

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Serv. Program Specialist at ebrown@ag.tamu.edu.

This work is supported in part by the Crop Protection and Pest Management, Extension Implementation Program [award no. 2021-70006-35347/project accession no. 1027036] from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Texas AgriLife Extension Service or the Texas AgriLife Research is implied. Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.

*** You may know them as: mosquito hawk, mosquito eater, gallinipper, and gollywhopper**

THEY CAN'T REALLY EAT (OR BITE) ANYTHING

Despite widely held beliefs that adult crane flies (or "mosquito hawks") prey on mosquito populations, the adult crane fly is anatomically incapable of killing or consuming other insects. Although the adults of some species may feed on nectar, the adults of many species have such short lifespans that they do not eat at all.



March Yard of the Month winners



Congratulations!

