View this email in your browser

December is one of the best months for hiking at Oxley Nature Center. The trees have dropped most of their leaves making bird watching, owl spotting, furry animal and armadillo glimpsing a little bit easier. Come out for a walk. Be sure to bundle up, wear your mittens, scarves and boots, no bug spray needed! And won't you drop by the Center afterwards and see what the Burr Oak Nature Store has for you? We have so many possible gift items and with your Oxley Member Discount you'll be able to find something you will love to give to someone special!

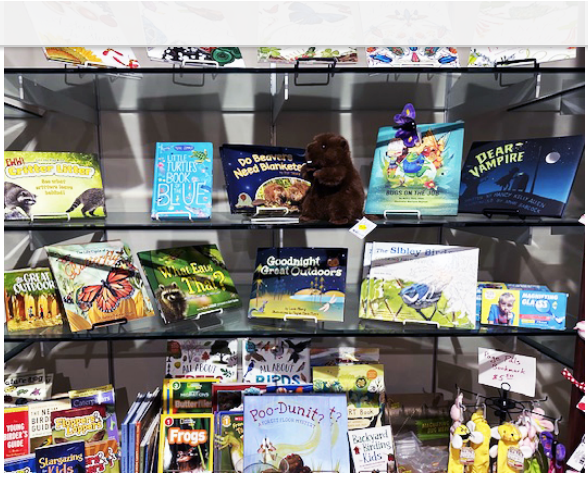
Burr Oak Nature Store

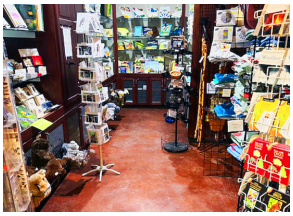
Nature-Themed Holiday Gifts

Use your member discount and support Oxley by shopping at the **Burr Oak Nature Store** in the Interpretive Building

- Oxley t-shirts, hats, pins, patches, mugs, stickers and more:
- Douglas stuffed animals
- Puzzles
- Children's Books
- Jabebo earrings
- Greeting cards
- Field Guides
- Hiking Sticks
- Art work
- The Best selection of books about Nature and more
- Gift memberships to Friends of Oxley are also available either at the front desk or through the website www.oxleynaturecenter.org

SPECIAL
Through December only, buy $20 or more in field guides or other books and get a copy of Robin Wall Kimmerer's new book The Serviceberry ($20 value) for free!!!





Burr Oak Nature Store

Naturalist Notebook - Thanksgiving 2024

By Karen Harris

It's the day before Thanksgiving, and we are finally getting some seasonal temperatures. It has stayed unusually warm through the first half of November, but we had pretty good frost last night and weather forecasts say Tulsa will drop into the 20's this week. To say we have had an exceptional fall may be an understatement. First we were in severe drought; then we got three months' worth of rain in a couple of weeks. Lake Sherry essentially dried up and then temporarily refilled and is now back down to about half full. I watched water under the bridge near the old beaver dam flow out from Blue Heron Swamp into Coal Creek, then back from Coal Creek into Blue Heron, then back out AGAIN. The tiny minnows swam back and forth sometimes with and sometimes against the flow. I think those little fish can teach us a lesson. Change is inevitable and, if the flow at the moment doesn't suit us, we need to adjust and persevere. That's just one thing Nature can teach us.

In her new book, The Serviceberry, Robin Wall Kimmerer argues that the Serviceberry can teach us about a system of abundance and reciprocity that engenders gratitude, the opposite of a system based on perceived scarcity and competition for resources that promotes greed. The genus to which Serviceberry belongs is Amelanchier and includes several species, only one of which, A. arborea, occurs naturally in Oklahoma. The late horticulturalist, Russell Studebaker, introduced me to "Miss Amelanchier", as he called her, on one of our spring field trips to Cherokee County. He taught me to drive slowly along the backroads so I could distinguish white Serviceberry flowers from those of wild plum and the invasive Callery/Bradford pear. To me, Serviceberry has the loveliest flowers of them all. But flowers aren't their only gift. By mid-summer her edible berries turn from bright red to a dark blue and, though seedy, are delightfully delicious. In my yard in town, I can only enjoy a few before small flocks of robins, bluejays, mockingbirds, and cedar waxwings take their share. However, in attracting the birds, the tree gives me the enjoyment of watching the incredible beauty of the flocks. When fall arrives, Serviceberry leaves turn a gorgeous orange, another gift to brighten my days. In return, the Serviceberry benefits from other

parts of the ecosystem. Other trees drop their leaves near her and decomposers work on those leaves to form humus and release accumulated nutrients to her roots. Insects that visit her flowers provide her with pollination services and birds that consume her fruits and scarify her seeds in their digestive systems provide dispersal services. In town even I get to play a part by providing supplemental water and mulch to the several Serviceberries that I have planted since that first field trip.

That brings me back to Thanksgiving. As a naturalist, I can focus on the existential threats of climate change and mass extinctions (and too often I do). I can also be grateful for my family, friends, colleagues, Oxley volunteers and members of ONCA who support our work and, most of all, for the gifts Nature gives us. I can't solve those two global problems by myself, but I can be satisfied with what I have rather than accumulating more stuff. I can give to others what I have in abundance. I can reduce my personal cost to the planet and I can encourage others to do the same. Tomorrow, at my farm family's home, relatives and friends will bring food to share. Each of us has our specialty (I'll bake the pies). It is a day of abundance, reciprocity, and gratitude. May that Nature-like spirit continue long past the day. Happy Thanksgiving.

Mary K. Oxley Nature Center - December Programs

Call 918-596-9054 to register for any program that requires pre-registration.

Project FeederWatch
*Every Thursday and Friday in December, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
Stay warm inside while helping collect community science data to submit to Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. We'll teach you all that you need to know. Bird watching and learning has never been so much fun! No registration required and all ages are welcome!

Autumn and Winter Discovery Walks
Fridays at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., and Sunday at 2:00 p.m.
These informal walks will be facilitated by Oxley staff naturalists. Meet by the message board in the parking lot and we'll walk together to see what the trails have to show us. These are free, drop-in events for all ages and abilities.

Saturday Morning Birding
December 7, 8:00 – 9:45 a.m.
All ages and skill levels are welcome for this free drop-in Birding Walk, guided by Oxley Natural Resources Coordinator, Josh Smith. Bring binoculars if you have them!

Oxley Green Teens!
December 7, 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
This program is for 13-18 year-old nature enthusiasts interested in having a positive impact on the environment and we are still accepting participants! Please feel free to call us (ask for Lisa or Maggie) if you or anyone you know is interested.

***Nature Story Time**
December 4, 11, and 18, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
This is an opportunity for caregivers and children (ages 0-8) to read, talk, and sing together. Participants receive a FREE BOOK and there is an optional group nature walk at the end. Come for one or come for all!

***Little Seedlings**
December 10 and 13, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
This program for curious little nature-lovers (ages 1-5) and their caregivers includes a craft and a guided trail walk to explore the theme of the month, "It's Cold in the Winter". (The Tuesday and Friday sessions are the same)

Drop-in Holiday Card-Making
December 10 – 22, from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.
During this time we will have supplies out for making your own nature-inspired holiday cards to take home and share with your families and friends. Supplies will include blank notecards, collage materials, colored pencils, stamps and stencils.

***Full Cold Moon Walk**
December 15, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Small, guided groups explore the trails by night. All ages welcome!

Saturday Morning Botany Walk
December 21, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Oxley Naturalists guide this free drop-in event, where we explore the lives of plants in the forest, prairie, and wetlands, and how they are responding to the seasonal changes.

Winter Solstice
December 21, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.
A celebration of the longest and darkest night of the year. Join us for lantern-making, a campfire, and a self-guided trail walk through the forest. This is a free, come-and-go event, but we encourage you to RSVP online to help us plan

All About Nature Book club
December 27, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Join us for a discussion of books related to nature, conservation, and the environment. December's selection: The Singing Wilderness by Sigurd Olsen

Coming in January

- *Nature Journaling group
- Winter Lecture Series

*indicates that pre-registration is required. Call 918-596-9054 to receive your member discount.

Red Shouldered Hawk | Bryan Tapp

OXLEY NATURE CENTER HOURS

Interpretive Center hours are 10-4:30PM Tuesday through Saturday, and Noon - 4:30PM on Sunday.

The Interpretive Building will be closed Tuesday December 24th & Wednesday December 25th for holidays. (Trails will still be accessible to enjoy).

After Interpretive Center hours, trails are open for hiking until 9:00 PM.

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