



## December 2019 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](http://www.fosana.org), for periodic updates and program information.

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### **Evergreen Rough Host of Butterfly: Who Am I?**

Their evergreen leaves are fragrant and may be used to create native local winter holiday decorations and wreaths. The oil is an insect repellent; the shavings repel moths; the wood makes furniture, including priceless chests in which to store clothes. The wood is also used in construction and for fence posts that are resistant to rot and insects. Providing food for birds and small mammals, the female tree's blue, berry-like cones provide food for many birds and small mammals. The tree is the larval host and nectar source for the juniper hairstreak butterfly (*Callophrys gryneus*). If you have not guessed yet, all of these are attributes of the Ashe juniper (*Juniperus ashei*) - and these gifts do not even include the fact that juniper bark is an essential component of the nest of the endangered golden-cheeked warbler (*Setophaga chrysoparia*).

As for the male tree, starting in late fall and continuing usually through January, those yellow tips are actually pollen-bearing cones. With the first gusts of wind from the Hill Country, the air may be laden with clouds of pollen, the cause of "cedar" allergies. Good news is, there are remedies like the one below, that may help folks avoid the itchy eyes and runny nose.

"Cedar Fever" Tea (recipe as recorded from a radio show in San Antonio, TX, Nov.2019)

1 c. chopped Ashe juniper leaves (harvest only where you have landowner and/or City permission)

1 qt. water

Boil water; then take off stove and add chopped leaves. Steep 1 hour. Strain off and dispose of juniper leaves. Store stock solution in refrigerator. On a daily basis, starting in late October and continuing for 2-3 wks., take 1 eyedropper (about 1 T.) of stock solution and add to 8 oz. of something you like the taste of. Drink your "mixed drink."

Alternatively, if your symptoms still persist, visit your local [allergist](#) to explore other medical remedies.



Ashe juniper berries of female tree and pollen laden branch of male tree

Actually a member of the cypress family (Cupressaceae), Ashe juniper is not a true cedar (family Pinaceae). Moreover, though it is often cited as an introduced species, it is known to have existed in central Texas since the Pleistocene. Often reviled and blamed for [reduction of spring flow](#) and taking up too much groundwater, numerous studies document the fact that the A. juniper is an exceedingly efficient user of water. Suffice it to say that the exact impact of A. juniper on water is controversial. In any case, the species is an essential part of our local ecosystems: remember all things in moderation allows for critical biodiversity.

In this season of giving and receiving, remember that like the juniper, all gifts are multi-dimensional. You may have delighted in making that simple backscratcher with the juniper handle and the plastic fork tines. The receiver may decide it's a silly piece of junk. What matters is being kind; if it all gets to be too much, take a walk in nature. Happy Holidays!

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## Upcoming Events December

- **Growing Up Wild:** Owl Pellets (ages 4-7)
  - 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | Thursday, December 5 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
  - Dissect an owl pellet and learn what owls eat and why they're beneficial to the environment! Growing Up Wild builds on a child's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. RSVP required. Visit [fosana.org](https://fosana.org) to reserve your spot. FREE. For more information, call 210-207-3782 or email [nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov](mailto:nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov).
- **Starting Out Wild:** We Love Leaves! (ages 1-3)
  - 10:00-11:00 a.m. | Friday, December 6 | Friedrich Wilderness Park classroom
  - Learn about leaves, shapes, and colors! These high energy, engaging programs are a perfect way to foster an appreciation of the natural world. Most classes take place outdoors. RSVP required. Visit [fosana.org](https://fosana.org) to reserve your spot. FREE. For more information, call 210-207-3782 or email [nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov](mailto:nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov).
- **Geology Walk** (ages 5 & up)
  - 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. | Saturday, December 7 | Crownridge Canyon Natural Area

- Enjoy a morning walk with Geologist Bob Hixon through the picturesque trail of Crownridge Canyon Natural Area to discuss the local limestone features as well as plant identification. Along the way, discover the many wonders of the park such as the karst feature along Water Trail, and other hill country habitat. Visit [fosana.org](http://fosana.org) to reserve your spot. FREE. For more information, call 210-207-3782 or email [nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov](mailto:nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov).
- **Star Party at Eisenhower Park** (all ages)
  - 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. | Saturday, December 14 | Eisenhower Park Mass Pavilion
  - What's to see in the Fall skies? Observe the night skies with the San Antonio Astronomical Association and learn about the planets and the moon. Family-friendly activity included! During inclement weather, be sure to check the calendar as this program may be cancelled. Suggested donation: \$3 per person, or \$6 per family. For more information visit FOSANA.org, or email [nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov](mailto:nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov). No reservations needed.

All programs (unless otherwise noted): RSVP required. Visit [fosana.org](http://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](mailto:nicole.mcleod@sanantonio.gov).



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

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

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

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**Are you a member of Friends of San Antonio Natural Areas (FoSANA)?**

Please support FoSANA on the preservation and educational outreach of natural areas around San Antonio by joining or renewing your membership [online](#) today.

Your membership this year will help us continue to

- offer over 400 environmental programs for families and adults at the Natural Areas.
- serve over 14,000 families and adults through education and outreach programs.
- coordinate over 400 volunteer programs and 7,500 volunteer hours supported trail maintenance, habitat conservation and restoration, and native landscapes and gardens.

Plus, when you renew your membership, you'll receive our monthly newsletter that provides updates on natural areas happenings and timely information on upcoming events.

Should you need any assistance or have any questions or comments about your membership, please feel free to email us at [friendsofsanaturalareas@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofsanaturalareas@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

FoSANA Board

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**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](#)**

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