

Nature Festival at Riverside Saturday. Plant Sale Postponed Due to Drought

For the past 8 years Riverside Nature Center, in partnership with the Hill Country Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist and the Native Plant Society of Texas--Kerrville, has held a native plant sale and nature festival twice a year. This fall, however, there will not be a native plant sale due to the severe drought, but there will be an expanded Nature Festival, this Saturday, October 1, from 9 to 3.

The reason for postponing the plant sale is a combination of the difficult growing conditions and the need to conserve water. While native plants can usually get along without extra water in normal conditions, all plants that are newly-planted require watering on a regular basis to get them established, which may take as long as two years. Given the very dry soil conditions, the Texas Forest Service is recommending that trees and shrubs not be planted this fall, because of the likelihood that they will not survive.

Also, given the prudent restrictions on water usage, it was believed that people should not be encouraged to plant new vegetation that would require even more watering. So everyone is invited to come to the FREE festival, but to understand that there will be no plants for sale this year.

There will be three nature presentations:

Tara Bushnoe from the UGRA will speak at 10:00 on "Water Conservation in a Drought Environment". She will discuss water in Kerr County and the threats to water quality and quantity, as well as how the current drought impacts available surface water and groundwater.

At 11:30, John Karger from Last Chance Forever will talk on "Raptors, Those Awesome, Intriguing Birds of Prey". John will share his knowledge of raptors and his enthusiastic respect for these beautiful birds. The talk will be suitable for all ages.

At 1:00, I will talk on "Harvesting Rainwater--Why and How". The reasons for harvesting rainwater as well as the basics of how to do it and the equipment needed will be discussed. In addition, my own experience in installing our personal system will be discussed and a tour of the Riverside rainwater harvesting system will be conducted.

In addition to the talks, there will be various exhibits and displays by local plant and nature organizations. A new display of live monarch butterflies, their larva, larval food and migrations. This exhibit which is always a favorite of adults and kids alike will be available from 9 to 1. There will be free kid's activities and crafts before, in between and after the talks. There will also be a demonstration of drip irrigation systems and

various types of mulch that are available, two very important aspects of watering trees and gardens in a drought.

People will be available to discuss plant and drought problems as well as to conduct tours of the Riverside grounds.

All of the activities at the Nature Festival are FREE

Also, PawPaws will be selling BBQ from 11 to 2.

For further information, call 830-257-4837 or go to www.riversidenaturecenter.org.

Riverside Nature Center is located at 150 Francisco Lemos Street in Kerrville.

Until next time...

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