

# Nature Notes

March 26, 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 . . . .

How I never noticed flowers on Yaupon hollies before. I love this shrub species, probably because it's the only caffeinated plant native to North America. Plus it's all over Texas, and an easy one to point out on nature walks. So you could say, I've known this plant for decades. And only now, confined to my front yard, did I notice these tiny, adorable pale green flowers. What a gift!

The flowers are so tiny, I wondered how the plant is pollinated. Most plants rely on insects for pollination. Some, like conifers and grasses, rely on wind. Turns out, yaupon hollies rely on bees to find their tiny, dull, barely scented flowers. Do you think perhaps the pollen is caffeinated too? That would certainly be a unique advantage of the yaupon!

Native Americans brewed tea from the yaupon holly, and it looks like the tea may be gaining popularity once again, at least here in [Texas](#).





### **I notice. . . .**

It's nearly impossible to tell the difference between a weed and a wildflower when you're out in nature. For example, last week we saw these beautiful white flowers at the park. I googled "wildflower with 6 white petals" and discovered this was a Star of Bethlehem flower. It's native to Europe, and all parts of the plants are poisonous. Reading gardener's blogs, it appears many people hate this plant because it is impossible to get out of a garden.

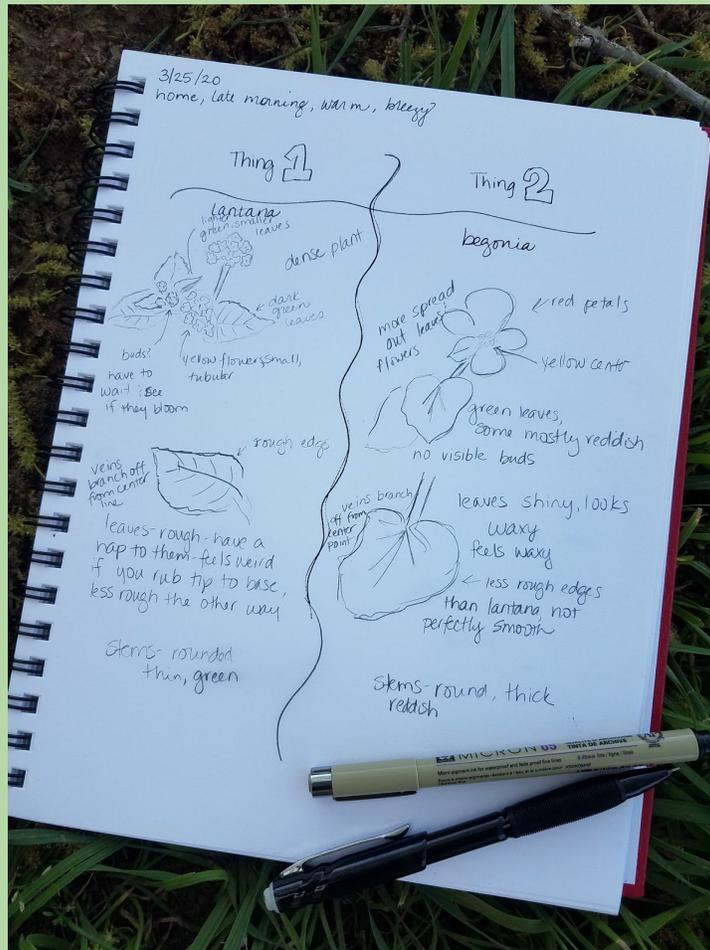
But. . . it's also beautiful. Regardless of its official classification, I'm going to enjoy this flower as a tiny reminder of God's delight in creation.

*Good Lenten reflection:*

<https://aleteia.org/2016/02/21/is-lent-feeling-limpid-maybe-you-should-go-into-the-wilderness/>

## **Outdoor Adventures**

This week in our daily nature break emails, I recommended starting a nature journal. It's absolutely amazing how much you can learn, even by being in your own yard. Yesterday I told you I'd share my comparison journal page, so here it is. Please note that you do not need to know names of the items you compared- I knew mine because I'd bought and planted these a couple of weeks ago! Comparing the two plants helped me learn more about them. If I hadn't been curious about the leaf texture on the lantana, I would have never rubbed my fingers against the begonia. Despite its glossy look, the begonia had a bit of rough texture to the leaf too!



And I truly hope my sketches remind you that drawings in your journal don't have to be gorgeous illustrations. Drawings, just like words, help you remember what you experienced.

## Where to find Mrs. Breclaw next week

Exploring nature and beauty from home. Please feel free to email me with any questions you may have, and stay tuned for daily "10 minute nature breaks" to help you through your distance learning adventures!

## 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!

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