



October 2018 Newsletter

Welcome to the Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas (FOSANA) e-newsletter! We share natural areas news, the Friends' efforts, and opportunities to get involved in volunteering or educational programs at San Antonio's natural areas parks. Please check our website, www.fosana.org, for periodic updates and program information.

Mushrooms in the parks

The heavy rains in San Antonio over the past month are good not only for the garden but also provide an opportunity to see mushrooms, or fungi, in wooded areas. Mushrooms you may find around San Antonio are different from the common button mushrooms found at the grocery store; mushrooms in our area come in a diversity of shapes and sizes. Regardless of their appearance, mushrooms play an important role in the [decomposition](#) of plants and animals. The structures we see above ground or growing on logs are only the "tip of the iceberg" while the bulk of the mushrooms consist of a large network of threadlike mycelia below ground. This network in the soil or wood is composed of minute hyphae that are invisible to the naked eye and secrete enzymes that break down plant and animal organic matter into minerals and small molecules, which then becomes available as recycled nutrients for new plants. If it were not for the fungi's ability to break down the lignin and cellulose of the leaves and dead trees in the forest, the dead material would pile up and affect the natural environment. Mushrooms are increasingly recognized for their [economic importance](#) as they can also break down some plastics and hydrocarbons. Other fungi that are beneficial to us in our daily lives are the antibiotic penicillin, and yeast that we use to make bread, beer, and wine. While we can consume fungi, please note that there are many types of edible mushrooms in Texas that may be easily mistaken for poisonous species, so it is best to ask a trained mycologist or consult a [mycology society](#) before eating wild mushrooms.





Some mushrooms in Friedrich park (photo: Thomas Paine)

Upcoming Natural Areas Events

- **Starting Out Wild: Clever Spiders** (ages 1-3)
 - 10:00-11:00 a.m. | Friday, October 5 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
Learn all about spiders through stories, songs, and hands-on fun! These high energy, engaging programs are a perfect way to foster an appreciation of the natural world. It is recommended that a child be walking and a parent or caretaker attend with each child. Most classes take place outdoors.
- **Hike Friedrich with the Family!** (all ages)
 - 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Saturday, October 6 | Friedrich Wilderness Park
Enjoy a guided nature walk with Nature Preserve Officer Tom Paine. Learn about the plants and animals of the Texas Hill Country and open your senses to nature. This leisurely walk will take you through approximately 1.5 miles of trails. This is a great introduction to nature for families of all ages.
- **Photography Walkabout** (Ages 13 & up):
 - 9:30 am-2:30 p.m. | Saturday, October 13 | Friedrich Wilderness Park
Partnering with San Antonio Natural Areas, The Creative Light invites you to join us for a day of photographing Friedrich Wilderness Park. This pristine natural area features over 600 acres of undeveloped Hill Country terrain and over 10 miles of trails that lie at the southern end of the Texas Hill Country. This heavily forested wilderness park is home for rare birds, terrestrial orchids, steep hills and deep canyons. Workshop participants will have the opportunity to visit an area of the park that is not accessible to the general public. This workshop is designed to strengthen your artistic vision with expert guidance on all aspects of photography, including exposure and artistic composition in a small and supportive environment. This workshop led by Nancy Cavender-Garcia and designed for beginners and advanced photographers alike. We will combine excellent photographic instruction with an informative in-the-field photography session after which we will adjourn to the classroom for a critique of your photographs. Bring your camera and join us in nature for the opportunity to relax, breathe, and create. This event is open to the public and will include a box lunch. For additional information or to register, email nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov.
- **Growing Up Wild: Looking at Leaves** (ages 4-7)

10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | Wednesday, October 17 | Friedrich Wilderness Park
Learn to identify leaves by the shapes, sizes, and colors. Growing Up Wild builds on a child's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. Activities are designed to provide an early foundation and appreciation of nature.

- **Starting Out Wild: Clever Spiders** (ages 1-3)
 - 10:00-11:00 a.m. | Friday, October 19 | Friedrich Wilderness Park
Learn all about spiders through stories, songs, and hands-on fun! These high energy, engaging programs are a perfect way to foster an appreciation of the natural world. It is recommended that a child be walking and a parent or caretaker attend with each child. Most classes take place outdoors.
- **All programs: RSVP required.** Visit FOSANA.org to reserve your spot. Suggested donation: \$3 per person, \$6 per family. For more information, call 210-207-3782 or email nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov.

Are you connected to San Antonio Natural Areas on social media?

You can like us on [Facebook](#).

Find us on [Instagram](#) @sanaturalareas.

Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas is dedicated to promoting stewardship of San Antonio's Natural Areas, and to the understanding and appreciation of nature through educational and scientific programs.

For the latest updates and more activities, please see the calendar on the FOSANA website.

[Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas Website](#)
