

Nature Notes

January 30, 2020

A digital journal documenting the search for truth, beauty and goodness in God's lovely creation throughout the diocese of Fort Worth.

I wonder

Back in December, I found this plant, flourishing while its neighbors looked bare and lifeless. At the time, I wondered what it was. And then forgot all about it. Today, when I was looking online for good articles about how wildlife survive winter temperatures, a blog showed a picture of an identical plant, and captioned it as a White (or Wild) Aster. Mystery solved! Because asters bloom later in the season than most flowers, they are an important food source for insects, including bees and butterflies. The generic name "aster" applies to hundreds of species. One nickname for asters is "Michaelmas Daisy," because they bloom on St. Michael's feast day, September 29.

<https://www.centraltexasgardener.org/2012/01/wildlife-winter-wonderland/>

<https://gardeninacity.wordpress.com/2012/09/24/an-astonishing-variety-of-mostly-wild-asters/>

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2018-09-29>





I notice. . . .

A strange little attachment to some bare branches. Could it be a cocoon, or an insect molt? Do you think the creature is still inside, or has it left through the little holes on the sides? Besides these two, I found one other casing on a different shrub.

It took a while to find something similar on the internet, but I believe these are ootheca, or egg cases, of praying mantis. If so, the egg cases are helping the baby insects (maybe 200-300 in each case) survive the winter. We'll have to keep an eye out this spring and see what emerges.

<https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=25979>

<https://agrillife.org/extensionento/insects/praying-mantis/>

The aesthetic value of creation cannot be overlooked. Our very contact with nature has a deep restorative power; contemplation of its magnificence imparts peace and serenity. The Bible speaks again and again of the goodness and beauty of creation, which is called to glorify God.”

-St. John Paul II

Courtyard Adventures

We're keeping the birdfeeders full in both courtyards. Have you noticed any interesting birds lately?



Where to find Mrs. Breclaw next week

Mon- 10-2

Tues-9-2

Wed- 10-4

Thu- 11-2, 4-5

Nolan Outdoor Learning Headquarters

In the office immediately to the left of the teacher boxes in room D22.

Please come by anytime! Let's chat about how we can work outdoor learning into your lesson plans!

ebreclaw@nchstx.org